



**TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**BUDGET PRESENTATION AND PUBLIC HEARING FOR
FY 2023-2024 BUDGET**

**TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM
Tuesday, January 24, 2023 – 6:00 P.M.**

**Also, on Greenwich Community Television:
Channels 24, 79, YouTube**

Committee

Present: Leslie L. Tarkington, Chair; Nisha Arora, Laura Erickson, Leslie Moriarty

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Ben Branyan, Town Administrator and Chief Operating Officer; Wendy Zhou, Senior Management Analyst; Joseph Siciliano, Director of Parks and Recreation; Daniel Carlsen, Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation; Joseph McHugh, Greenwich Fire Chief; Charles Lubowicki, Assistant Fire Chief; Amy Siebert, Commissioner, Department of Public Works; Ken Borsuk, Office of the First Selectman

Selectman: Fred Camillo, First Selectman, Lauren Rabin, Selectwoman, Janet Stone McGuigan, Select-person

Board: Dan Ozizmir, Chairman, William Drake, Karen Fassuliotis, Harry Fisher, Miriam Kreuzer, Stephen Selbst, David Weisbrod

BOE/GPS: Christina Downey, Board of Education, Vice Chair, Dr. Toni Jones, Superintendent of Greenwich Public Schools (GPS), Blaize Levitan, Chief Operations Officer, GPS, Dan Watson, Director of School Facilities, GPS

Other: Don Conway, GCTV

Ms. Tarkington called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. and welcomed the audience to presentations by the First Selectman, the Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools of their recommended FY 2023-2024 Operations and Capital Budgets.

She introduced members of the Budget Committee and welcomed members of the audience thanking them for attending and their interest in the Town's FY 2023-2024 Budget process. Ms. Tarkington commented that the presentations will be followed by a Public Hearing and explained how the public could comment. She encouraged the public to review the schedule of upcoming Budget Committee Departmental Review Meetings available on the Town website.

First Selectman Recommended Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget Presentation

First Selectman Camillo presented his recommended Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Operating and Capital Budgets as a continuation of current programming and services and the implementation of capital projects at \$127 million for the next fiscal year and \$411 million over the next five-year period. He emphasized creating a level of certainty of capital over this five-year period as requested in the BET Budget Guidelines.

Of note, the GPS and the Building Committee will be embarking on the Central Middle School Renovation project that was submitted for a request of \$85.5 million and reduced to \$75.5 million in FY24. The Old Greenwich Elementary School at \$24.5 million was submitted for FY 2024 but deferred to FY 2025. Julian Curtiss Elementary School is scheduled for major renovations for the upcoming budget years. The plan also includes funding for a new Hamill Rink and improvements to Roger Sherman Baldwin Park.

First Selectman Camillo presented his operating budget at \$480,911,064 which represents an increase of \$15,925,110 or a 3.42% increase in spending. The Town's mill rate would increase by 2.91%. He stressed that although there is a proposed change in the budget from the current plan as implemented during FY23 by an interim appropriation, there will be enhanced police coverage at all K-8 Greenwich Public Schools over the FY23 budget. GHS has a separate security staff, including two school resource officers.

The Fixed Charges contained a \$5,507,089 increase mainly driven by a 12% increase in healthcare costs. However, Mr. Camillo reported that the Town has saved approximately \$177.2 million over the last five years by going to and staying in the State of Connecticut Partnership Plan versus the market.

Mr. Camillo mentioned that there is currently a Request for Proposal to evaluate a long-term lease proposal for The Nathaniel Witherell Nursing Home Facility.

Revenue was up by \$3,437,280 mainly due to rising interest earned, higher building permit revenues, and charging for Fire Plan Reviews as other communities do.

He concluded by saying Town headcount is up by 1.86 Full-time-equivalents and the mill rate increase of 2.96% is slightly lower than the Budget Guidelines.

Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget Presentation

The Board of Education Budget was presented by Dr. Toni Jones, Superintendent of Schools, Christina Downey, Vice Chair of the Board of Education and Blaize Levitan, Greenwich Public Schools Chief Operations Officer. They explained that the budget process is a 12-month process that includes examining academic needs, reviewing previous and current budgets, and analyzing enrollment projection data.

The fiscal year 2023-2024 Operating Budget is proposed at \$182,165,266 (before benefits), which is an increase of \$5,209,524, or 2.9% over the previous year budget. They pointed out that the major drivers of the increase were 1) Salaries and other contractual payments, 2) Special Education tuition, 3) Utilities and 4) Transportation costs. It was reported that they met the BET Budget Guidelines of 2.9%. However, they also pointed out that the proposed budget included potential risks as follows; 1) Utilities of \$264,000, 2); Substitute teachers of \$600,000 and 3) Facilities of \$300,000.

They stated that the Town receives \$3,149,900 of revenue that includes Special Education and Education Cost Sharing Grants, along with Tuition and Medicaid reimbursements.

The BOE proposed FY 2024 Capital Budget submitted to the First Selectman was \$121,714,311 with major drivers being: 1) Central Middle School Replacement of \$85,500,000 requested, 2) Old Greenwich School Renovation of \$24,500,000, and overall maintenance of \$9,749,711.

Public Hearing

The following speakers addressed the Committee:

- Jennifer Bencivengo – Principal, Old Greenwich School, spoke in favor of funding for the Old Greenwich School Renovation
- Candace Garthwaite – Old Greenwich resident spoke in favor of more pickleball playing courts.
- Jodi Stuart – Wellness specialist and Town resident spoke in favor of more pickleball playing courts.
- Francis Wu Nobay – PTAC President spoke in favor of full funding for the BOE Budget.
- Sharlene Ray - Spoke about the discontinuation of the Share the Fare program for Town seniors through the Town's Senior Center.
- Tim Busler – District 11 resident spoke about drainage conditions, need for receipt of Department of Public Works drainage study, and for DPW engineering improvements.
- Bob Chaney – PTAC member for Facilities and Town resident spoke in favor of funding various school capital projects.
- Lucy Von Brachel – RTM District 4 member spoke in favor of funding various school capital projects.
- Brian Jacoby – Old Greenwich resident spoke in favor of funding for the Old Greenwich School renovation.
- Mary Tobin – Old Greenwich resident spoke in favor of funding for the Old Greenwich School renovation.
- Hillary Haroche – RTM District 10, spoke in favor of funding fire trucks for the Fire Department and support for the RHVFC public-private partnership for renovations.
- Steph Cowie – spoke in favor of various school capital projects and school accessibility.
- Matthew McCabe – Old Greenwich Resident spoke in favor of funding for the Old Greenwich School renovation.
- James Waters – Old Greenwich School Building Committee Chairman provided an update on the progress of the Old Greenwich School renovation project.
- Michael Partridge – Town Resident and husband of Old Greenwich School teacher spoke

in favor of funding for Old Greenwich School to become ADA compliant.

- Jane Sprung – RTM District 10 spoke in favor of alternative, ed specs for the Central Middle School capital project and professional management for The Nathaniel Witherell.
- Dina Urso and Matthew Kane – Co-President and Treasurer, Central Middle School PTA spoke together in favor of the Central Middle School capital project.
- Janet McMahon – RTM District 6 spoke in favor of funding the BOE Operating and Capital Budgets.
- Christopher Weiss – Riverside School Principal spoke in favor of a building study for capital funding for Riverside Elementary School.
- Allison Maus and Cary Bisbee– Co-President Riverside School PTA spoke in favor of school capital projects funding.
- Luke Szymczak – RTM District 7, spoke in favor of addressing drainage and flooding issues and wanted the Department of Public Works to fund more money for these projects.
- Craig Berendowski – Old Greenwich Resident spoke in favor of the Old Greenwich School renovation and ADA issues.
- Claire Kilgallen – Town Resident spoke in favor of funding BOE Operating and Capital budgets.
- Joseph Kantorski – Byram Neighborhood Association President spoke in favor of traffic calming and radar speed signs in the Byram section.
- Molly Saleeby – RTM District 8 and Old Greenwich School Building Committee spoke in favor of funding for the Old Greenwich School renovation.
- Vin DiMarco – Member of First Selectman’s Bicycle Task Force spoke in favor of having more bicycle paths and routes in Town.
- Alex Popp – Town Resident spoke to “smart size” the size of the Central Middle School capital project and how the mill rate disproportionately increased in Byram.
- Don Conway – spoke in response to a prior speaker to say that the Town offers Call-a-Ride with free service.

The speaking portion of the Public Meeting concluded at 8:40 P.M. In addition to the Public Hearing comments made by 28 residents, there were several residents who completed the Public Hearing Form linked to the Town website. The 151 Forms totaling 328 pages can be accessed at [Link to comments](#)

Respectfully submitted,



Peter Mynarski, Recording Secretary

L. Tarkington

Leslie L. Tarkington, Budget Cmte Chair