



**TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION BUDGET COMMITTEE
BUDGET PRESENTATION AND PUBLIC HEARING
FOR FY2021-2022 BUDGET**

MINUTES

Hybrid Virtual & Town Hall Meeting Room
Tuesday, January 26, 2021, 6:00 P.M.

- Committee:** Leslie L. Tarkington, Chair; Andy Duus, Leslie Moriarty, Jeffrey S. Ramer
- Board:** Michael Mason, Chairman; William Drake, Laura Erickson, Karen Fassuliotis; Debra Hess, Elizabeth K. Krumeich, Miriam Kreuzer, David Weisbrod
- Selectmen:** Fred Camillo, First Selectman; Jill Oberlander, Select-person; Lauren Rabin, Selectwoman
- Staff:** Benjamin Branyan Town Administrator; Lauren Elliott, Assessor; Roland Gieger, Director, Budget & Systems Management, Finance Department; Jim Heavey, Chief, Police; Blaize Levitan, Assistant Director, Parks & Recreation; James Michel, Deputy Commissioner, Public Works; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Demetria Nelson, Commissioner, Human Services Department; Barbara Ormerod-Glynn, Director, Greenwich Library; Amy Seibert, Commissioner, Department of Public Works; Patricia Sesto, Director, Environmental Affairs
- BOE/GPS:** Peter Bernstein; Chairman, Board of Education (BOE); Karen Hirsch, Secretary, BOE; Dr. Toni Jones, Superintendent of Greenwich Public Schools (GPS); Sean O'Keefe, Brian Peldunas, President, PTAC; Chief Operations Officer, GPS, Michael Ting, Director, Educational Technology; Dan Watson, Director, School Facilities, GPS
- RTM:** Mike Basham (D-2) Chair, Finance; Kimberly Blank (D-7), Education; Nancy Burke (D-2) Budget Overview (BOC); Ed Dadakis (D-1); Philip Dodson, (D-8) Public Works; Mareta Hamre, (D-10) Alternate, LCC; Lucia Jansen (D-7), Chair, BOC; Scott Kalb, (D-7) Public Works; Katherine LoBalbo (D-2), Chair, Parks and Recreation; Wynn McDaniel, (D-7), Chair, District 7; Shawn McDonnell, (D-5); Danyal Ozizmir (D-5) Vice Chair, BOC, Chair, LCC; Molly Saleeby (D-8) BOC; Kim Salib (D-11), Chair, Transportation; Louisa Stone (D-10); Joanna Swomley (D-10), Lucy Von Brachel, (D-4) Land Use; James Waters (D-12), Greg Zorthian (D-11) Finance

Public: Joseph Angland, Chairman, Democratic Town Committee; Ken Borsuk, Reporter, *Greenwich Time*; David Chass, Jennifer Dayton; Richard Kaufman, Reporter, *Greenwich Sentinel*; Mary Lee Kiernan, President/CEO YWCA; Howard Richman; Winston Robinson, Board, Human Services; Carol Sutton; Leslie Yager, Publisher, *Greenwich Free Press*

Budget Committee Chair Tarkington called the Meeting to order at 6:02 P.M. and welcomed the audience to presentations of the recommended FY2021-2022 Operations and Capital Budgets. by the First Selectman and the Chairman of the Board of Education. She invited Town residents to meetings over the next six weeks, to understand the budget details and decision-making process required to determine the BET recommended budget. Ms. Tarkington commented that the Departmental Review Hearings can be attended virtually streaming on Zoom, or on GCTV and YouTube. A schedule of the Budget Committee's Departmental Review Hearings is available on the Town website. The Budget Committee will vote on its recommended budget on March 4th, and if necessary, March 5th. The Budget then moves to the full BET for a Public Hearing on March 29th. A Budget Workshop will take place on March 30th, and then the BET will vote on the recommended budget scheduled tentatively on April 1st. The RTM will vote on the recommended budget at its May 10th, 2021 meeting. Ms. Tarkington noted that this evening's Public Hearing was an opportunity for public comment, which would begin at the conclusion of budget presentations by the First Selectman Fred Camillo, and Mr. Peter Bernstein, Chairman of the Board of Education, and Dr. Toni Jones, Superintendent, Greenwich Public Schools.

PROPOSED BUDGET FY2021-2022

First Selectman Camillo presented his recommended FY2021-2022 Budget and thanked his staff for their professionalism and contribution to its preparation. He welcomed the Board of Estimate & Taxation (BET), members of the Board of Education (BOE) and Greenwich Public Schools (GPS), Representatives of the Town Meeting (RTM) and members of the community.

Mr. Camillo reviewed the BET Budget Guidelines and then introduced his recommended FY2021-2022 Budget of \$450,649,585 noting that it reflected a 0.51% increase over the current fiscal year's budget; if passed, the Town's mill rate would increase 1.75%, from 11.59 mills to 11.793 mills. The Presentation included an overview of the Capital Budget, \$51 million for projects which Mr. Camillo characterized as "long overdue". He enumerated five criteria for qualifying capital expenditures: Maintenance, Replacement, Upgrade, Discretionary and New Projects. Among the Capital Projects suggested are: Eastern Civic Center, soil remediation at Greenwich High School, cybersecurity, a King Street facility for Greenwich Emergency Medical Service (GEMS), redesign of Roger Sherman Baldwin Park as well as projects postponed from FY2021. He intends to pursue public/private partnerships as vital contributions to supplement the Capital Budget, and savings from headcount reductions resulting from not filling 8 full time open positions, and part time hours will be reduced by 0.29%.

The First Selectman concluded his remarks referencing the lingering uncertainty caused by COVID-19's impact on the economic environment. He complimented the BET's foresight shaping a level budget for FY2020-2021 despite challenges and encouraged virtual public attendance during February Departmental Budget meetings to become familiar with the factors that will drive decision-making for FY2021-2022's Budget.

BOE BUDGET PRESENTATION

Board of Education Chairman Peter Bernstein presented an overview of BOE's proposed fiscal year 2021-2022 Operating Budget for Greenwich schools of \$169,846,597, an increase of

\$6,482,405 (3.97%) over previous year and, a Capital Budget of \$32,092,000 that included costs for major projects (\$17.3 million). He cited major budget drivers as salaries and other contractual payments, and Special Education.

Dr. Jones explained how the budget was designed to meet the strategic plan's mission to assist student growth in academic, interpersonal, and personal areas. Focusing on the operating budget's priorities, she explained that textbooks, teaching materials, and custodial supplies were covered for the current year through pre-purchased FY2020 savings but now needed to be prioritized to meet FY2022 needs. It was emphasized that the quality of Greenwich public schools drives property values, and that the Town needs to invest in their operation and maintenance of its assets. Its model instructional success during the pandemic encouraged other school districts as GPS served 15% of its student population with remote learning and high school students with blended classroom/remote learning. Concern was expressed however, that revealed a "learning loss" in mathematics as a result of recent testing.

Closing with a preview of capital projects priority list, anticipated Grant funding and departmental savings, the full BOE presentation promises more detailed information during its meeting with the BET Budget Committee on Tuesday, February 2, 2021.

PUBLIC HEARING

Ms. Tarkington opened the Public Hearing at 7:00 P.M. noting that 166 viewers were attending virtually.

The following speakers addressed the Committee:

- Brian Peldunas, President PTA Council representing PTAs of 15 Greenwich schools: spoke in support of the full BOE budget recognizing it is in excess of the Budget Guidelines; spoke in support of its prioritization of Special Education, supplies, student safety and accelerating ADA accessibility.
- Terry Lamantia – Co-President of GHS PTA with Stephanie Cowie: spoke in support of BOE budget and capital projects currently underway including: Cardinal Stadium, Security school entrance, and upgrading technology.
- Bob Chaney – Julian Curtis students' parent and member of PTA: spoke in support of renovations at Julian Curtis for safety, security, and accessibility.
- Joanna Swomley – RTM D-10: spoke in support of a northwest Greenwich professional staffed fire station being included in the FY2022 Budget due to inadequate coverage of an essential Town service promised if Matrix, a fire safety risk assessment study, favored a northwest site.
- Diana Singer - RTM D-10: spoke in support of a new professional staffed northwest fire station based on the findings of the Matrix study confirmation of need,
- Rosemary Hyson – GHS teacher spoke in support of fully funding the BOE Operating and Capital Budgets to provide resources for the needs of the students.

- Ernest Schirmer – spoke in support of accelerating the renewal Greenwich Railroad Station Plaza as a capital project and benefit of Greenwich living. Mr. Schirmer expressed thanks for the Public Hearing as an opportunity to provide feedback to elected officials.
- Andi Hortsellis - Dundee School PTA: spoke in favor of the BOE budget and their priorities of books for libraries, math remediation and school maintenance.
- Jill K. Oberlander – Board of Selectmen member, Environmental Sustainability Committee member; spoke in support of Town’s Environmental Sustainability services; spoke in favor of the GPS budget as presented; adding bike trail accessibility to the Bicycle Master Plan and accelerating its implementation; spoke in favor of the addition of economic development staffing in the Office of the First Selectman.
- Hector Arzeno – RTM D-8: spoke in favor of funding GPS Special Education programming as recommended by the FY2020-2021 Special Education Study.
- James Waters – GPS parent – member of PTA Council: spoke in support of BOE budget; spoke in support of investing in the future of the Town with funding for GPS and BOE capital budget.
- Peter Sherr – GPS parent, member of Board of Education (BOE): spoke in support of increasing BOE operating budget for teachers, security, maintenance of air quality and ADA accessibility.
- Sarah Muir & JP Muir – GPS parents: spoke in support Julian Curtis Elementary School as an experience in diversity for their four children; spoke in support of funding for HVAC, security, and ADA accessibility at Julian Curtis.
- Susan McNulty – former BOE Board member: spoke in support of Julian Curtis School diversity and the value of the proposed \$1.7 million capital improvements to the school.
- Mary Flynn –RTM D-12: spoke in support of the BOE Budget, fire coverage for northwest Greenwich; and need for uniformity of Town emergency services.
- Carolyn Lerum – GPS Special Education student’s parent: spoke in support of the BOE implementing the programming and staffing recommendations in the FY2020-2021 Special Education Study.
- Louisa Stone – Sixty year resident, RTM member, and former P&Z Chair: spoke in support of a professional fire station at the Round Hill volunteer fire station.
- Matt Driskill - GPS student’s parent: spoke in support of the BOE Budget and capital improvements to Julian Curtis School.
- Ashley Cole – member of Hillside Road traffic and safety Committee: spoke in support of the installation of an additional egress from the GHS property due to traffic concerns.
- Svetlana Tsalik Wasserman– RTM D-10: spoke in support of the additional professionally staffed northwest fire station; spoke in support of an east-west bicycle trail study.
- Clare Kilgallen - PTA Council member: spoke in support of the BOE budget as presented.

- Lucia Jansen – RTM D-7, Chair, Budget Overview Committee: spoke in opposition to the 130% increase in Town capital budget; spoke in opposition to 3.97% increase in BOE operating budget that exceeds the BET Budget Guidelines; spoke in support of Town & BOE reconciliation of their capital budgets of \$55 million and \$32 million, respectively.
- Molly Saleeby – RTM D-8, BOC: spoke in support of the capital and operating budgets as presented and supports school security and ADA accessibility improvements.
- Rosemary Paccione – President residential neighborhood board, “Pheasant Run, 73 Weaver Street”: spoke in support of capital investment in installation of sidewalks at W. Putnam and Weaver Street for pedestrian safety.
- Katherine LoBalbo - RTM D-2, Chair, Parks & Recreation Committee: spoke in favor of Town capital spending on infrastructure, sustainability, and Western Middle School field remediation.
- Lorelei O’Hagen: spoke in support of investing in committed GPS parents’ priorities as part of the solution for capital expenditure decision-making, and the northwest fire station.
- Wynn McDaniel, Chair RTM D-7: spoke in support of examining FY2022 spending carefully while still in COVID pandemic economic and employment recovery mode.

In addition to the Public Hearing comments, under the Governor’s Executive Orders the following residents completed the Public Hearing Form linked to the Agenda. Comments were accepted through the close of the Public Hearing. The link to completed Forms is: [5917 \(greenwichct.gov\)](https://www.greenwichct.gov/5917).

Public Hearing

Forms: Rosemary Hyson, Mimi Duff (2), Jill Oberlander, Svetlana Wasserman, James Waters, Brian Peldunas, Dan Ozizmir, Meredith Curreri, Robert Andriano, Lorelei O’Hagan, Andrea Basso, Diana Singer, Melissa Tynan, Matt Driskill, Thoma McGuire, Bob Chaney, Joanna Swomley, Janet McMahon, Pamela Karetzky, Cheryl Moss, Sheilah Smith, Jill Ernst, Gerald Anderson, Sandra Heath, Wynn McDaniel (2), Vince DiMarco, Patricia Sesto, John Ryan, Jane Sprung, Sarah McNulty, Dan Castrigano, JP Muir, Marcia O’Kane, Jaime Patton, Rosemary Paccione, Stephanie Cowie, Myra Klockenbrink, Alex Popp, Ali Ghiorse, Lucy von Brachel, Paul Levine, Robert Koshar, Svetlana Wasserman,

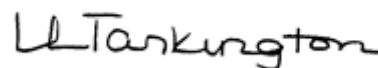
Ms. Tarkington thanked the Budget Committee for their support and the speakers for their attendance and interest.

The Committee unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary



Leslie L. Tarkington, Chair