Mr. Lash welcomed the audience to the first of a series of meetings on the Town of Greenwich FY2017-2018 Budget. He invited attendance during the next eight (8) days of Hearings to better understand the decision-making process required to develop a plan for the Town of Greenwich's upcoming fiscal year’s Capital and Operating expenditures. He reminded the audience that the Public Hearing, with its opportunity for public comment, would take place at the conclusion of presentations by the First Selectman Peter Tesei, and the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Salvatore Corda.

**PROPOSED BUDGET FY2017-2018**

First Selectman Tesei presented the Town's proposed FY2017-2018 Budget together with Ben Branyan, Town Administrator. He introduced a budget that reflected an overall decrease of 2.55% representing a $10.96 million decrease in spending and $5.25 million decrease in State and Federal aid. He noted that the budget responded to feedback from the 2016 resident satisfaction survey and its recommendation not to raise taxes, and the Representative Town Meeting (RTM) vote last May to reducing spending in all Town departments. He affirmed his continued commitment to the character of the Town, to maintained level of services while acknowledging the economic environment challenges that the Town faces.
He concluded his remarks acknowledging the contribution of Department heads and Appointing Authorities and recognized Mr. Branyan, the Town Administrator, for his support in the preparation process.

Mr. Lash thanked the First Selectman and noted that it was unusual to have a budget presented that complied with all the Budget guidelines.

**BOE Presentation**

Peter Sherr, Chairman of the BOE together with Dr. Corda, Superintendent of Greenwich Schools presented an overview of the BOE's proposed fiscal year 2017-2018 Budget for Greenwich schools noting that it would be serving approximately 8,900 students with 2.04% overall increase in costs, minimizing staffing increase to 2.9 FTE despite budgeted increased enrollment of 156 students.

Dr. Corda cited budget challenges of student demographics impacting programs and staffing, the rise in the number of students participating in the Free/Reduced Price Lunch program, and Special Education costs. He spoke of how accelerating personalized learning through the Digital Learning program was mitigating the achievement gap, as well as increasing the number of students taking AP and SAT tests and their prize-winning achievements in academics, arts and athletics.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

Mr. Lash encouraged members of the public to comment during the Public Hearing and opened the floor to the public at 7:12 P.M.

The following speakers addressed the Committee:

- Mary Lee Kiernan – spoke in support of the Budget’s inclusion of the YWCA request for funding to maintain the Violence Prevention Education in Greenwich’s public Middle Schools and High School

- Meredith Gold – spoke in support of the Budget’s recognition of the YWCA’s Violence Prevention Education initiative which provides a 24-hour Hotline, youth leadership experiences and healthy relationship programming in Greenwich’s Middle Schools and High School

- Kristen Tomasiewicz – spoke in favor of the First Selectman Budget’s support of the YWCA Violence Prevention Education representing the Kids in Crisis organization as a health educator

- Barbara Bartlett – spoke in favor of the Budget’s support of funding the Youth Services Coordinator as a part time position and its relocation to Greenwich’s Department of Social Services (Human Services) and its value to Greenwich students. She also spoke in favor of the YWCA’s healthy relationship programming in public school class rooms

- Wendy DiChristina – spoke in favor of the Budget’s support of the YWCA’s Violence Prevention Education as a parent of former Greenwich public school students, saying that it had provided tools and knowledge about healthy relationships to her daughters’ that
influenced their on-going education and interest in advocacy. Ms. DiCristina is also a trained volunteer for the YWCA's Domestic Violence Program

- Janet Lockton spoke in opposition to Budget's proposed improvements of the Steamboat Road pier. She cited the Town Plan of Conservation & Development's vision for the pier as a coastal scenic resource and asked the Budget Committee to defer the request of $600,000 as the request is premature

- Drew Marzullo - spoke in favor of the Budget’s funding the Part Time Youth Services Coordinator position

- Tatiana Lieberman - a senior at Sacred Heart, spoke in favor of the Budget’s funding the Youth Service Coordinator position citing its Restorative Justice Program as an example of its contribution to at-risk youthful offenders

- Alexander Schnur - spoke in favor of the Budget’s funding and relocation of the Youth Service Coordinator position to Greenwich’s Department of Social Services (Human Services)

- Lucia Jansen - spoke in favor of the First Selectman’s proposed budget that responded to some of the concerns of the RTM’s BOC guidelines with both operating and capital spending decreases. She noted the budget benefit of the one-time healthcare savings. She noted that the Town reduced headcount by 11 FTE while the BOE is increasing staff of 3.9 persons, and did not conform to the BET Budget guidelines. She wanted to see more improvement in the School Lunch Fund. She was looking forward to the departments’ responses to the BET Guidelines request for cost reduction ideas.

- Sabine Schoenberg - spoke in favor of the First Selectman’s Budget allocation for a Public Relations marketing campaign in a Public/Private partnership.

- James Aiello - spoke in favor of the First Selectman’s Budget allocation for a Public Relations marketing campaign as a Public/Private partnership

Mr. Lash invited other members of the Public who might not have submitted Speaking Request forms to come forward.

- Christine Georgopulo spoke in favor of the First Selectman’s Budget support for the Youth Services Coordinator part time position in the Department of Social Services

Mr. Lash encouraged members of the Public to reach out to BET members during the Budget Hearing process to share their opinion on budget items that will be considered during the upcoming meetings.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 7:54 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  

Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary

James A. Lash, Chairman