TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
NATHANIEL WITHERELL STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
MINUTES – Parks & Recreation Conference Room, Town Hall
Wednesday, January 31, 2018

Committee: Arthur D. Norton, Chair; William Drake, Andy Duus, Elizabeth K. Krumeich, Jeffrey Ramer, Nancy Weissler

BET: Jill Oberlander, Debra Hess, David Weisbrod

Others: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Laurence Simon, Chairman, TNW Board of Directors; Alan Brown, Director, TNW; Dan Ozizmir, RTM Budget Overview Committee; Patty Roberts, RTM Health & Human Services Committee

The meeting was called to order at 10:32 A.M.

1. Approval of the BET Nathaniel Witherell Strategic Planning Committee Meeting of Minutes January 5, 2018

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Weissler, the Committee voted 6-0 to postpone acceptance/approval of the January 5, 2018 Meeting minutes until the end of the meeting.

2. Presentation and description of the January 5, 2018 Committee Report to the new Committee Members

Mr. Norton described the process followed by the Committee to create its report and offered an overview of the facility's background including its attempted merger with Greenwich Hospital frustrated by the issue of the Town's municipal sovereign immunity and the Grantors restrictive condition that it be a "home for the aging" in perpetuity. Mr. Simon was asked for his observations of the Report and if he could support any of the five options, to which he responded that it was unclear to him who was going to make the decision on the options. Mr. Norton remarked that the options were presented so that the Town could be engaged in a town-wide discussion about TNW because the legislative body (RTM) had the authority to make the decision.

3. Next Steps: Schedule meetings with BET, Board of Selectmen, Nathaniel Witherell Board, RTM and the public to present the Committee Report.

Ms. Weissler suggested that the Report's transmittal letter be adjusted to reflect a reduction in TNW's consumer rating from a 5 to a 4-star property subsequent to the Report's publication, before being circulated to the BET, BOS and RTM. Ms. Krumeich disagreed with the necessity of either changing the original transmittal letter's date or the addition of a new letter.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Weissler, the Committee voted 4-0 in favor of Mr. Norton creating a fresh letter, with its own date, from the Committee to the BET which would have the insertion of Ms. Weissler's recommended 3-sentence text as follows:
"The BET Special Committee on Nathaniel Witherell approved its report on December 19, 2017. In early 2018, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services downgraded its overall rating for The Nathaniel Witherell (TNW) from five stars to four stars. TNW's rating will be reviewed in the next 12 months as part of the annual inspection and review process."

4. Initiate discussion of the Nathaniel Witherell Business Models suggested in the Committee Report

Mr. Drake proposed that the Committee focus its discussion on the Report's 5 longer-term options and its shorter-term recommendations.

Longer-term, strategic options:
- Maintain current Town ownership and operation of TNW subject to the short-term recommendations
- Lease or sell TNW to a newly established 501(C)(3) nonprofit corporation that would continue to operate it as a SNF
- Lease or sell TNW to an existing 501(C)(3) nonprofit corporation that would continue to operate it as a SNF
- Lease or sell TNW to a for-profit manager to provide SNF services
- Request a Certificate of Need from the Department of Social Services for a reduction in bed count or the closure of TNW

Short-term recommendations:
- Release deed restrictions
- Educate TNW Board about fiduciary responsibilities and update Committee structure
- Hire an industry consultant to address staffing and operational issues
- Continue a BET special project committee to review TNW financial and operating results

Mr. Ramer commented that procedurally, the RTM required a transactional presentation. Mr. Weisbrod proposed that business models of the Report's options be created. Mr. Drake responded that the role of the Committee and the BET is finance whereas TNW's role is the healthcare business. Ms. Weissler suggested that a consultant be hired to address staffing and operational issues.

Mr. Norton proposed that a full BET Workshop be scheduled on Thursday, February 15 at 2:00 P.M. to familiarize the BET with the Report's recommendations, answer their questions and ask for the Report's acceptance. It would allow adequate time for the BET to consider the Report and present its recommendations to the Board of Selectmen as well as request a place holder on the RTM Calendar for its March Call. Additionally, Mr. Norton suggested that a Special Meeting be held on Thursday, February 8 at 1:00 P.M. to further discuss the scope of the project in preparation for the BET Workshop.

5. Adjournment

On a motion duly made by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Mr. Drake, the Committee voted 4-0 to adjourn the meeting at 12:35 P.M.

Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary