

**TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION BUDGET COMMITTEE
DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW FY2020-2021 DAY #3 MINUTES**

**Town Hall Meeting Room – 9:00 A.M.
Tuesday, February 3, 2020**

Present:

Committee: Leslie L. Tarkington, Chair; Debra Hess, Leslie Moriarty, Jeffrey S. Ramer

Staff: Caroline Baisley, Director, Health Department (Dept.); Dr. Alan Barry, Commissioner, Human Services Dept.; Robin Clark-Smith, Director, Special Clinic Services, Health Dept.; Angela Gencarelli, Ass't Budget & Systems Manager, Finance Dept.; Roland Gieger, Budget & Systems Director, Finance Dept.; Robert Kick, Ass't Chief, Fire Dept.; Michael Long, Director, Environmental Health; Erica Mahoney, Ass't Director, Human Resources (HR) Dept.; Renata Michalski, Director, Purchasing; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller, Finance Dept.; Mary Pepe, Director, HR Dept.; Larry Roberts, Deputy Chief Training, Fire Dept.

Board: Michael Mason, BET Chairman; William Drake, Andreas Duus, Laura Erickson, Karen Fassuliotis, Miriam Kreuzer, Elizabeth K. Krumeich, David Weisbrod

Selectmen: Fred Camillo, First Selectman; Jill Oberlander, Select-person

RTM: Andrea Anthony, (D-1), Education Committee (Cmte); Josh Brown, (D-1), Town Services Cmte, Labor Contracts Cmte; Phil Dodson, (D-8), Public Works and Town Services Cmtes; John Eddy, (D-8), Public Works Cmte; Lucia Jansen, (D-7), BOC, Chair, Labor Contracts Cmte; Richard Neuman, (D-11), Town Services Cmte, Chair; Danyal Ozizmir, (D-5) BOC, Vice Chair, Labor Contracts Cmte, Chair; Bruce Pflug, (D-5), BOC and Finance Cmtes; Molly Saleeby, (D-8), BOC Cmte; Alexis Voulgaris, (D-6), Moderator Pro Tempore, Health & Human Services Cmte, Chair, Community Block Grant Cmte, Chair

Other: Greenwich Emergency Medical Services (GEMS) Board of Directors: Jim Higgins; Gerard Saggese; GEMS Staff: Thomas Diserendino, Director of Finance; Tracy Schietinger, Executive Director; Board of Health: Marilyn R. Cahn, MD; Board of Human Services: Alan Gunzburg; Abbott Jones, Chair, Winston Robinson; YWCA Staff: Meredith Gold, Director Domestic Abuse Services, Mary Lee Kiernan, Executive Director, John Stack, CFO; Berrin Snyder, Greenwich Resident; Ken Borsuk, Reporter, *Greenwich Time*

Budget Committee Chair Tarkington called the meeting to order at 9:06 A.M. After introducing members of the Committee and welcoming the audience, the day's Departmental Review Hearings began.

Fire Department

Assistant Chief Kick provided an overview of the Fire Department stating that approximately 106 career firefighters are scheduled to work 2,148 hours per year (42-hours per week) during 24-hour shifts, 365 days per year. The Department responded to 4,093 incidents in 2019 (including 1,988 alarms of which 50% were false alarms, 145 fires, and 537 rescues) through 8 fire stations with the support of approximately 100 volunteer firefighters. Six stations are manned with 3 assigned firefighters and a “floater”. Staffing demographics of recruited, tested, new hires and current career staff were reviewed. Staffing and salary increase was reported to be flat, due to the number of retirees being replaced with new recruits hired at lesser salaries. Concern was expressed by the Department that a change in the defined benefit pension plan could be a negative issue for recruiting. There was discussion about the statutory limit on liability if the firefighters are designated emergency responders.

Operations - In the review of the Operating Budget, the Committee questioned the cost of overtime and learned that 59% was firefighter-floaters related to cover vacations, sick time and injuries, 36% covered lieutenants and 6% covered the Deputy Chief over time. It was indicated that the analysis of hiring a full time firefighter vs utilizing overtime has been reviewed and, while it is almost equal, it has been decided to continue to use overtime to fill staffing needs. The Committee questioned criteria for volunteer firefighters to qualify for health benefits (meeting a performance standard during annual 240 hours of participation collected through tags and iPad check-in) and if Town’s projected 10% health benefit increase was reflected in the budget. The Assistant Chief confirmed volunteers are provided a separate policy. The amount of TOG’s contribution that supports the two totally volunteer fire stations (Round Hill and Banksville) was described as the full amount requested by the individual fire stations. Career firefighters are provided 1,052 hours of training. The scheduling of firefighter training and the ability of volunteer integration into classes was questioned and the Committee discussed whether its intent for building camaraderie was being satisfied if career fire fighters were acting as instructors. The increased cost of waste disposal resulting from CT DEEP environmental regulations for remediation of foam used to quell previous fires and the disposal of the current supply on-hand was noted. The question of whether protective gear replacement belonged in the Capital or Operating budget was considered.

Capital Budget - Capital Budget items discussed included the Close Out of Capital Items; the potential of increasing permitting revenue-income; the criteria for selection of a new vehicle appropriate for backcountry roads; and, computer software and hardware costs were reviewed.

In closing, Assistant Chief Kick commented that the Town’s most recent ISO (Insurance Services Office Inc.) structural fire rating had improved dramatically and the Town should be advised it is 2/2Y in the next month or two lowered from 3/3Y. The impact is anticipated to be that Greenwich residents’ property insurance premiums will be reduced, and the Town Fire Department will join a classification of elite fire departments nationally.

GEMS

Introduction - GEMS Executive Director Schietinger reviewed GEMS work in the community year-to-date including 4,900 calls and 2,400 transports compared to its annual goal of 6,500 calls and 4,300 transports. Calls and activities included 45-50 calls from cardiac arrest patients (with a save rate of 21% which is more than double the national average); medical standby at GHS sports; increased boater response; its Boy Scout Explorer internship program; CPR training at the Greenwich Senior Center; Stop-the-Bleed training and device contribution to GHS; and EMT

training. GEMS fundraising activities that cover the purchase of new capital equipment include the second annual Kids Triathlon and participating in both the national and Fairfield County Community Foundation Giving Days. In FY2019 over \$650,000 was raised.

Operations - GEMS part time Finance Director, Tom Diserendino, commented that GEMS' budget was up only 1% over its previous year, despite its growth rate, due to efficiencies: a new cash management process; reduction of annual office rent by an annual 14%; staffing restructuring; reducing headcount costs and the reduction of the CFO position to 50% part-time. While the overall budget increase for the coming fiscal year is 1%, the bad debt write-offs continue to be 6.3% of revenues, and employee benefits are up 9%.

Capital Budget - GEMS Station 4 is listed among the Town's FY2020-2021 CIP projects for \$1.5 million to self-build a new, permanent northwest location at 1165 King Street. It anticipates preparing its design specifications for a modular dwelling, pursuing its land use permitting and requesting Municipal Improvement (MI) status from the Board of Selectmen to break ground for construction in early Fall. The Committee asked GEMS for a timeline and more detailed information on the project. There was discussion about Town vs GEMS management of the project. There was also discussion about the timing of the project given the ongoing Fire Study.

Purchasing

Operations - Director of Purchasing Michalski noted that the Department budgeted below the BET Guidelines due to efficiencies: salary costs are down due to vacant positions and a reduction of overtime, reduction of advertising frequency of RFPs, and, printing and office services reductions. Additional efficiencies are being explored to reduce the cost of professional services and file storage. The Committee suggested that efficiencies might be achieved through consolidation of physical storage rental costs with other Departments and analysis of digital storage. Ms. Michalski was encouraged to speak with the Finance Department's Chief Accountant Maureen Tracey who is heading up the installation of a Town-wide vendor-management project. It was suggested that the contractual indemnity language of RFPs was restrictive and might benefit from revision to encourage vendor response.

Capital Budget - The Committee questioned whether Single-Source contracting increased TOG purchasing costs and if incentives to departments to share in the savings might stimulate volume-discounting from vendors. It was confirmed that some utility contracts are bid together, though there may be other opportunities. Ms. Michalski discussed the electricity contract being in place until December 2022. Ms. Michalski was encouraged to confirm consistent policies and procedures for all department purchasing areas including DPW Engineering, the Libraries, and Schools.

Health Department

Overview - Director Baisley commented that the Department's budget was 1.84% over the current fiscal year and within BET Budget Guidelines; salaries increased 1.9% due to contractual commitments and that line item was responsible for 84% of its budget.

Operations - Ms. Baisley remarked that the implementation of a higher fee schedule for the Department's client services was scheduled for July 1, 2020 and that the transfer of credit card bank fees on client transactions to the Finance Department would provide relief. Preparations for the costs associated with an anticipated new virus could increase delivery costs. The transition of Departmental records from CityView software to Muncicity was in progress.

Ms. Baisley remarked that although the grant for the Public Health Emergency Coordinator salary will be reduced for the next fiscal year, other grants were being pursued. Patient contact and water-testing were areas of interest to grant funders and could contribute to Health Department income.

Capital Budget - No major capital acquisition plans are being considered. The National Health Accreditation preparation cost is in the Operating Budget and totally offset by CT state underwriting.

Human Services

Overview - Dr. Barry, accompanied by Chairman Jones, commented on the Mission of the Human Services Department as a quality of life effort to provide a safety net for Town residents' emergencies and a means of pursuing self-sufficiency. Its programs range from early intervention special education to substance abuse; from mental health assessments to developing direct resources for assisting clients. The Department updates its demographic client service report monthly.

Operations - Dr. Barry noted that the Department's FY2020-2021 Budget increased 1.8% over the current year with case management representing 2,052 clients and responsible for 46% of Budget, and Home care covering 100 clients and representing 18% of the budget. External Entities (21) served as community partners delivering services to clients in the areas of health, employment, safety and education programs. Amounts contributed to individual programs was discussed. Federal Grants support some programs such as substance abuse through agencies like Greenwich Together, a coalition of various services. Initiatives to support Greenwich's YWCA Domestic Violence programs are supported by public agencies and public philanthropy. The Department supports program initiatives in the areas of birth to 3-years pre-school and Special Education. The Committee discussed the challenge of what programs a municipality is obligated to support for its population. The Committee considered that the Federal poverty level nationally differs from Greenwich's.

Human Resources

Operations - Director Pepe commented that increases in salaries, software rental and maintenance costs were drivers in the Department's budget. Economies and efficiencies of increasing the use of part time and temporary employees, reducing advertising and project implementation postponement were among the tactics used to control its budget. This past year 6,800 employment applications were received for 89 full time, 118 part time and 374 temporary open positions.

Capital Budget - The Department anticipates upgrading the Town's ADP payroll system which will be tested simultaneously with the current ADP payroll program during late summer.

Labor Contracts

The Committee entered Executive Session at 3:07 P.M. to discuss the status of labor contract negotiations.

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to enter Executive Session. Motion carried.

The Committee exited Executive Session at 4:05 P.M

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to exit Executive Session. Motion carried.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 4:09 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, .



Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary



Leslie L. Tarkington, Committee Chair