

**TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
BUDGET COMMITTEE
BOE – OPERATIONAL AND CAPITAL BUDGET REVIEW FY12 BUDGET
MINUTES
Cone Room 2nd Floor – 9:15 A.M.
Thursday, February 10, 2011**


Present:

Committee: Michael S. Mason, Chairman; William Finger, Laurence B. Simon, Leslie L. Tarkington

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Roland Gieger, Budget Director;

BOE: Dr. Sidney Freund, Superintendent; Susan Chipouras, Director, Facilities Building and Construction & Maintenance Supervisor; Regina Williams, Assistant Director of Human Resources; Ben Branyan, Director of Budgets, Mary Forde, Director of Pupil Personnel Services; Kim Eves, Director of Communications; John Curtin, Special Projects Manager, Dr. Robert Lichtenfeld, Director of Business Operations and Dr. Stacey Gross, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Learning

Board: Nancy Barton, Randall Huffman, Art Norton, Joseph Pellegrino, Jeff Ramer

Others: Steve Anderson, Chairman, Board of Education; Leslie Moriarty, Vice-Chairman, Board of Education, Robert Brady, RTM; Genny Krob, RTM, Tylor Tregellas, Turner Construction, Joe Ross, GHS MISA Building Committee, David Greenberg, Acoustical Engineer; *Stephen Warzoha* 

Mr. Mason called the meeting to order at 9:15 A.M. He welcomed everyone to the BET Budget Committee meeting on the Board of Education FY12 Operating and Capital Budget Review.

SPEAKERS

Board of Education officials gave a presentation to the BET Budget Committee with opening remarks from Mr. Steven Anderson. Dr. Sidney Freund and other education officials answered a series of questions from the BET Budget Committee and other BET members in attendance. The substance of the questions and the responses are as follows:

- Ms. Moriarty opened up the discussions with the Greenwich High School MISA capital project. Two handouts were initially distributed to all in attendance. Ms. Moriarty went through the distributed materials and answered a series of questions on the project. Assisting Ms. Moriarty in her explanations were Mr. Tregellas, Turner Construction, Mr. Ross, Chairman of the GHS MISA Building Committee and the acoustical engineer, Mr. Greenberg. The cost of the two combined projects is \$28.8 million including only \$75,000 in building fees. The project is also eligible for State School reimbursement in the range of \$2.5 million to \$4.5 million.
- Subsequent to discussions on the GHS MISA project, Mr. Anderson, Ms. Chipouras and Dr. Freund proceeded in discussing all of the remaining capital projects requested for FY12. They answered all questions from the Committee and BET members in attendance. In particular, the committee discussed the flooding at Riverside School and the subsequent damage to the foundation. The committee questioned whether this was a Town or School project. Other topics discussed included:
 - Preventive Maintenance module is being put up on School Dude and then will be utilized in the upcoming year.

- More maintenance work is being delegated to head custodians and therefore reducing overall costs.
- Still awaiting demonstration of wireless technology in the schools. Not certain how it fits into the curriculum but it is clear how this technology fits into the current school environment.
- The committee questioned the need for Air Conditioning at Cos Cob gym. The rationale being that this is where summer school is provided.
- The committee would like to see a site drawing for the proposed North Street School parking lot and vehicular circulation reconfiguration

The meeting adjourned for a lunch break at 12:28 P.M. and reconvened at 1:05 P.M.

- A listing of "Unfunded Mandates" was distributed to the Committee. Most of the discussion centered on the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) grant. Dr. Freund informed the Committee that the Greenwich school district had a major responsibility for special education students, including all students attending either a public or private school in the town, whether they are residents of the town or not.
- A report entitled "1970-2010 Historical Budget Analysis" was distributed. Mr. Anderson and Dr. Freund made repeated references to the report and answered questions presented by the Committee members. The report was basically a presentation how State of Connecticut mandates have impacted costs on the Town of Greenwich school district over time.
- Dr. Freund gave the Committee an update on transportation costs for public and private schools in Greenwich. Dr. Freund pointed out that providing transportation for private school children on a comparable basis to public school students is mandated by the State of Connecticut.
- Dr. Freund discussed the summer school programs, the costs associated with them and the fact that they are mandated by the State in many cases. Dr. Freund distributed a document summarizing school assessments (dated 2010) and stressed the connection of favorable results to summer schooling.
- Dr. Freund talked about the increase in certified staffing at 11.25 full-time equivalents. He stated that a majority of the increase was attributed to FY 11 enrollment increases while maintaining desired class sizes. Mr. Simon asked Dr. Freund about the actual to budget variance from FY11 to FY12. Dr. Freund offered his version of the variance. At that point, Mr. Simon requested Budget Director Roland Gieger, to prepare a cash to cash reconciliation of salaries from FY11 to FY12.
- Mr. Simon asked Dr. Freund about the possibility of losing any grant funds from the State of Connecticut. Dr. Freund responded that he thought the area of most vulnerability is with the Special Education Excess Cost Reimbursement monies.
- Mr. Mason asked Dr. Freund about what steps were being taken to avoid a repeat of costly mistakes in the BOE Human Resources Administration. Dr. Freund responded that they are taking all the necessary steps in the area of workers' compensation with added policy and procedures.
- Dr. Freund was asked about the staffing of administrative positions relative to other school districts. Dr. Freund's opening response was that the Town had 15 schools to administer, which is more than the other school districts. In addition, the presence of the current number of administrators takes pressure off of teachers and allows them to teach more effectively. Dr. Freund discussed the role of Assistant Principals at the various elementary and middle schools.
- The Budget Committee asked Dr. Freund about student performance targets. Dr. Freund distributed a document detailing the districts "Mission and Its Vision of the Graduate". Attached to the document were the student outcome indicators and targets by grade. Dr. Freund gave an explanation of what factors drive student performance. Among those factors were; summer school, class size, adequate facilities and teacher evaluations, to name a few. Mr. Simon asked Dr. Freund what would make him happy regarding reaching these targets. Dr. Freund responded that exceeding the listed targets within the three-year target period would make him happy.
- Mr. Anderson addressed the steps the school district was taking in light of the fiscal environment. Mr. Anderson informed the Committee that the BOE is very proactive in managing school labor contracts as they expired. He commented that the GEA contract was the last one negotiated prior

to the collapse of Lehman Brothers and the next contract will be negotiated with more realistic increases.

- Dr. Freund predicted that the School Lunch Fund would end the year in the black with an approximately \$7,400 operating fund surplus. Mr. Mason added that the Budget Committee would revisit subsidizing this fund on Decision Day.
- Dr. Freund was asked about closing the achievement gap. Dr. Freund discussed the concerns and issues related to closing the gap, and stated that the challenge is getting there and the difficulty in predicting the results.
- Dr. Freund was asked about the Advanced Learning Program (ALP) program. Dr. Freund responded that they are studying this program and will provide an update this fall.
- Dr. Freund was asked about Professional Learning, Professional Services and Technology. Dr. Freund distributed materials and discussed each relative to the materials handed out. Regarding consultants, Dr. Freund detailed misconceptions about the different consultants utilized by the school district and the inclusion in the budget line of many costs not typically considered to be consultants; e.g. athletic coaches, student teachers who provide substitute teaching services, accompanist for school concerts, school performances by the Greenwich Symphony, etc. Regarding professional learning, Dr. Freund offered that teacher certifications and training are mandated by the State.
- Dr. Freund concluded his day-long presentation by discussing the International Baccalaureate program by updating the Committee on where it's been and where it is headed in this area. Dr. Freund made the following observations in order to clarify the controversy on the IB program:
 - The Town has been running the IB program for more than ten years at International School at Dundee and is in the 3rd year at New Lebanon School.
 - In FY11, the town spent \$135,000 training teachers in the IB program.
 - In FY12, there is \$100,000 budgeted to train additional teachers in the summer of 2011 in the IB program.
 - The IB program provides a framework for delivering curriculum. The IB program for Grades 11-12 is a diploma program but the school district has not committed itself to that course of action.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,


Peter Mynarski, Recording Secretary


Michael S. Mason, Chairman