TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
BUDGET COMMITTEE

DAY FOUR - DEPARTMENT REVIEWS FOR FY16 BUDGET
MINUTES

Town Hall Meeting Room – 9:00 A.M.
Wednesday, February 11, 2015

Present:

Committee: Marc V. Johnson, Chairman; Mary Lee A. Kiernan, Jeffrey S. Ramer, Leslie L. Tarkington

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Roland Gieger, Budget Director; Maureen Tracy, Financial Analyst; John Crary, Town Administrator; Melissa Jones, Senior Business Analysis; Tom Klein, Director Information Technology; Francis St. Jean, Technical Support Manager; Mary Pepe, Human Resource Director; Allison Graham, Employee Benefits Manager; Al Cava, Director of Labor Relations; Alan Barry, Commissioner Social Services; Ben Branyan, BOE Managing Director of Operations; John Wayne Fox, Town Attorney; Katie DeLuca, Planning & Zoning Director; Al Monelli, Superintendent Building & Construction; Lauren Elliot, Town Assessor

Board: William Drake, William Finger, Sean Goldrick, Michael Mason, Art Norton, Nancy Weissler

Selectmen: John Toner, Selectman; Drew Marzullo, Selectman

Others: Charlee Tufts, Greenwich Emergency Management Services; John Strong, GEMS Chief Financial Officer; James Boutelle, Executive Director, TAG; Bill Ference, Director of Finance, Bruce Museum; Sherri Shapiro, Executive Director, Kids in Crisis; Bob Brady, Member MISA Building Committee.

Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:06 A.M.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY - Mr. Klein began his comments with a review of the BerryDunn IT departmental study accomplished before his arrival; he noted that it focused on expectations versus core competencies. He has spent much of the first part of the fiscal year considering how to move the department from primarily installation and system support to also include business analysis, workflow management and solution-based assistance.

Operating Budget – Mr. Klein noted that his operating budget was flat except for the addition of two positions: Technical Support and Technology Solutions Specialist. His project priorities were upgrading email and document management and business analysis of workflow that would connect related departments to increase capacity and efficiencies; he gave examples of working with the land use departments and the Assessor’s Office. He shared that the CGS email system
used by the BET and RTM has no user support. It is his intent to move to Office 365 for email and document sharing starting with the Boards and Commissions. The Technical Support position will also help with the VOIP launch and support. Ms. Kiernan asked who was responsible for the launch of new Town-wide IT systems, and Mr. Klein thought a steering committee was the best structure to lead the launch of such a system, due to the federated nature of our Town government.

Because the departmental budget showed a 13.1% increase, the Committee asked Mr. Klein to prioritize the additions to staffing and consider phasing in the second new hire later in the fiscal year.

Capital Budget – The Committee asked Mr. Klein to comment on the projects identified in the capital budget: updating email/document sharing software; application upgrades; cyber security fortification; website upgrading; and document management optimization. Concern was expressed that all the projects could get done in a single fiscal year so Mr. Klein was asked to consider reducing his requests, phasing some projects over multiple years and delaying some projects into FY17.

HUMAN RESOURCES – Ms. Pepe commented that her department was on budget for FY15 in all expenses, including consulting fee expenditures. Ms. Pepe reviewed the status of the ADP system and stated that the payroll function was working well despite some minor human error and code issues. Ms. Pepe also described the ongoing issues with vendor files and the interface with the general ledger, and explained that the Town was still withholding a large payment to ADP. Ms. Pepe suggested that the Town should consider an enterprise level HRIS consultant to assist with outstanding ADP issues. The Committee asked about the ADP annual processing fee and why it was projected to increase in FY16. The Department will be transitioning one position out of payroll systems administration and into HRIS supervision.

LABOR RELATIONS - Mr. Johnson asked Mr. Cava to advise the Committee on what negotiations would be coming up during FY16 and FY17. Mr. Cava related that the first contracts that would be expiring were for Firefighters, School Nurses and GOSA (school administrators). He noted that GMEA, Teamster and Teachers' contracts were scheduled for FY17. He pointed out that a sensitive point in the upcoming negotiations would be how the Cadillac tax on employee healthcare would be handled.

SOCIAL SERVICES. – Alan Barry, Commissioner of Social Services reviewed the department’s mission statement -- to enhance quality of life for residents by linking them to resources for self-sufficiency. The Department’s focus is on education and employment for its client base. He reviewed the department’s FY16 budget and how it increased by 1.9% over previous year. Mr. Johnson asked about a 7.1% increase in Temporary salaries which Mr. Barry explained resulted from PT/Temporary replacements for the 2 full time positions that had been eliminated.

Capital Budget – Mr. Barry requested a new client tracking software to better monitor delivery and identify needs for program development. Mr. Crary commented that the software would work better with IT support.

The Committee asked how professional services such as client transportation and escorted client service outsourced to external entities such as TAG were tracked. Ms. Kiernan asked how the Youth Services Coordinator position supported Social Services efforts, in which department the position should be located and how youth services might benefit from staff support and program money. The Committee also asked about the Teen Talk program, and Mr. Barry
explained that clients perceived a higher level of confidentiality when the Teen Talk staff were located outside BOE because student records would not be affected. Ms. Tarkington requested a chart of agencies receiving money from Social Services and what programs were being supported. Mr. Ramer asked for Mr. Barry's opinion on extending Teen Talk to a third middle school. Ms. Kiernan asked how teen mental health needs were assessed, to which Mr. Barry replied that the United Way Needs Assessment showed increased service demand in this area that is still unmet.

NEW LEBANON SCHOOL A&E – Ms. DeLuca, Mr. Brady, Mr. Branyan and Mr. Fox were invited by Mr. Johnson to participate in a discussion that would help clarify the various steps in Town and land use approvals related to this expenditure, including preliminary site plan approval, soil and wetlands testing; geo technical testing; steps necessary for MI review; determining scope of A&E services needed; and overall cost estimates for this preliminary phase of planning for a new building at New Lebanon School. There were discussions about at what point a Building Committee should be formed to oversee the process. The Committee determined that it would make sense for this ad hoc committee, under the leadership of Mr. Fox, to reconvene during the next week to present its recommendations. Ms. Kiernan asked Mr. Branyan about the nature of the environmental testing done at the site, and Mr. Branyan replied that Phase 1 environmental testing was done for all three schemes (A, B and C) and that partial Phase 2 environmental testing was planned for all three schemes. Ms. Kiernan asked Mr. Branyan and Mr. Monelli the cost of completing Phase 2 environmental testing, and Mr. Branyan estimated $25,000. Mr. Ramer and Ms. Tarkington stressed the urgency of meeting so that the flow of funding could be discussed and BET conditioning of funds could be considered.

EXTERNAL ENTITIES

Greenwich Emergency Medical Service, Inc. (GEMS) – The GEMS budget request was presented by Charlee Tufts, GEMS Executive Director, and John Strong, GEMS Fiscal Officer. Mr. Strong stated that FY16's budget request reflected a 2.55% increase, whereas FY16 non-Town revenues were projected to increase 1.76%, non-capital fixed charges at 3.49% and ordinary expenses were projected to increase by only 1.88%. He indicated that lower fixed charges than other town services and outside billable revenue made this possible.

Operating Budget – Mr. Strong noted that attorney costs to resolve significant personnel matters and extra compensation to Operation Management for overtime were responsible for the bottom line request of 2.55% overall budget increase. Mr. Strong and Ms. Tufts then proceeded to discuss Revenue topics such as: call volume, billing rates, Medicare rates and collection rates. Ms. Tufts commented that the GEMS vehicles located at four stations throughout Greenwich 24/7 had improved emergency response time, particularly in the northwest area of Town.

Ms. Kiernan asked if savings would accrue from purchasing benefits through the EMS Chiefs Association to which Mr. Strong replied that not enough members statewide were in favor of that type of aggregate purchasing. Mr. Johnson asked if staff turnover was a problem to which Mr. Strong replied that employees looking for higher pay or better pensions did move on.

Transportation Association of Greenwich – TAG – Mr. Boutelle began his presentation with comments about increased ridership in programs such as Dial-a-Ride and the Youth Council Safe Ride, YMCA after school transportation and bus leasing.
Operating Budget – A recent audit of Workers’ Compensation changed the characterization of TAG from a social service to a taxi/limo service which increased workers compensation by $18-$20k. A small surplus was achieved during FY15 which would be used to retire debt. Mr. Boutelle noted that most capital expenditures were met by outside sources due to Federal reimbursement of 80% of the cost of vans and a private donor’s contribution.

Despite the fluctuation of revenue from town departments such as the Senior Center, GADC and Nathaniel Witherell, TAG was able to meet its expenses.

Bruce Museum – Mr. Bill Ference, the Bruce Museum’s new Director of Finance, introduced the Committee to the Museum’s capabilities. He noted overall admissions were 80k per year due to mounting 12-16 annual exhibits, the local school program and the Bruce’s mobile exhibit vehicle. Hours were expanded on Saturdays and Sundays, and Tuesday attendance had increased since admission was free of charge. He noted that lectures were simulcast on YouTube further expanding the audience.

He commented that the Museum’s land and building belong to TOG, as well as art donated to the Museum with an insured valued of more than $80 million. The collection has received accreditation by the American Association of Museums making it among the top 5% of American museums. The in-kind services provided by TOG of insurance, plowing and landscaping, and sewer district taxes, plus non-unionized employees helped to contain costs. While the Museum considers a capital campaign, this year an $822,000 request was being made to defray its $5.1 million operating budget to improve the building and grounds, educational programs, and registrar activity required to install new exhibits.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT: Fixed Charges and Revenue Presentations

Mr. Mynarski explained the overall 4.9% increase in Fixed Charges, which includes the annual required pension contribution to the Defined Benefit program, Sick & Vacation payouts, Healthcare and OPEB contributions.

Mr. Mynarski commented that healthcare premiums for FY15 had risen 14.7% and were budgeted to increase by 18% for the second six (6) months of 2016. He explained the differences for the annual required contribution (ARC) for OPEB funding of 7% and 7.25% rate of return assumptions. The Committee also discussed funds required for funding the ARC at 100%, 70% and 60%.

Mr. Goldrick asked Mr. Mynarski to investigate if other CT towns funded their OPEB at just the normal cost or at 70% of ARC. Mr. Mason commented that the predictability of establishing an OPEB policy would enhance Greenwich’s credit rating.

In discussing revenues, Mr. Mynarski noted that in the First Selectman’s budget, the mill rate had increased 2.85%. Ms. Elliott commented that among the Tax cases to be settled, 36 cases are pending on the 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013 grand lists. Ms. Elliot explained that settling these particular tax cases could have a negative net effect on the town’s revenues projections depending on the size of the incentive offers that might be required. Mr. Mynarski continued that revenue from tax collections could be increased in the FY16 budget. He also suggested that the anticipated year-end fund balance could be increased if many of the departments operations finished the year under budget, among other variables that affect year-end fund balance.
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Members of the Committee asked a variety of additional revenue questions for a number of departments including Parking, Wetlands and Libraries.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary

Marc V. Johnson, Chairman