



**TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION BUDGET COMMITTEE
DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW FY2021-2022 DAY #5 MINUTES
Hybrid Virtual & Town Hall Meeting Room – 9:00 A.M.
Tuesday, February 16, 2021**

Present:

- Committee: Leslie L. Tarkington, Chair; Andy Duus, Leslie Moriarty, Jeffrey S. Ramer
- Staff:: Matt Brooks, Firefighter; Daniel Carlsen, Senior Business Analyst, Office of the First Selectman (OFS); Jay Domesek, Director, Fleet Department; Richard Feminella, Manager, Waste Water Division, Dept of Public Works (DPW); Angela Gencarelli, Ass't Budget & Systems Manager, Finance Dept; Roland Gieger, Budget & Systems Director; Barbara Heins, Executive Assistant, OFS; Laurette Helmrich, Administrator, Senior Center; Brian Koczak, Ass't Chief, Fire Services; Peter Kurpeawski, Acting Highway Superintendent, DPW; Jenny Larkin, IT Dept; Thomas Lenart, Deputy Chief Training, Fire Services; James Michel, Deputy Commissioner, DPW; William McCormick, Manager, Business Services, DPW; Joseph McHugh, Chief, Fire Services; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Amy Seibert, Commissioner, DPW; Demetria Nelson, Commissioner, Human Services Dept; Maureen Tracey, Chief Accountant, Finance Dept;
- Board: Michael Mason, BET Chairman; William Drake, Laura Erickson, Karen Fassuliotis, Miriam Kreuzer, Elizabeth K. Krumeich, David Weisbrod
- Selectmen: Jill Oberlander, Select-person
- RTM: Phil Dodson, (D), Town Services; Lucia Jansen, (D-7), Chair, Budget Overview Committee (BOC); Richard Neuman, (D-11); Danyal Ozizmir, (D-5) BOC, Vice Chair and LCC, Chair; Charles Parkhurst, (D-5); Lucy von Brachel, (D-4)
- Other: Patricia Burns, Chair, Commission on Aging; Ken Borsuk, Reporter, *The Greenwich Time*; Lori Contadino, Director, Commission on Aging; Sebastian Dostmann, Chief, Cos Cob Police & Fire Rescue; Tatiana Flowers, Reporter, *The Greenwich Time*; Steve Katz, Vice Chair, CMSN on Aging; Horst Tebbe, WGCH-TV; David Walko, Chief, Byram Volunteer Fire Dept, and President of the Chief's Association

Budget Committee Chair Tarkington called the Meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. and welcomed the attendees to the fifth in a series of eleven BET Budget Committee public meetings. Ms. Tarkington introduced members of the BET Budget Committee -- Andy Duus, Leslie Moriarty, and Jeff Ramer. The Committee is also supported by the Finance Department -- Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Angela Gencarelli, Assistant Budget & Systems Manager; Roland Gieger, Budget & Systems Director, and Shira Davis, Executive Assistant.

The BET Budget Committee Departmental Review Hearings are operating under the Governor's COVID-19 Executive Orders and will be conducted by hybrid Zoom. This meeting is being recorded by Zoom and an audio recording will be posted on the Town website. Meetings are being live broadcast by GCTV on channels 79 and 24 and YouTube. Technical expertise is being provided by Jenny Larkin and Horst Tebbe. A schedule of the Budget Committee's Departmental Review Hearings is available on the Town website's calendar.

Fire Services

Introduction – Chief McHugh introduced the Department as 197 staff, of which 90 were volunteers. The FY2022 Budget is indicating a 2.1% increase over previous year, with an overall cost increase of 7.4% and salary increase of 4.3% citing overtime, holidays staffing costs, increases in cost of water, software rental, cleaning services, and healthcare. He indicated the FY22 budget adds a second Assistant Chief and eliminates the Volunteer Recruiting and Retention position; however, Chief McHugh requested the BET modify the budget to retain the Volunteer Recruiting and Retention position. He indicated 8 members of the Department retired during the current fiscal year, which was more than expected and resulted in increased training and overtime costs in the current year. He added that the FY21 overtime increase of \$245,000, which the Fire Department would be requesting at the March monthly Budget Committee meeting is related to COVID-19 quarantine, position vacancies, and health and accident issues. He said that 80-85% of the Fire Department was in the process of getting both COVID-19 vaccinations. The Chief was congratulated on the Department achieving the national ISO rating of 2/2Y and since it would be a benefit to residents' insurance rates, it was suggested that it be publicized in the next property tax bill mailing.

Operations – Chief McHugh noted that the department's FY22 Budget was within BET Guidelines, use of online services was increasingly popular, and Zoom meetings increased efficiency. Volunteer costs are decreasing by 16% in FY2021. The Chief commented that increasing revenue through the price penalty cost of false alarms was being discussed. The Committee asked about status of COVID reimbursements for appropriate expenses incurred. The Chief identified the steps to develop an action plan for the Strategic Plan and Matrix Study recommendations.

Capital Budget – The Round Hill Fire Station Open Capital item of \$1 million renovation was discussed and Mr. Chass, Chief of the Round Hill Volunteer Fire Company, commented on the status of the renovation and on how an addition could be added to the current renovation plan to accommodate career firefighters. Questions were asked to Chief McHugh about estimated costs for implementing Matrix Plan recommendations. Capital Budget requests included: PPE Equipment cyclical replacements, a new vehicle extrication apparatus, a reserve pumper, and two upfitted SUVs. He discussed the recommendation to add funding for volunteer emergency equipment for \$24,600.

Senior Center/Commission on Aging

Introduction – The Chair of the Commission on Aging, Patricia Burns, commented that it was implementing a 5-year strategic plan in years 2020-2024 with priorities to improve Greenwich senior quality of life. It is currently reinventing how services are offered in conjunction with the AARP Age-Friendly Town model.

Operations – Operations' costs increased 1.4% in the FY2022 Budget of which 84% is spent on salaries. An error occurred when entering the cost of living (COLA) benefit so salaries are being recalculated and the budget's bottom line will be changed. Cost increases in the following categories were noted: professional services, food service, class instructor salaries and transportation. Savings from furloughed kitchen staff salaries offset some increased costs. Revenue increased from membership enrollments fees from 100 new applicants, and subsidies from program offerings such as of share-the-fare, health insurance counseling, referrals and outreach, classes on Zoom, drive through sales of 200 meals per day, and grants. More than 3,300 households were served with grocery support partners of At Home Greenwich, Community Centers, Jewish Family Services, Neighbor to Neighbor, Meals on Wheels, and the Department of Human Services. Sixty-five percent of individuals age 75 and older have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. It was noted that \$1.1 million is currently budgeted for the Senior Tax & Disability Relief Programs, however, more applications may be received due to the increased cap on the value of homes. In response to a question, the Commission would like to request additional part-time clerical help at the appropriate time.

Capital Budget – Ms. Contadino remarked the open and encumbered funds of \$1.2 million were with DPW- Building & Construction Maintenance for ongoing renovations. Friends of the Senior Center fundraising goal is \$1.4 million of which \$760,000 has been received and is anticipated to grow with the option of "naming opportunities".

Fleet Department

Operations – Mr. Domesek identified two significant changes that enabled the decrease in the Department's FY2022 Budget: renegotiating the cost of motor fuel and lubricants because oil prices were low, and reduction of staff due to a retirement. The second shift, an evening shift, was eliminated upon the retirement of the Shift Supervisor that also created an opportunity to reduce full-time staff by the shift's mechanic. No negative impact has been observed so the change is to be permanent.

Capital Budget – Open Capital includes the upfit of two 2019 Police vehicles, nine 2020 Police SUVs and four 2021 SUVs--- a new bid for upfitting is being sought, a total of 22 cars need replacement due to mileage/wear. The DPW has ordered a van and new dump truck and 3 current dump trucks are to be upfitted to propane use. DPW new capital requests of \$600,000 include heavy equipment for excavating, a Transfer Station loader and a paving rover. BOE, Parks & Recreation and Fire Department are also requesting replacement equipment. The Committee requested an inventory of Town vehicles and CIP sheets describing the cost of new replacements for the DPW loader and the Fire Department rescue pumper. The revenue from the sale of spare parts and auction income from disposed vehicles was discussed.

Dept of Public Works – Waste Removal

Operations – Commissioner Seibert updated the Committee on changes to waste disposal and recycling, revenue from tipping fees and residential permits and estimated loss of hauler tonnage due to the imposition of tipping fees and their taking their refuge elsewhere likely with lower or similar tipping fees. She commented that tipping fees for commercial haulers had been calculated at \$112 per ton, while the permit program was off the ground and that 7,000 permits at \$25 each had been sold. If numbers hold, 36,500 tons of municipal solid waste will have been generated for the current FY21, up from 35,286 tons last year, but 9,600 tons will be disposed of elsewhere. The cost for hauling and disposal is \$93.66 per ton. Similarly for single stream recycling is estimated at 15,600 tons this year compared with last year at 14,000 tons. FY22 Budget includes an estimate of \$85 per ton cost for the recyclables; however, this rate may be able to negotiate to \$65 per ton, the current rate. The Committee asked about the impact of singled stream recycling versus multi-stream program. The difficulties with the multi-stream process were identified, including the impact on the 25 licensed haulers, and the increased burden on residents and Holly Hill. Expanding the composting initiative to residential pickup and the process of personal vehicle drop-offs is also being evaluated. The Committee asked for benchmarking of peer towns' tipping fees, disposal costs and landfill options in an effort to offset cost with higher revenue.

Capital Budget – The Commissioner commented that the Budget requests funds for planning for adjustments to be made to the Department's Master Plan and sewer-line redesign improvements within Holly Hill.

Department of Public Works – Highway & Engineering

Operations – Mr. Kurpeawski, Acting Highway Superintendent, provided an overview of the Department's FY2022 budget reduction of \$500,000 from previous year due to lower snow overtime, paint striping, materials, collaboration with the Parking Fund and paving's spring review of road conditions. The Committee asked if there was an opportunity to shift some function from off-hours to during the day to reduce overtime expense.

Capital Budget – Open Capital items include the causeway wall at South Stanwich Road, Greenwich Avenue Streetscape, ADA bump-out landscaping on Elm Street and shoulder and storm drain improvements. Capital requests include a stormwater compliance inspection consultant; new signage; asphalt paving for bicycle path shoulders; highway curbing; Glenville Road project design costs; and, *Reimagining Greenwich Avenue* decorative barriers. The Committee asked about the costs of granite curbing. The Department responded that granite curbing has a longer life cycle due to benefits from the use of salt, snow plowing. The Committee discussed the process and pros and cons of the Brookside Drive intersection project.

Sewer and Wastewater Management

Operations - Mr. Feminella commented that Sewer Fund Maintenance would be installing nitrogen removal valves through an incentive credit.

Capital Budget – Open and encumbered capital of \$2 million is available for Sewer Maintenance projects that could begin immediately on Old Greenwich and Cos Cob pump stations that are at risk. Old Greenwich's force main project has \$7 million encumbered. All the above-mentioned projects are multi-year and complex. A capital request to install electrical system improvements at four additional pump stations is planned without-year place holders in the third and fourth years to upgrade the larger pump stations. No projects were planned for the Sewer Improvement Fund.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 4:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Sidor

Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary

Leslie L. Tarkington

Leslie L. Tarkington, Committee Chair