



MINUTES of the regular meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation held on Tuesday, February 21, 2017 in the Cone Room, Greenwich, CT.

Chairman Michael Mason called the meeting to order at 6:40 P.M., after which the members pledged allegiance to the flag.

Board members in attendance:

Michael S. Mason, Chairman
Arthur Norton, Vice Chairman
William Drake, Clerk
John Blankley
Elizabeth K. Krumeich
James A. Lash
Leslie Moriarty
Jill K. Oberlander
Jeffrey S. Ramer
Leslie L. Tarkington
Anthony Turner
Nancy Weissler

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Roland Gieger, Budget Director; Lauren Elliot, Assessor; Abby Wadler, Assistant Town Attorney; Tod Laudonia, Tax Collector

BOE: James Hricay, BOE Managing Director of Operations

Mr. Mason welcomed BET members and attendees and thanked BET members for their attendance earlier in the day at the Budget Hearings. He then called on Mr. Drake to move the Routine Applications.

ROUTINE APPLICATIONS

<u>Number</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
HD-3 \$15,456	Health F496	Approval to Use HERR Funds Grant
ED-6 \$70,000	BOE S 670 53400	Additional Appropriation School Lunch Fund
PR-1 \$4,900	P&R Z812 59830 17176	Additional Appropriation Skate Park Upgrade

PR-2	P&R	Additional Appropriation
\$4,900	M824 59560 17213	Rest/Clubhouse Partial Roof Replacement
PD-5	Police	Approval to Use
\$155,326	F21318 54300M824 59560 17213	2016, 2017, 2018 FEMA DHS Port Security Grant & 25% In-Kind Match

Upon a motion by Mr. Drake, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Board voted 12-0 to approve all the Routine Applications presented.

NON-ROUTINE APPLICATIONS

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Mr. Lash, the Board voted 12-0 to vote on both Non-Routine Applications together.

SE-13	First Selectman	Additional Appropriation
\$36,241.66	P935 57350	McGuire & Schiappa vs. TOG

Ms. Tarkington commented that the Law Committee approved the Gregory McGuire and Stephen Schiappa v. Town of Greenwich and Edward Fesko (Personal Injury) settlement 2-0 and recommended approval of it by the BET. The Budget Committee voted 3-0-1 (Abstain: Ramer) to approve the settlement.

SE-14	First Selectman	Additional Appropriation
\$9,479.36	P935 57350	Travelers Insurance & Schiappa vs. TOG

Ms. Tarkington commented that the Law Committee approved the settlement of Travelers Home and Marine Insurance Company a/s/o Stephan Schiappa v. Town of Greenwich and Edward Fesko (Property Damage) 2-0 and recommended approval of it by the BET. The Budget Committee voted 4-0 to approve the settlement.

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Lash, the Board voted 10-2-0 to approve the two appropriations above. (Opposed: Mason, Ramer)

ASSESSOR'S REPORT

Ms. Elliot provided highlights of recent department activity including: the 2016 Grand List being signed showing a total assessment valuation of \$32,678,441,384, an increase of \$359,893,277 before any adjustments that the Board of Assessment Appeals might make during their upcoming hearings and deliberations. To date 176 residential and 35 commercial appeals have been filed. As the second BAA Appeal after appeals to the 2015 Grand List, the appeals are fewer than the number filed in the second BAA Appeal after the 2010 Grand List (where values overall declined).

Ms. Elliot presented a listing of properties owned by Greenwich Hospital and its subsidiaries. She pointed out that combined these showed an assessed value of \$339,200,050 which might be taxable under Governor Malloy's proposed change in tax law.

In speaking about the Sketch Verification Project underway to ascertain if housing as-built conformed to Assessment records, 2,955 parcels were found to have errors and variations which would be inspected for verification of accuracy of assessment valuation.

Ms. Elliott commented on the Senior Citizens' Tax Relief Program and the percentages of applications seeking a credit versus a deferral of taxes. The Board asked Ms. Elliot if the text on the Senior Tax Relief Form could be clarified so that the choice between tax deferral and tax credit was more obvious which might increase the number of deferral applications.

Mr. Norton asked about litigations and the number of cases that had either been settled or resolved, to which Ms. Elliot replied that one case had been continued due to snow days and 11 were in the process of pre-trial preparation.

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Board voted 12-0-0 to accept the Assessor's Report.

COMPTROLLER'S REPORT

Mr. Mason commented on his experience as part of the Audit Committee pointing out the outstanding service provided by the Risk Manager who recently retired but is temporarily working part time while his replacement is being sought. Mr. Mason expressed his appreciation for the successful negotiations, amounts of recovery and expertise which Mr. Lalli brought to his work.

Upon a motion by Mr. Norton, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Board voted 12-0-0 to accept the Comptroller's Report

Acceptance of the Treasurer's Report Showing Investment Portfolio Activity for January 2016

Upon a motion by Mr. Mason, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Board voted 12-0-0 to accept the Treasurer's Report.

BET Standing Committee Reports

None

BET Liaison Reports

None

BET Special Project Team Reports

None

New Business

● **Vote to Re-appoint RSM US, LLP as Town of Greenwich External Auditors** – Mr. Norton, as the Chair of the Audit Committee, commented that in light of the substantial size of Greenwich debt and the Town's ratio of debt to annual expenditures, two accounting firms had been interviewed as potential independent external Auditors for Greenwich. He stressed that RSM US LLP, formerly McGladrey and Pullen, was reappointed because their services brought continuity

to Greenwich's audit process, that it is the 5th largest independent public accounting firm in the United States, and the rating agencies and investment community had confidence in their expertise.

Ms. Weissler asked if RSM US, LLP's fees were comparable to the other firm interviewed, to which Mr. Norton responded in the affirmative. Mr. Mynarski remarked that over the contract period there were "step ups" in fees but that the firm was occasionally called upon to do additional work. Mr. Ramer asked that in the future a rotation of audit firms be considered; Mr. Norton responded that RMS US LLP would be providing a rotation of partners during the contact period.

Mr. Norton offered the following resolution:

Appointment of RSM US LLP, formerly McGladrey and Pullen, as Independent Accountants for the Town of Greenwich Financial statements for fiscal years ending June 30, 2017 and June 30, 2018

"RESOLVED, that the Board of Estimate and Taxation in accordance with provisions of the Connecticut General Statutes and upon advice of its Audit Committee, hereby appoints RSM US LLP as the independent public accountants to conduct the annual audits of the Town of Greenwich for the next two (2) fiscal years, beginning July 1, 2017 and July 1, 2018, with the option of additional three (3) one-year terms, given approval of both parties. The Audit Committee had voted 4-0 to approve the contract". The Board voted 12-0-0 to appoint RSM US LLP as the independent public accountants.

● **M & C Salary Increases for Fiscal 2017-2018** – Ms. Weissler submitted a memo summarizing the HR Committee consideration of the M&C Compensation Pool, and reported that the HR Committee had voted 2-2 on a motion for a 2% increase in the M&C compensation pool for fiscal 2018. Motion failed. (Opposed: Krumeich, Oberlander). The HR Committee then voted on a motion for a 2.5% increase in the M&C compensation pool for fiscal 2018. Vote on the motion was 2-2. Motion failed. (Opposed: Drake, Weissler)

Ms. Weissler noted that the Town's M&C employees continue to be paid at a significant premium to their municipal peers and that the HR Director had indicated that M&C salaries are competitive to attract and retain employees. Ms. Oberlander commented that on average, union employees received a 2.7% salary increase in FY17, the increase in the Consumer Price Index for this area for the 12 months ending in November was 1.6%, and the 2.5% pool would allow for performance compensation. Mr. Lash noted that recent increases had been higher than the rate of inflation, the Office of the First Selectman had stayed within BET guideline by reducing headcount and that this was a message during labor negotiations that the Town was determined to control costs, in the interest of residents. He added that higher personnel costs can lead to the employment of fewer M&C salaried positions.

Ms. Weissler made a motion for a 2.0% increase in the compensation pool for M&C employees, seconded by Mr. Drake.

Upon a motion by Ms. Oberlander to amend Ms. Weissler's motion, to establish a 2.5% increase in the compensation pool for M&C employees, seconded by Ms. Krumeich, the Board voted 6-6-0. Motion failed. (Opposed: Mason, Drake, Lash, Norton, Tarkington, Weissler)

Upon the original motion by Ms. Weissler to establish a 2% increase in the

compensation pool for M&C employees, seconded by Mr. Drake, the Board voted 12-0-0 in favor.

- Elected Officials' Salary Increase for the 2018-2019 Elected Term

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Mr. Lash, the Board voted 12-0-0 to postpone action on this item until after the HR Committee Meeting of March 9, 2017.

Old Business

None

Approval of the BET Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the Minutes of the Special BET Meeting of January 10, 2017.

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Board voted 11-0-1 to approve the Minutes of the Regular BET Meeting of January 18, 2017 (Norton abstaining).

Chairman's Report

Mr. Mason complimented the Budget Committee on its work at the Departmental Hearings and fellow BET members for their presence and participation. He asked all BET members to review their calendars and coordinate with the RTM calendar for visits to discuss the Budget at its Committee and District meetings.

Adjournment

Upon a motion by Mr. Turner, seconded by Ms. Krumeich, the Board voted 12-0-0 to adjourn at 7:23 P.M.

The next Regular Meeting of the BET is scheduled on Monday, March 20, 2017 at 6:30 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room.

Respectfully submitted,


Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary


William Drake, Clerk of the Board



Michael S. Mason, Chairman