MINUTES of the Joint meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation and Board of Education held on Tuesday, February 26, 2019 in the Town Hall Meeting Room, Greenwich, CT.

Jill Oberlander, BET Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:17 P.M., after which the members pledged allegiance to the flag.

BET members in attendance:

Jill K. Oberlander, Chair
Jeffrey S. Ramer, Vice Chairman
Elizabeth K. Krumeich, Clerk
William Drake
Andreas Duus III
Karen Fassuliotis
Debra Hess
Michael S. Mason
Leslie Moriarty
Leslie L. Tarkington
Anthony Turner
David Weisbrod

BOE members in attendance:

Peter Bernstein, Chair
Jennifer Dayton, Vice Chair
Barbara O’Neill, Secretary
Gaetane Francis
Meghan Olsson
Peter Sherr
Kathleen Stowe

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Howard Richman, Tax Collector

BOE: Ralph Mayo, Interim Superintendent, Greenwich Public Schools (GPS); Lorianne O’Donnell, Chief Operating Officer, GPS; Don Watson, Director of Facilities, GPS

Other: Jeff Ziplow, Partner, blumshapiro Consulting; Lindsey Donato, blumshapiro Consulting

Ms. Oberlander welcomed members of the Board of Estimate and Taxation (BET) and the Board of Education (BOE), as well as attendees to the meeting.
Presentation and discussion of the Greenwich Public Schools Capital Project Operational Assessment – Study prepared by blumshapiro

Ms. Oberlander commented that the two Boards were meeting jointly to hear a presentation by blumshapiro, an accounting and consulting firm, of the Capital Project Operational Assessment sponsored by both Boards to facilitate planning for the future capital projects proposed by the Board of Education. Mr. Bernstein thanked the two Boards for their support of the study and indicated the joint goal of improving the execution of capital projects.

Mr. Ziplow provided an Executive Summary of the Capital Project Operational Assessment (the Report) and thanked the Working Group of Mr. Mayo, Ms. O’Donnell, Mr. Roland Gieger (Budget Director, Finance Department), and Ms. Melinda Frame (Town Internal Auditor) and BET Education Liaisons (Ms. Moriarty and Ms. Hess), for their forward-looking input to the processes and goals of the Report.

Mr. Ziplow explained the process and methodology undertaken to identify the issues and, based on findings, make recommendations to improve budgeting, tracking and accountability for future capital projects. Mr. Ziplow reported that blumshapiro found certain deficiencies during the review of completed and open capital projects, existing documentation, and current project management processes. Mr. Ziplow identified the following recommendations to improve current practices and resources:

- Need to develop checklists, standard policies outlining how to open, manage and close projects
- Implement project management software
- Track and maintain additional project information
- Maintain stronger identification correlating projects to vendor contracts
- Implement asset management system
- Provide comprehensive MUNIS training to staff
- Consider additional staff or outsourcing for capital project duties
- Continue to provide ongoing meetings within senior Administration team

GPS Administration need training on MUNIS, the financial management software applications used by both GPS and the Town, as it applies to capital project management. This training is to focus on the functionality of the existing modules and how they can be better utilized to track commitments and expenditures by location. The Report proposed acquisition of project management software and asset management software to provide systemized methods of budgeting, planning and managing capital projects. The Report noted that the Town’s construction projects may also benefit from this investment. In addition, blumshapiro recommended the development of a manual of policies, procedures, standards and protocol for consistency across all construction projects, including an electronic binder for each project which houses all relevant documents relating to a project. The Report indicated that the BOE Facilities Department was under-resourced for the size of the capital plan and needed the addition of either another Project Manager or an outside construction management partner.

Following the presentation of the Report, Mr. Ziplow and Ms. Donato addressed questions from the respective Board members. Mr. Ziplow reviewed the process of bundling similar projects and commented that there are advantages and disadvantages with the use of bundling, but indicated that the recommendations regarding standardized procedures would provide the mechanism for transparency. Standard practices were needed to ensure that a project would be initiated,
monitored, and completed in a timely manner. GPS Administrators with responsibility for a construction project would be able to approach projects in a similar manner. The key deliverables for a project’s initiation must be clearly stated, including why the project was being commenced, what are the educational specifications, and whether or not, for example, the Planning and Zoning Commission needed to review the project and issue a Municipal Improvement status. Each step of the project needs to be clearly delineated in a document that documents each of the deliverables.

BOE members commented that they should determine whether or not the Administration needed additional resources and support to carry out the recommendations of blumshapiro. Mr. Ziplow was asked when the BOE should determine the need for additional staff and replied that such decisions should be made after a year.

Chairman Bernstein stated that the Report was a plan forward. Mr. Watson agreed that additional systems would be beneficial to track unfinished projects. Ms. O’Donnell expressed her commitment to defining standards. Chair Oberlander and BET members expressed a willingness to continue discussions to identify resources needed to implement the recommendations. Mr. Ziplow congratulated the two Boards for the constructive discussion and noted that this meeting was unique among municipalities with which he had worked because members were focused on how to move forward and seek a better path for completion of construction projects.

**Adjournment**

Upon a motion by Mr. Duus, seconded by Ms. Fassuliitis, the Board of Estimate and Taxation voted 12-0-0 to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 P.M. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary

Elizabeth K. Kromeisch

Jill K. Oberlander, Chair