

**TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

CONSOLIDATION DAY - Fiscal Year 2020-2021 BUDGET

Town Hall Meeting Room, Thursday, February 27, 2020

Present:

Committee: Leslie L. Tarkington, Chair; Debra Hess, Leslie Moriarty, Jeffrey S. Ramer

Staff: Lauren Elliott, Assessor, Office of the Assessor; Angela Gencarelli, Ass't Budget & Systems Manager, Finance Department (Dept.); Roland Gieger, Director, Budget & Systems Director, Finance Dept.; Jim Michel, Deputy Commissioner, Dept. of Public Works; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller, Finance Dept.

Board: Michael Mason, BET Chairman; William Drake, Andreas Duus, Laura Erickson, Miriam Kreuzer, Elizabeth K. Krumeich, David Weisbrod

RTM: Hector Arzeno, (D-8), Finance; Lucia Jansen, (D-7), Budget Overview Committee (Cmte.) (BOC), Chair, Labor Contracts Cmte. (LCC); Bruce Pflug, (D-5) Finance Cmte.; Dan Ozizmir, (D-5), BOC. Vice Chair, LCC, Chair; Molly Saleeby, (D-8), BOC

Other: Ken Borsuk, Reporter, *Greenwich Time*

Ms. Tarkington called the meeting to order at 9:10 A.M.

Consolidation Process

Ms. Tarkington welcomed attendees and introduced Consolidation Day, as a workshop for the BET Budget Committee to review the issues, the proposed initiatives and opportunities in a public forum. Recognizing the assistance of the Finance Department, Roland Geiger, Director of Budget & Systems Management, and Peter Mynarski, Comptroller, preparing information for the Budget Committee decision process, she also encouraged BET members to contribute their questions and comments.

Budget Guidelines provide the framework, and Departments were requested to find efficiencies to deliver the services familiar to and demanded by the citizens at a reduced cost. Ms. Tarkington commented that the Budget Committee, BET, RTM, and the First Selectman are working together to formulate a budget that is conscious of keeping Greenwich affordable to attract young families, value its senior citizens, provide safety and security, top education, great sports and green spaces - a quality of life for all to enjoy and admire.

Ms. Tarkington thanked the First Selectman and Town Department heads for their responsiveness and support throughout the process.

OPERATING BUDGET

Revenue

Property Taxes

Committee members with input from Assessor Elliott discussed revenues from property taxes, and the application of the status of property tax relief programs.

State Reimbursement

Comptroller Mynarski itemized State reimbursements with the Committee and discussed potential changes in all revenue lines and risks of receipt.

Mr. Ramer expressed concern about regressiveness of the pay-as-you-throw trash disposal solution and noted the consultant's roles: manager at WasteZero, DEEP consultant and proposed consultant to the Town at a \$675,000 per annum fee. Mr. Ramer identified a question on Eastern Greenwich Civic Center rental revenues.

Operating Expenses - Items which are being considered by Committee members for proposed modification

105 OFS - Possible deletion of Labor Negotiator recruitment cost and salary.

106 Purchasing - Consistency of policy and operational guidelines to coordinate TOG, Library, & BOE purchasing.

120 Registrars of Voters - (increase by \$32,000)

- Proposal not yet approved by BET, but it would (51010) increase salary line by \$30,000 and reduce stipend currently in budget.

General M&C Salary Increases - BET has not yet voted on proposal, but final budget should be modified if the adopted pool varies from the 2% currently assumed.

130 Finance

- Review whether all credit card fees are consolidated into Finance budget.
- **(52030)** Increase bank fees by \$10,000.
- **(51490) (Increase by \$200,000)** Mr. Ramer will make a motion to add \$200,000 to consulting code.
- **(51010) (Add \$20,000)** Reconcile part time with Internal Auditor salary; add \$20,000 to salary line to reflect Internal Auditor salary, keep PT salary.

- 134 **IT** - Centralized policy.
- 140 **Law Department)** - Mr. Ramer proposed adding an additional account code to separate the Town Attorney's consulting fee from fees paid for outside law firms.
- 195 **Commission on Aging** - Mr. Ramer will make a motion to add \$10,000 to budget for a part time employee.
- 174 **Land Use** - Possible transfer of \$25,404.29 for a part time employee position responsible for inspection of low-income housing.

Fire Department

- **204–2053** - Decrease number of inspectors. Ms. Moriarty requested that the Fire Department be asked back to understand the potential impact on inspections.
- **204-208** - Ask Fire Chief of implications of eliminating Volunteer Firefighter Recruiter.

Police Department

- **217-5010** - Mr. Ramer will make a motion to increase uniform patrol by 3 officers and add back \$265,194 in salaries.
- Consider adding cost of three traffic lights at intersection plus traffic light maintenance if the officers are to be removed from Greenwich Avenue.
- Add cost of traffic study funding.
- Ms. Tarkington identified combining cost of proposed traffic-calming bump-out in capital to Greenwich Avenue Streetscape project.

321 DPW

- **321-20510 Waste Disposal** - Mr. Ramer will make a motion to reconcile disposal, transfers and recycling costs due to postponement of Pay-As-You-Throw program.
- The Committee requested better detail of the proposed Bruce Park bridge.

440 External Entities

- **TAG** - Condition release of funds quarterly and on SAFE RIDE program separately.
- **440-57221 and 57231** - Discussion of whether Safe Rides should continue as a separate item from TAG.
- Compare Town Department expenses for TAG to TAG budget for each Department.
- **GEMS** - Condition release of funds semi-annually.

501 Human Services

- **501-55010** - Review current sub-contracted programs to evaluate appropriate value for citizen support.
- **502** - Temporary Assistance Program budget increased 35%, so suggest decrease by \$20,000.
- **501-57210** - Review external entities especially for type of programs for potential decrease, for instance \$17,442 for YMCA pre-school program, which is closing. Discussed contribution to YWCA Domestic Violence education program.

600 Board of Education (BOE)

- Special Ed Out-of-District Tuition - Budget discussed as being insufficient for FY21 – consider increase of \$1,100,000 because of increasing number of students and settlement costs.
- Ms. Hess recommended BOE IT cyber security funding be increased and moved from BOE operating to capital project to better track the Schools’ cyber program.
- BOE - Ms. Tarkington commented enrollment is down FY20 110 students and FY21 47 students supporting a recommendation to reduce FY21 by (\$391,666).
- Special Education Study - Suggest segregate cost for best practice study in the administration of special education by moving to capital budget If study is to remain in operating, suggest an increase to the \$60,000 budget.

701 Libraries

- Ask if expansion of Library infrastructure will require a corresponding increase in staff.
- Reduce one employee in each Item Code (701, 702, 710) to correspond to an assumed more efficient workflow due to increased use of technology.

FIXED CHARGES

901 Employee Benefits

- Healthcare 57095 - (Reduce \$1.5 million) - Reduction due to smaller increase of premium. Publish RFP to identify new healthcare provider options.
- Insurance - self retention - (Reduce \$100,000) Reduction of employee life insurance premium cost.

902 Benefits 57908 - (reduce \$175,000) - Mr. Mynarski reported that Workers’ Compensation costs are trending toward a surplus. He cautioned about reducing this item.

908 Self Retention Insurance Claims 56800 - (reduce \$100,000) - Mr. Mynarski indicated the insurance broker will be presenting new rates in March.

999 Transfer to Other - 57122 - (Increase \$1.5 million) - The Risk Fund needs to be replenished per Town Attorney who suggests adding \$1.5 million to the current balance of \$3 million.

999 New Account - 57128 - (Increase \$1.5 million) - Ms. Moriarty suggested increasing the contribution to Nathaniel Witherell to \$3 million. Ms. Tarkington suggested retaining at \$1.5 million contribution. The Committee discussed adding an account to separately identify the contribution to The Nathaniel Witherell for its prior year’s negative fund balance. Mr. Ramer suggested that the contribution be \$4.1 million to cover the entire prior year’s loss.

FUNDS

450 The Nathaniel Witherell

- Discussion over impact on patient care and building operations to meet First Selectman’s recommended \$1.5 million contribution level. Ms. Hess and Ms. Tarkington suggested reducing operating costs to achieve the lower contribution level.

219 Parking Fund - Increase revenues to reflect approved increased parking fees.

131 Retirement Board - Lower consulting fees to \$1.7 million.

CAPITAL BUDGET

General Government

Information Technology - \$1.5 million - The Cyber Security initiative is expected to require an additional \$551,000 for Data Loss Protection for Town of Greenwich and \$500,000 for the same application across Town departments. Also transferring the BOE cyber from its operating budget to Town capital consistent with the rest of the Town.

Conservation - \$1 million - Aquarian Water Company is selling land which the Town will contribute to its purchase for its Open Space program. The negotiated price is \$2 million; the cost will be shared with the Greenwich Land Trust which will have the title and steward the property, and the Town will have a permanent easement for public access.

Conservation - Climate change sea level study is deferred **(\$100,000)**.

DPW - Engineering - \$400,000 - Stormwater Program Compliance - consider reducing.

DPW Greenwich Avenue Streetscape (Reduce \$300,000 of \$500,000) - Open Item balance available to combine with the remaining \$200,00 of this appropriation for the Greenwich Avenue Streetscape.

DPW - Brookside Drive at Glenville Rd intersection - Ms. Tarkington is considering deferring this project due to its complexity.

DPW - ADA Sidewalk project - Ms. Tarkington suggested reducing by \$200,000 to amount budgeted last year for FY21.

DPW (reduce \$500,000) - Annual Paving - Ms. Tarkington would like to reduce the \$4,500,000 budget by \$500,000 to \$4,000,000.

DPW - Sound Beach Bridge Replacement Project – Ms. Tarkington is considering a condition to confirm community input. Asked if State LOTCIP funding is confirmed.

DPW - Bruce Park Bridge Project – Asked for breakdown of costs.

DPW P&Z - (\$100,000) - Neighborhood Identity Project Implementation. Mr. Ramer suggested that such a program can divide the community rather than enhance.

DPW Harding Road Drainage Improvement - (Reduce \$750,000) - New project. After clarifying that this project is independent of the EGCC project, Ms. Tarkington would like to defer the \$750,000 project for one year.

DPW Glenville Road Corridor Improvements - Ms. Tarkington proposed separating the design phase and to proceed with the construction phase in the second year. DPW will be asked to separate the two costs of the \$5 million project.

DPW - GHS Soil Remediation Project - Ms. Moriarty indicated this is a \$20 million project spread over several years and suggested it is a candidate for longer term financing.

DPW/BOE Parking Lot Maintenance - (delete \$375,000) Defer paving at Central Middle School until field plan/location is determined.

DPW - Holly Hill Resource Recovery Facility - (Delete \$350,000) - A member is considering deferring the project until the ingress/egress driveway is planned.

DPW Building Construction - Leased Building - (Delete \$200,000) Bathroom update postponed for one year. The Committee will ask First Selectman to develop a policy for repairs in leased buildings that don't have public access.

DPW Building Construction - Hamill Skating Rink - Condition release \$1,030,000 - A condition exists on the FY20 appropriation of \$200,000 for review and acceptance of the feasibility study. This request is for the full architectural and engineering funding, such that the Committee would add a condition to release of 30% for design drawings and Municipal Improvement process and then 70% for the remainder of the construction drawings. A Public/Private Partnership has been mentioned for this facility, so the Committee is deferring action until the information is received.

DPW Building Construction - \$300,000 HVAC/Boiler Upgrades - The Committee asked that the two pieces of equipment be separated into two projects.

Bruce Museum LED Lighting Installation - \$125,000 - The Committee questioned the cost of the installation project

GEMS - Station #4 Construction (delete \$2,150,000) - Certain members of the Committee suggested that the project be delayed until the Matrix Fire Study is completed, with the project deferred for one year. The Committee also discussed the proposed management and oversight of the project.

BOE - Food Service Equipment Upgrades - \$260,000 - The Committee identified that there were several options still being researched by the BOE: dishwasher installation at GHS for pickup/delivery of dishes from all schools to be washed at GHS; purchasing smaller dishwashers for each school; price the cost of service from an outside vendor. Mr. Ramer suggested adding a condition upon review and acceptance of a specific plan. Ms. Hess suggested the project be changed to a study of the options.

BOE - GHS Renovations - The Committee requested a revised CIP sheet describing a reduced project scope to only address an improved security entrance to GHS.

BOE - Maintenance Projects - General discussion about the amount of open appropriations and the ability of the staff to complete those projects as well as the number of new projects being requested. Capital Asset Management Project was recommended in the BlumShapiro consulting report, and the Open Items, capacity and timing of new projects is questioned. Ms. Hess proposed a reduction of \$3 - 5 million in maintenance projects to reflect an inability to complete in the next fiscal year.

BOE - Other (Lighting, Painting, Paving, ETC) - \$297,000 - Ms Tarkington questioned the investment in Parkway School due to its current low enrollment.

BOE - Stage Project - Request for details by location.

BOE - Old Greenwich School Renovation Feasibility Study - Ms. Tarkington questioned if this project should be started due to the several other BOE large project appropriations. Mr. Ramer identified it as the next step in the Master Plan.

BOE - Julian Curtiss School Renovation Architectural and Engineering Funding - Ms. Tarkington asked if the fuel tank removal project was independent of this work.

BOE - Cardinal Stadium - \$8,100,000 - The Committee confirmed that the requested funding covered the complete project - Phase 1 (home bleachers, home team room, handicap parking, new entrance kiosk, new light fixtures, and planning funds for Phase 2) and Phase 2 (visitor bleachers, visitor's team room and new road). Ms. Moriarty suggested the funding be separated in Phase 1 (amended to include the visitor bleachers and team room) and Phase 2, but the specific amounts need to be confirmed.

BOE - CMS Field - Increase by \$2.265 million - Mr. Ramer suggested the appropriation be increased by \$2.265 million to fund the joint natural grass and artificial turf field supported by the BOE. Ms. Hess and Ms. Tarkington expressed concern that the First Selectman has not expressed support for that option.

BOE - Western Middle School Field Remediation - \$8,500,000 - Ms. Tarkington suggested that the funding for this item be deferred since DEEP and EPA approval has not been received so that it is unlikely this funding will be needed in FY21.

P&R Park Restoration & Work Facility Relocation (reduced to \$400,000) - Mr. Ramer suggested the project be reduced to \$400,000 to allow continued development of a Master Plan for the Park and the start of the relocation of the P&R facility, and would introduce a condition for the review and acceptance of a master plan.

P&R Beaches - Great Captain Island Dock Extension (Delete \$50,000) - Ms. Moriarty recommended the extension be deferred for one year and asked for a master plan on ferry services.

TNW - Electrical Board and General Capital (\$585,000) - The Committee discussed funding only the \$500,000 electrical panel upgrade and \$85,000 of general capital.

Sewer Maintenance - Force Main Improvement and OG Common Force Main - Ms. Moriarty asked if the project could be separated and funded over two years.

The Committee reviewed several scenarios for the 15-year Capital Budget to study the affordability and impact of capital projects on BET Debt Policy parameters. Mr. Gieger was asked to provide a new scenario modifying capital tax levy, term of debt, and amount of capital projects specifically related to the timing of the BOE master plan. It was requested that school project reimbursement revenue and Public/Private Partnership impact be added to the various scenarios' revenue inflow.

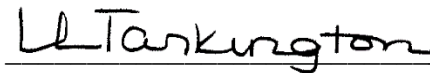
All the comments and proposals were for discussion purposes only. There were no motions made and no votes taken on any item discussed at this meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary



Leslie Tarkington, Budget Committee Chair