

MINUTES of the regular meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation held on Monday, March 20, 2006 in the Town Hall Meeting Room, Greenwich, CT.

The Chairman, Peter J. Tesei, called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M., after which the members pledged allegiance to the flag.

Board members in attendance:

Peter J, Tesei, Chairman
Robert S. Stone, Vice Chairman
Alma Rutgers, Clerk
Nancy Barton
William R. Finger
James Himes
Edward T. Krumeich
Michael Mason
Arthur D. Norton
Laurence B. Simon
Leslie Tarkington
Stephen G. Walko

Ex Officio Board Members: James Lash, First Selectman; Peter Crumbine and Penny Monahan, Selectmen

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Roland Gieger, Finance Department; Ted Gwartney, Robert Shipman, Assessor's Office; Sherry Krieger, Department of Human Resources; Ed Gomeau, Town Administrator; James Walters, Chief of Police

ROUTINE APPLICATIONS:

HD-1 HEALTH DEPARTMENT -Transfer -\$63,000

Request for transfer:

\$59,000	to	A-401-51010	Regular Salaries
\$ 2,000	to	A-402-51010	Regular Salaries
\$ 2,000	to	A-425-51010	Regular Salaries
\$16,500	from	A-405-51010	Regular Salaries
\$46,500	from	A-415-51010	Regular Salaries

PD-1 POLICE DEPARTMENT- Transfer- \$348,515

Request for Transfer:

\$348,515	to	A-217-51100	Overtime
\$ 13,600	from	A-213-52050	Postage
\$ 50,300	from	A-213-52090	Tuition

\$135,460	from	A-213-52360	Software Maintenance
\$ 26,560	from	A-213-53010	Office Supplies
\$ 79,506	from	A-213-53300	Uniforms
\$ 43,089	from	A-213-54200	Maintenance of Machinery

PD-4 POLICE DEPARTMENT-Approval to Use-\$15,643

Request for approval to use:

\$ 8,143	to	F-213-53640	Taser Equipment
\$ 7,500	to	F-217-51100	Taser Training Overtime
\$15,643	from	F-213-35018	Federal Asset Forfeiture

FL-1 FLEET- Additional Appropriation- \$171,000

Request for additional appropriation:

\$ 77,600	to	A-380-53500	Additional Funds to purchase fuel (gas and diesel) to 6/30 06
\$ 23,400	to	A-380-53510	Additional funds to purchase Tires to 6/30/06
\$ 70,000	to	A-380-53510	Additional Funds to purchase Parts to 6/30/06
\$171,000	from		Contingency

Upon a motion by Ms. Rutgers, seconded by Mr. Walko, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the routine applications.

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE ACTIONS & REPORT-APPROVAL OF EMPLOYEE HEALTH CARE BUDGET STATUS REPORT

Sherry Krieger, Director of Employee Benefits, indicated that she was prepared to answer any questions concerning the monthly report prepared by Maureen Kast, Director of Human Resources.

Ms. Krieger stated that the employee health care costs continue to run under budget.

Mr. Simon noted that the report refers to "Totals based on 7 months" and asked Ms. Krieger if this was correct. Ms. Krieger responded that it should be 8 months.

In response to another question from Mr. Simon regarding revenues in the OPEB health care budget, Ms. Krieger responded that the \$3,275,102 total was actual revenue received to date for 8 months. At times, the actual revenues show more than the premium equivalents, which in this case total \$3,230,115. Ms. Krieger explained that this is an issue of timing, with retirees paying quarterly or ahead. Reconciliation by USI is still being finalized.

In further response to Mr. Simon, Ms. Krieger said that USI is not yet providing the reconciliation of the monies retirees should be paying and the monies actually received. Mr. Simon asked if the objective is to have USI do the reconciliation for the entire fiscal year ending June 30, 2006. Ms. Krieger responded that USI was not given the information for the first two quarters. Mr. Mynarski and Mr. Gieger said that work on the first half of the year had been done in-house, but that USI is expected to provide the reconciliation. Mr. Simon stressed the need to focus on achieving this goal. Ms. Krieger said that the Human Resources Department will work with USI to get the reconciliation done.

Upon a motion by Mr. Simon, seconded by Mr. Walko, the Board voted 12-0-0 to accept the Employee Healthcare Budget Status Report.

ASSESSOR'S REPORT

Mr. Gwartney began with an addition to his written Assessor's Report. He said that March 20, 2006 was the final day for filing appeals with the Board of Assessment Appeals. There are approximately 750 residential appeals and 100 commercial appeals. Hearings begin on April 1, 2006 and will continue until completed, probably by the end of the third week in April.

In response to a question from Mr. Tesei as to how the number of appeals compares with appeals following the 2001 revaluation, Mr. Gwartney responded that in 2001 there were approximately 1,600 appeals, but that was a ten-year revaluation. He attributed the lesser number of appeals with the 2005 revaluation, approximately half the number, to the fact that this was a five-year revaluation. In terms of informal hearings, the Assessors office had approximately 2,000 this year, and nearly 5,000 for 2001. Mr. Gwartney said that a ten-year revaluation will generate more inquiries than a five-year one, and he would expect the number to drop even further with a two-year revaluation.

Mr. Tesei reminded Mr. Gwartney that the possibility of two-year revaluations was discussed at the January BET meeting and at that time Board members requested that there be input from members of the Board of Assessment Appeals regarding issues they have encountered with the 2005 revaluation. BET members are to submit their questions. Noting that it may not be possible to take this up at the April meeting, Mr. Tesei asked Mr. Gwartney what the impact would be if the Board waited until May to discuss and decide whether or not to do two-year revaluations. Mr. Gwartney said that the more delay there is the more difficult it becomes to complete the revaluation on time. Mr. Tesei asked that the General Government Liaisons develop a process to funnel questions from BET members to the Assessor and to the members of the Board of Assessment Appeals. In an informal meeting with the Chairman of the Board of Assessment Appeals, Mr. Tesei was told that members of the Board of Assessment Appeals would be happy to provide any information the BET needed.

Mr. Himes reminded Mr. Gwartney of his request at the February meeting for additional information regarding the impact of the 2005 revaluation on participants in the Elderly Tax

Credit program. Mr. Himes also expressed his concern that a change to a two-year revaluation will increase volatility in the Grand List and asked what additional burden such a change might place on homeowners and what additional resources might be necessary to implement the change. Mr. Gwartney responded that, to the contrary, the tendency would be to reduce volatility because the revaluations are done more often. Movements are smaller and more understandable. Mr. Gwartney said that two-year revaluations will reduce volatility and be more equitable, making people more aware and more in tune with what assessments are all about.

In response to a question from Mr. Tesei, Mr. Gwartney said that Greenwich would be the first community in Connecticut to have two-year revaluations.

Mr. Tesei said that the Law Committee and the General Government Liaisons, Mr. Mason, Ms. Tarkington and Ms. Barton, will be looking more closely at taxable properties going to tax-exempt status. This will be done in consultation with the Law Department. They will review the data provided by Mr. Gwartney, and get back to the full BET, at which time a determination will be made, again with the advice of the Law Department.

In a response to a question from Mr. Simon about the results of the personal property audits, Mr. Gwartney said they have not yet been tabulated. The results are being reviewed and the totals should be available in June. Mr. Simon also asked how many Elderly Tax Credit applications have been received to date, and Mr. Gwartney responded that there were probably 350 applications.

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

BET COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS

Human Resources Committee- Leslie Tarkington

Ms. Tarkington said that the Human Resources Committee met on March 2, 2006. The committee reviewed its memorandum to the Budget Committee with the updated and reformatted Schedule of Full Time Employees submitted for the FY 2006-07 Budget. Modest conforming changes were made.

The Human Resources Committee will take a practical approach to its work. The BOE Grant Employees will be added to the Schedule of Full Time Employees. BOE part time employees are already included. The committee is requesting similar information for town employees. Additional information on vacant positions is to be compiled. A better understanding of the town's staffing is the goal.

Audit Committee- Robert Stone

Mr. Stone said that the Audit Committee met on March 9, 2006. One of the items taken up was the condition of the town's marinas. A number of observations concerning the town's possible risk of liability came to light during the January BET meeting. As a result, those who made the observations were invited to the Audit Committee meeting to provide specific details. All were invited to participate. No one from Parks and Recreation was present. The Committee voted unanimously, 4-0, to direct the Risk Manager, with representatives from the Marine Division, together with those making the observations, to report on those conditions.

The second item taken up was a proposed study of the participation in the town's health insurance programs. Discussion concerned the need to develop a more reliable system to record enrollment in, and track premiums for, the town's health insurance programs. The Committee approved a motion that will eventually, following input from both Human Resources and Labor Relations, lead to a recommendation to the BET to retain the services of a specialist to develop a solution.

The third item taken up was discussion regarding the process of interviewing and rating those firms responding to the RFP for engagement as the town's independent auditor. Unanimity was reached regarding the process at a special meeting held on March 16, 2006. The interview process has begun and will conclude on March 21, 2006. It is expected that a recommendation will be made at the April BET meeting.

Glenville School Building Committee-Peter Tesei

Mr. Tesei reported that the Glenville School Building Committee met on March 1, 2006. The purpose of the meeting was to interview project managers. Of the three firms interviewed, the committee agreed to negotiate a contract with Turner Construction. Changes in the proposed contract will be reviewed. One concern was that the person assigned to the administrative side of the project should have more seniority and experience than the person first proposed. A favorable cost was negotiated for the proposed work, below the projected \$860,000 allocated for this purpose.

Hamilton Avenue School Building Project

Mr. Walko reported that this Committee will meet on March 21, 2006 to discuss three bids for the contract for the construction of the building.

COMPTROLLER'S REPORT

Mr. Mynarski presented his report to the Board. He made one addition to the Retirement Board portion of the report. The Buckhead contract is scheduled to go the Retirement Board for approval along with the ING contract on March 28, 2006. Both contracts will come to the BET in April.

Mr. Tesei asked that the contracts be forwarded to the Law Committee for review.

Mr. Simon, referring to the "Enterprise Fund Accounting" section of Mr. Mynarski's report, said that this was not a "process to convert The Nathaniel Witherell to an Enterprise Fund," as stated in Mr. Mynarski's report. Mr. Simon said that it should be "crystal clear" that the BET would have to approve the creation of an Enterprise Fund and that there is no process at this time to convert TNW to an Enterprise Fund. Mr. Mynarski agreed that the Enterprise Working Group was working only on a cost allocation plan and that he would make this clear in future reports.

In response to a question from Mr. Himes regarding an update on boating insurance, Mr. Mynarski responded that he has heard nothing negative from the Risk Manager and that the Risk Manager has not been called in for additional assistance.

Upon a motion by Mr. Simon, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Board voted 12-0-0 to accept the Comptrollers Report.

ACCEPTANCE OF TREASURER'S REPORT SHOWING INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIODS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2006-FEBRUARY 28, 2006

Mr. Mynarski said that the Treasurer's Report has been reformatted.

Mr. Simon asked that the Investment Committee look at the Fixed Asset part of the investments, to see if the current arrangement is satisfactory, or if a different investment choice should be recommended. He asked that the committee report back to the full Board in April, if possible.

Mr. Walko noted that the agenda was growing for the April meeting and suggested that perhaps the May meeting would be preferable. It was left to the discretion of Mr. Himes and Mr. Norton to address the issue of timing with the understanding that they will bring their recommendation back to the full Board in either April or May.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular BET Meeting Minutes- February 21, 2006

Upon a motion by Mr. Walko, seconded by Mr. Simon, the Board voted 12-0-0, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of the BET from February 21, 2006.

Public Hearing-March 6, 2006

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Simon, the Board voted 11-0-1 to approve the Minutes from the Public Hearing of March 6, 2006, with Mr. Walko abstaining as he was not in attendance at the meeting.

Decision Meeting- March 8, 2006

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Simon, the Board voted 11-0-1 to approve the Minutes from the Decision Meeting of March 8, 2006, with Mr. Walko abstaining as he was not in attendance at the meeting.

OFFICER'S REPORT

Mr. Tesei shared with the Board the communication that was sent to the First Selectmen regarding the February 2006 Sense of the Meeting Resolution on the Western Greenwich Civic Center.

The Nathaniel Witherell Board has named a new Executive Director, Bill Kowalewski. A breakfast is being held for him in the Chapel at TNW on Friday, March 24, 2006 between 7:30 and 9:00 A.M.

Referring to a November 18, 2005 memorandum from Mr. Gomeau and to the November 21, 2005 BET minutes, Mr. Tesei said that the Town Administrator requested, in November 2005, that the BET confirm that there would be no post retirement cost of living adjustments for retirees. This was a request made by the RTM Labor Contracts Committee consistent with changes in collective bargaining regarding cost of living adjustments, defined benefits and defined contributions. This request was made to the Retirement Board and subsequently to the BET. This was referred to the Budget Committee and to the Retirement Board Liaisons to be brought back to the BET as a policy. Mr. Tesei asked that the record show that this matter must be addressed within the next few months.

Mr. Tesei reminded Board members to reserve the evenings of May 1, 2, 3, and 4. The RTM standing committees and districts meet on these dates, and the RTM call in May consists of approval of the town budget. It is the custom to have BET members at each RTM committee and district meeting to answer questions on the proposed budget. Mr. Simon added that all BET members are expected to attend the May 8 RTM budget meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Reconfirmation of the Charter Revision-The Creation of The HR Department

This item was before the BET in the spring of 2005 as part of a series of charter amendments proposed by the Board of Selectmen. The RTM chose not to act on them last year. The Board of Selectmen will now be bringing them back to the RTM. It is a requirement that this particular charter amendment be voted upon by the BET.

There was a Special Meeting of the BET on June 1, 2005 to take up the charter amendments creating a Department of Human Resources. At that meeting the BET amended the Board of Selectmen's original proposal.

Ms. Tarkington reported that there was a Special Meeting of the Human Resources Committee today, March 20, 2006, held for the purpose of discussing the proposed amendments. In attendance at the meeting to answer questions were Valerie Maze of the Law Department and Ed Gomeau, Town Administrator, as well as First Selectman, James Lash.

Ms. Tarkington said that, after discussion, the committee voted unanimously to bring to the full BET the proposed charter amendments establishing a Department of Human Resources and the position of a Director of Human Resources, as well as smaller administrative changes to the First Selectman's powers and duties. The version approved by the Human Resources Committee is the same version approved by the BET on June 1, 2005.

Mr. Simon inquired as to pg 2, Section iv: "Except for the Town's Retirement System, the Director of Human Resources shall administer the Town's benefits program and related budgets for all active and retired Town employees." Mr. Simon said that it is presently not clear who is in charge of the town's benefits programs and where responsibility for their administration lies. Mr. Gomeau responded that when a Retirement Administrator was appointed two years ago, it was convenient to have this responsibility in the Finance Department, under the Comptroller, but that the Charter currently does not state where this function is located. In response to Mr. Simon, Mr. Gomeau said he was comfortable that what is proposed by the charter change will work.

Mr. Krumeich noted that the charter proposal creates a change in the administrative function presently performed by Jim Lavin under the Comptroller in the Finance Department. The charter change proposal moves this function to the Human Resources Department, under the supervision of the Director of Human Resources.

Mr. Krumeich said that the position of the Director of Human Resources was not intended to become a policy making position. He expressed concern that some of the proposed language could give the Director of Human Resources extensive powers in the area of personnel policy and regulation. He cited Section 217 (b), (i) : "The Director of Human Resources shall develop personnel policies," and Section 223. Mr. Krumeich further asked why the BET was not being asked to vote on Section 223. He said that the BET is an appointing authority and specifically referred to in this section. By inserting town personnel policies into parts a and b, the function of the BET is being affected. He felt that the BET's vote would be required.

Ms. Rutgers responded that Valerie Maze said the BET would be required to vote on Section 223 for the very reason cited by Mr. Krumeich, that it affects the powers of the BET.

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Norton, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the charter amendments creating a Department of Human Resources.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of Interest Rate And Repayment Period For North Mianus and Milbrook Sewer Assessments

Mr. Walko reported that the Budget Committee took up this item and voted 4-0 on an interest rate of 4.181% and a repayment period of 20 years, as noted in the March 17, 2006 transmittal letter from the Town Administrator.

Upon a motion by Mr. Walko, on behalf of the Budget Committee, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the 4.181% interest rate and a repayment period of 20 years for the North Mianus and Milbrook sewer assessments.

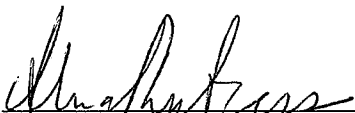
ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Mr. Finger, seconded by Mr. Norton the Board voted 12-0-0 to adjourn at 7:55 P.M.

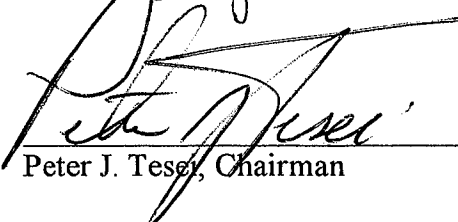
Respectfully submitted,



Valerie Zebrowski, Recording Secretary



Alma Rutgers, Clerk of the Board



Peter J. Teser, Chairman