

**TOWN OF GREENWICH  
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION**

**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, April 14, 2020

Zoom Virtual Meeting

**Committee**

**Present:** Leslie Tarkington, Chair; Debra Hess, Leslie Moriarty, Jeffrey S. Ramer

**Staff:**

Aamina Ahmad, Assistant Town Attorney; Lauren Elliott, Assessor; Roland Gieger, Director, Budget & Systems Management; Craig Jones, Information Technology (IT) Department (Dept.); Jenny Larkin, IT Dept; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Heather Smeriglio, Tax Collector

**Board:**

Michael Mason, Chairman; Andreas Duus, Laura Erickson, Karen Fassuliotis, Elizabeth K. Krumeich

**BOE/GPS:**

Peter Bernstein, Chairman, Board of Education (BOE); Mary Forde, Chief Pupil Personnel Services Officer; Dr. Toni Jones, Superintendent, GPS; Sean O’Keefe, COO, GPS; Dan Watson, Director of Facilities, GPS

**Public:**

Ken Borsuk, Reporter, *Greenwich Time*

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 P.M.

**REQUESTS FOR BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
ED-11	BOE	Interim Appropriation
\$1,200,000	6201753 & various	

Schools Superintendent, Dr. Toni Jones, and Chief Operations Officer, Mr. O’Keefe presented the request. Mr. O’Keefe updated the Committee on the need for \$1,120,000 to cover a shortfall due to additional Special Education tuition and transportation settlements, and for two unbudgeted items, \$40,000 for rental of shoring for the GHS bleachers and \$40,000 for custodial overtime for deep-cleaning of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The BOE is in the process of identifying savings since the schools’ closure on March 12 and scheduled closure through May 20<sup>th</sup> including lower bussing transportation costs. Because the RTM Education Committee postponed the item until the RTM’s May meeting, it was suggested by Dr. Jones and Mr. O’Keefe that the BET Budget Committee also postpone.

Mr. Watson, Schools Director of Facilities, commented on projects currently underway or completed during the spring school vacation period including the replaced couplings at GHS MISA and other projects at Hamilton Avenue, Eastern Middle, Western Middle, and Parkway Schools.

Upon a motion by Ms. Hess, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to postpone a vote on the BOE application for an Interim

Appropriation of \$1.2 million until its May meeting. Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS** – No **OLD BUSINESS** was scheduled for discussion.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- **Discussion of Governor’s Executive Order 7S Relating to Taxes**

The Tax Collector, Ms. Smeriglio, the Assistant Town Attorney, Ms. Ahmad, and BET Law Committee Chair, Ms. Fassuliotis explained that Executive Order 7S requires the legislative body to authorize a town to participate in one or both programs that either defers tax collection (“Deferment Program”) or reduces the amount of interest paid on late tax payments (“Low Interest Rate Program”). These programs are intended to offer support to eligible taxpayers, businesses, nonprofits and residents economically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Deferment Program proposed deferring tax payments of April 1 until July 1 and deferring the July 1 property tax payment until October 1. The Low Interest Rate Program offers a low interest rate loan at 3% per annum (or ¼% per month) to assist tax payers to make payments due on March 10, 2020 through and including July 1, 2020 who are delinquent in paying their taxes for 90 days from the time when it became due and payable until the date it is paid. The Comptroller and Tax Collector developed an explanation and recommendation of the options for the RTM and its Committees. A recommendation was made that the Deferment Program be applied to all taxpayers, excluding ineligible escrow taxpayers, because it would be simpler to execute and more efficient. The Comptroller estimated that although a cash flow loss of approximately \$150 million would result, even in the worst-case scenario, the Town had enough capability to withstand the impact through reserves and, if needed, possible delaying of yearend transfers. Responding to a question, Mr. Mynarski suggested that a Tax Anticipation Note (TAN) while he did not consider it was needed was also an option if a cash shortfall were to become a problem. He reminded the Committee that its preparation by Robinson & Cole and approval by the full BET and RTM would be needed. No vote was taken but the Committee acknowledged the preparation of the information and the recommendation of the Comptroller.

- **Discussion of Economic Conditions**

Budget & Systems Management Director Gieger presented an overview of TOG income commenting that he expected that lower revenues from Conveyance Tax and Permits would continue through the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Ramer pointed out that 98.2% of the budgeted Revenues for FY20 had already been collected, and although some losses in commercial property tax and interest were lower, if the State education reimbursement was timely, it would eliminate the projected BOE shortfall. It was proposed that FY21 Capital Projects be conditioned to see how the economy was recovering during the summer. Mr. Gieger commented on Department collections and indicated operating expenses since the Town Hall shutdown were running favorably to FY19. He anticipated that Fund Balance for FY20 will be about flat with FY19. He anticipated a high number of capital encumbrances due to rescheduling of many Departments’ projects and reduced staffing. Mr. Mynarski cautioned that the 2020 Revaluation would affect Grand List for FY22; members discussed that the Revaluation would represent a likely shift in property taxation not in the total taxation revenues.

**Approval of the BET Budget Committee Meeting Minutes**

Upon a motion by Ms. Hess, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, the Committee

voted 4-0-0 to approve the BET Budget Committee Public Hearing Minutes of January 23, 2020. Motion carried.

Upon a motion by Ms. Hess, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the Regular BET Budget Committee Meeting Minutes of March 10, 2020. Motion carried.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hess to adjourn at 2:59 P.M. The Committee voted 4-0-0 in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

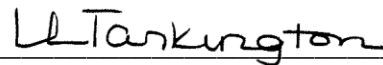
Next Regular Meeting of the BET Budget Committee is scheduled for May 6, 2020 at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted, .



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Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary



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Leslie Tarkington, Budget Committee Chair