



MINUTES of the regular meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation held on Monday, April 20, 2020, held as a Virtual Webinar, Greenwich, CT.

Michael Mason, BET Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M., after which the members pledged allegiance to the flag.

Board members in attendance:

Michael S. Mason, Chairman
Karen Fassuliotis, Vice Chair
William Drake, Clerk
Andreas Duus III
Laura Erickson
Debra Hess
Elizabeth K. Krumeich
Miriam Kreuzer
Leslie Moriarty
Jeffrey S. Ramer
Leslie L. Tarkington
David Weisbrod

Staff: Lauren Elliott, Assessor; Roland Gieger, Budget & Systems Management Director, Finance Department (Dept.); Craig Jones, Information Technology (IT) Dept.; Jenny Larkin, IT; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Heather Smeriglio, Tax Collector

TNW: Laurence Simon, Chairman, Board of Directors, The Nathaniel Witherell

Public: Ken Borsuk, Reporter, *Greenwich Time*

The Chairman welcomed BET Members, Town of Greenwich staff and the public. He requested a Motion to Suspend the Rules in order to allow BET members to participate and vote through virtual webinar meetings until June 15, 2020.

Upon a motion by Ms. Fassuliotis, seconded by Ms. Krumeich, the Board voted 12-0-0 to suspend rules for all BET members to participate and vote through virtual meeting until June 15, 2020 and add an item to the Agenda. Motion carried.

REQUESTS FOR BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

Mr. Mason asked the BET Clerk to move the Routine Applications for Budget Adjustments.

<u>Number</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
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Ms. Tarkington reported that Dr. Toni Jones, GPS Superintendent, and Mr. O'Keefe, Chief Operating Officer, updated the Committee on the need for an additional appropriation to cover a shortfall due to SPED tuition, settlements, transportation placements and two unbudgeted items: rental to shore up GHS bleachers (\$40,000) and Custodial Overtime (\$40,000) for deep-cleaning of schools due to COVID-19 pandemic. The BOE Business Office has identified savings resulting from school closure beginning March 12, so may be able to cover the budget shortfalls in these line items. Because the RTM Education Committee postponed this item until the RTM's May meeting, the Budget Committee voted 4-0-0 to suggest that the BET also postpone action until May. Mr. Mason will advise the RTM of the BET's action.

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Board voted 12-0-0 to postpone voting on the BOE \$1.2 million application for an Interim Appropriation until its regular meeting in May. Motion carried.

ASSESSOR'S REPORT

The Town Assessor, Ms. Elliott, highlighted items from her written monthly report: despite a reduced and rotating staff, all inquiries were receiving timely responses; the State Senior Tax Relief Program filing deadline was extended to August 15, 2020; however, the Greenwich Senior and Disabled Tax Relief Program deadline is May 15, 2020. In response to a question, it was noted that the deadline could be extended with approval by the BET, the Board of Selectmen (BOS) and RTM. Members of the Board recommended alerting the Commission on Aging on the upcoming deadline for the local program. Mr. Mason asked that the BET Law Committee provide an opinion so that if necessary, the BET could approve the extension at a Special Meeting to move the recommendation forward for a BOS vote and contact the RTM Moderator for a placeholder on its next Agenda.

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

COMPTROLLER'S REPORT

The Comptroller, Mr. Mynarski, described how the Finance Department has been functioning under the restrictions of the Governor's Executive Orders to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus. In response to a question, Mr. Mynarski indicated that the Fire Study is not delayed with a draft of the Fire Study was expected in May 2020 and the Final Report in June 2020. In response to a question about refinancing Town long term debt, he indicated that it was his intention to have Robinson & Cole provide its recommendation whether refinancing would yield savings. A Bond Resolution would will be submitted to the BET and RTM with the FY21 Budget and be valid for one year to allow the Town to act if the market conditions are favorable. In response to a question, Mr. Mynarski commented that a special MUNIS account was set up to track those COVID-19 expenses, of which 75% of eligible expenses would be reimbursable by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It was noted that the balance of the Superstorm Sandy FEMA reimbursement is still expected before June 30.

Upon a motion by Ms. Hess, seconded by Mr. Duus, the Board voted 12-0-0 to accept the Comptroller's Report. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Upon a motion by Ms. Krumeich, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Board voted 11-0-1 (Abstained: Krumeich) to accept the Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.

BET Standing Committee Reports

- **Human Resources Committee** – Ms. Fassuliotis commented that claims under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and teacher unemployment claims had spiked during March. Seasonal and temporary workers had not been hired for Parks & Recreation upcoming programs, thus avoiding unemployment claims.

BET Liaison Reports

- **The Nathaniel Witherell (TNW)** – Mr. Simon commented on the patient census and the hospital's experience resulting from the Coronavirus pandemic. He noted that the Health Dimension Group (HDG) contract would expire at the end of April, however Joanne Kotulski, Acting Administrator, engaged through Health Dimensions Group (HDG), agreed to remain until June 30, 2020 if needed. Mr. Simon expressed his gratitude to the BET for providing the expertise needed to reorganize TNW operations and finances. He commented on staffing issues and added that the absence of key executives added to the challenges at TNW. He acknowledged the receipt of many private donations and State of Connecticut assistance through both stimulus grants and increased Medicare/Medicaid reimbursements.
- **CDBG Program** – Mr. Drake and Mr. Weisbrod commented that 40 Grant Applications under the U.S, Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program have been received by the CDBG Advisory Committee requesting \$2,200,000 from the CDBG Program of \$982,000; 21 Grant Applications have been received for \$1,200,000 of the additional special grant program to cover COVID-19related expenses of \$486,000. The CDBG Advisory Committee will hold a public hearing and then present their recommendations to the First Selectman in May.

BET Special Project Team Reports - No Special Project Team Reports were scheduled.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Tipping Fee**
Mr. Mason commented that the item would be added to the Agenda of the upcoming BET Workshop on April 23 and discussed on BET Decision Day April 27, 2020.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Tax Collector Update on Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7S – Tax Deferral/Low Interest Options**
The Board discussed the two Tax Payment options proposed in the Governor's Executive Order: Deferral of property tax payment by 90 days, and low interest rates on delinquent taxes. In discussion about the impact information shared with the RTM for its consideration, the Comptroller and the Tax Collector recommended the Deferral option

for all taxpayers for its simplicity of execution and efficiency. Concern was expressed about the impact on the Town's cash flow and the possible negative reaction of the rating agencies' credit rating if the Town borrowed via a Tax Anticipation Note (TAN). Mr. Mynarski responded that he believed the Town had the capacity to absorb the impact based on its policy of maintaining a Fund Balance equivalent to 8-10% of the Town's Operating Expenses and other funds to satisfy the Rating Agencies triple-A assessment rating.

- **Public Hearing – General discussion including procedures, voting, misc.**

Mr. Mason remarked that more than 150 emails and written responses were submitted in the Public Hearing and will be filed with permanent meeting records.

- **Decision Day Meeting – General discussion including procedures, voting, misc.**

Mr. Mason reminded the Board that Mr. Gieger would prepare a consolidated budget document for the final round of discussion and voting. Each individual item would be subject to roll call voting. Budget amendments need to be submitted after the BET Workshop on April 23, 2020 so Board members have sufficient opportunity to review them prior to the Decision Day meeting on April 27, 2020.

Chair's Report

Mr. Mason thanked the Finance Department and BET members for their dedicated participation. Mr. Weisbrod expressed his appreciation to Mr. Mason for the leadership in the unusual and challenging circumstances created by the health emergency.

Approval of BET Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Mr. Drake, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the Minutes of the BET Workshop held on March 16, 2020 as amended. Motion carried.

Vote on the Minutes of the Regular BET Meeting of March 16, 2020 was postponed until the next meeting.

Upon a motion by Mr. Drake, seconded by Ms. Erickson, the Board voted 10-0-2 (Abstained: Drake, Hess) to approve the Minutes of the Virtual Zoom Webinar Workshop of April 1, 2020. Motion carried.

Upon a motion by Mr. Drake, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Board voted 11-0-1 (Abstained: Drake) to approve the Minutes of the Virtual Zoom Webinar Meeting. Motion carried.

Adjournment

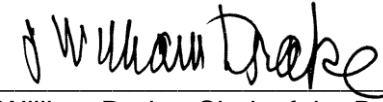
Upon a motion by Mr. Weisbrod, seconded by Ms. Kreuzer, the Board voted 12-0-0 to adjourn the meeting at 3:35 P.M. Motion carried.

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation is on Monday, May 18, 2020.

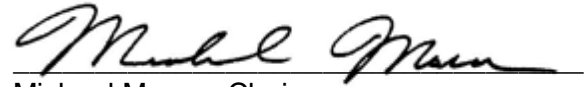
Respectfully submitted, .



Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary



William Drake, Clerk of the Board



Michael Mason, Chairman