



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

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 13, 2021

Hybrid Virtual and Town Hall Meeting Room

Committee

Present: Leslie L. Tarkington, Chair; Andy Duus, Leslie Moriarty, Jeffrey S. Ramer

Staff: Benjamin Branyan, Town Administrator; Roland Gieger, Director, Budget & Systems Management, Finance Department (Dept); Brian Koczak, Assistant Chief, Fire Department; Jenny Larkin, IT Dept; Joseph McHugh, Chief, Fire Dept; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller

Board: William Drake, Laura Erickson, Karen Fassuliotis, Miriam Kreuzer, Elizabeth K. Krumeich

BOE/GPS: Sean O'Keefe, Chief Operating Officer; GPS

RTM: Danyal Ozizmir, (D-5); Vice Chair, Budget Overview; Chair, Labor Contracts

Guest: Tracy Schietinger, Executive Director, Greenwich Emergency Service (GEMS); Lawrence Simon, Chairman, Board of Directors, The Nathaniel Witherell

Other: Ken Borsuk, Reporter, *Greenwich Time*; Horst Tebbe, GCTV

Ms. Tarkington welcomed meeting attendees and commented that BET Budget Committee hybrid format meetings would conclude today, and beginning in September, the Budget Committee would meet in person in the Town Hall Meeting Room. The first meeting will be September 14 at 1:00 P.M. or in the event that a Primary Election is scheduled for that date, the Budget Committee meeting will be held on September 15 at 1:00 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room.

An application scheduled for the Transportation Association of Greenwich (TAG) was deferred for additional Town Administrator due diligence.

REQUESTS FOR BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

<u>Number</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
ED-6	BOE	\$1,359,481	Transfers
	Various		Year-end Adjustments

Mr. O’Keefe explained the request to transfer \$1,359,481 to offset increased cost of supplies for textbooks, audio visual equipment and cybersecurity with available funds not used for settlements and transportation. Ms. Tarkington thanked Mr. O’Keefe for the additional detailed information that he provided..

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Mr. Ramer, to approve the transfer of \$1,359,481 within various object codes to cover increased cost of FY21 supplies and materials. The Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the application by its authority over BOE transfers. Motion carried.

ED-7	BOE	\$75,085.33	Transfers
	Various		School Lunch Fund Year-end Adjustments

Mr. O’Keefe explained the request to transfer \$75,085.33 from various accounts, including School Lunch Fund non-personnel services, to cover shortfalls in supplies and transportation.

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Mr. Ramer, to approve the transfer of \$75,085.33 from non-personnel service object codes to cover increased cost of FY21 supplies and transportation. The Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the application by its authority over transfers. Motion carried.

FD-1	Fire Department	\$259,000	Transfers
	Various		Year-end Adjustments

Assistant Chief Koczak requested the transfer of \$259,000 from various object codes to cover a shortfall in salaries. Eight vacancies occurred through retirements costing overtime pay. Additionally, salaries increased as a result of promotions due to retirements, and vacations being rolled over due to COVID-19 staffing needs were causes for the transfer. A two-month spending freeze was instituted to cover a portion of the salary increases. The Assistant Chief commented that approximately 50% of the department was eligible for retirement and two additional vacancies had recently occurred. He predicted these same factors could impact the department’s FY22 Budget.

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Mr. Duus, to approve the transfer of \$259,000 from various object codes to cover increased cost of FY21 salaries and overtime. The Committee voted 4-0-0 to recommend the application to the full BET as a routine application. Motion carried.

FI-1	Finance	\$1,914,189	Transfers
	B Fund Various		Bonding Auth. Reduction

Mr. Mynarski explained that this was a close-out authorization for B Fund projects, not a transaction reduction. Ms. Moriarty asked if close-out forms had been received from Departments, Mr. Mynarski responded only one from Perrot Memorial Library had been received. The Committee asked that Public Works, BOE and Parks & Recreation complete their forms for review at the September meeting.

Upon a motion by Mr. Duus, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, to accept the report and reduce bonding authority, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to recommend the application to the full BET as a routine application. Motion carried.

GM-1	GEMS	\$1,410,000	Release of Conditions
	B440 51490		GEMS Station 4

Town Administrator Branyan commented that the funds contributed by GEMS for the construction of Station 4 on King Street would be transferred to the Office of the First Selectman (OFS) for the public/private partnership between GEMS and DPW with Superintendent of Building & Construction, Alan Monelli, providing project oversight. Release of Conditions is approved upon the receipt of the GEMS gift contribution of \$200,000 toward the building construction, which was received by the Finance Department. Ms. Tarkington thanked Ms. Schietinger for on-time progress and financial commitment by GEMS. She requested a memorandum on project contract bidding results after the completion of the RFP. The GEMS Executive Director was congratulated on achieving certification and a perfect accreditation score from the national professional association for Volunteer Emergency Services. Ms. Schietinger shared her gratitude for the validation with the citizens of Greenwich as confirmation of the quality of emergency services being provided.

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Mr. Ramer, to release conditions on \$1,410,000 for construction of GEMS Station 4. The Committee voted 4-0-0 to recommend the application to the full BET as a Routine application. Motion carried.

SE-1	First Selectman	\$8,000	Release of Conditions
	A105 51490		Professional Services - NOC

Mr. Duus as co-chair of the First Selectman's Nathaniel Witherell RFP Committee explained the request to release \$8,000 of the \$25,000 Professional Services consulting amount. Mr. Ramer expressed concerns including: the request of \$8,000 does not meet the restriction of the condition for consulting assistance to the First Selectman's committee for review of proposals; funding is requested in furtherance of proposals not yet shown to the BET; funding is to implement sale of the property, but there is no authority to sell or lease; process is proceeding without involving the TNW Board; the RTM has not been given the opportunity on whether to spent \$8,000 for promoting the sale, they were told that dollars are to be spent analyzing the proposals; a for-profit operation of the facility may violate restrictive covenants on the property without perhaps access to people with standing to waive the restrictive covenant; and Mr. Ramer may have faint hope that new management may do financially better. In response, Mr. Duus assured the Committee that the Law and Purchasing Departments had been consulted, and that bid-responders' questions prompted the request. The RFP Committee planned to make its recommendation in the Fall. If accepted, the sequence of discussions would be with the First Selectman, followed by the Board of Directors of Nathaniel Witherell, the RTM and the Witherell descendants. The scope of the work and qualifications of the consulting firm were discussed. Mr. Duus added that bidders had recommended the consultant as trusted by the industry. He added that Mr. Simon, Chair, Nathaniel Witherell Board serves on the RFP Committee. Ms. Moriarty questioned the scope of work of the proposed contractor and the level of detail that the RFP Committee would be getting. Ms. Tarkington commented that this type of due diligence and war room is common in the financial industry. She repeated Ms. Moriarty's concern that the work may be superficial and that as a government agency the RFP Committee should consider the contractor with an abundance of caution, and spoke of highly regarded contractors who prepared Nathaniel Witherell physical studies for Project Renew.

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to approve the release of \$8,000 for professional consulting services, the Committee voted 3-1-0 (Opposed: Ramer) to approve the application and recommend it to the full BET as a Routine Application. Motion carried.

TC-1	Town Clerk	\$31,176	Approval to Use
	F150 51100, 52050 various		COVID Grant

Mr. Gieger explained that the Town Clerk had initiated the Grant request directly to the Secretary of State to cover overtime, mailings and printing using State COVID funds to cover the additional absentee ballot and election and other costs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Upon a motion by Mr. Duus, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, to approve the use of the Grant of \$31,176 by the Town Clerk. The Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the application and recommend it to the full BET as a Routine Application. Motion carried.

CARRY FORWARD CAPITAL REQUESTS

ED-1	BOE	\$156,000	Continue-in-Force
	B680 21250		Restroom Renovation

Mr. O’Keefe explained that the request was for work next summer on North Mianus School restrooms so as not to disrupt the students. The project, separate from the renovation project, is located nearby, resulting in scheduling issues. The Committee questioned if work could be done sooner, and Mr. O’Keefe will follow-up with the Director of School Facilities to check feasibility.

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Mr. Duus, to approve the request to carry forward \$156,000 for BOE Restroom Renovation, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the application and recommend it to the full BET as a Routine Application. Motion carried.

ED-2	BOE	\$15,000	Continue-in-Force
	Z680 21258		Fences

Mr. O’Keefe explained that the request was to maintain a budget for emergency repairs of school property fences.

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Mr. Duus, to approve the request to carry forward \$15,000 for BOE emergency fence repair, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the application and recommend it to the full BET as a Routine Application. Motion carried.

ED-3	BOE	\$149,000	Continue-in-Force
	B680 21262		Abatement

Mr. O’Keefe explained that the abatement request was for work at Havemeyer and Eastern Middle School due to delays resulting from COVID-19 restrictions.

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Mr. Ramer, to approve the request to carry forward \$149,000 for delayed BOE abatement projects, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the application and recommend it to the full BET as a Routine Application. Motion carried.

ED-4	BOE	\$130,000	Continue-in-Force
	B680 21264		Emergency Lighting

Mr. O’Keefe explained that the Emergency Lighting request was for work at Riverside School stair lighting due to delay resulting from COVID-19 restrictions.

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Mr. Duus, to approve the request to carry forward \$130,000 for delayed BOE emergency lighting project at Riverside School, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the application and recommend it to the full BET as a Routine Application. Motion carried.

ED-5	BOE	\$110,000	Continue-in-Force
	B680 21268		Underground Tank Removal

No remaining tanks to be removed. Application withdrawn. \$110,000 to be returned with project Close Out form.

Ms. Tarkington commented that \$96 million being carried over from FY21 plus \$66 million approved by the BET and RTM for FY22, a total of \$162 million of Capital projects was currently available with the TOG representing \$101 million and the BOE \$61 million. The Carry Forward Capital Requests were caused by COVID-19 pandemic delays. Ms. Tarkington expressed appreciation to the BOE staff, Mr. Gieger and Mr. Mynarski for the efforts on behalf of tracking Capital Projects and Close Outs.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Economic Conditions Report**

Mr. Gieger reported that revenue for FY21 exceeded budget by \$9.5 million but due to the reclassification of some expenses the budget could be considered actually \$18 million ahead. Taxes and Interest revenue was \$5 million over previous year. The BET Liaisons to the Tax Collector’s Office, the Tax Collector and Law Department were thanked for follow-up on the department’s arrears. Conveyance revenue of \$10 million was double the budgeted amount of \$5 million. State Grants and reimbursements for the BOE and Bridges were also ahead of budget. Mr. Gieger noted that the Fund Balance was increased by \$8.7 million. Departments had lower spending and reduced expenses due to not being in the office, therefore there was reduced need for overtime and office supplies; Fixed Charges \$13 million less than budget, also reflected accounting changes. The net change of year end results exceeded Budget by \$28 million.

Mr. Mynarski reported that the Retirement Fund assets had increased \$120 million over FY20, an over 20% gain through increased value of investments, which most likely negates the benefit of a pension obligation bond. The gain would be smoothed over the next five years. He expects the Retirement Board Trustees will pursue reducing the return assumption from 6.25% to 6%. The reduction of the rate of return could enable the Retirement Board to de-risk the portfolio. Ms. Pam Fredrick, a former RTM member, will fill the vacancy created by Mr. Pellegrino’s retiring; the new Retirement Board Chair will be sworn in during July.

- **Budget Resolution #49 – 2021 Tree Plantings**

The Committee expressed appreciation to the new Tree Warden, Dr. Gregory Kramer for delivering the report, required by the Budget Resolution. A member commented that

the Budget Resolution does not require tree or planting donations to seek appropriation. The Committee suggested the Law Committee review the Resolution and to consider it with Resolution #50 for consistency in the upcoming FY23 Budget cycle.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Mr. Duus, to approve the Minutes of the following five Meetings of BET Budget Committee held on:
June 8, 2021 – Regular Meeting
March 1, 2021 – Consolidation Day 1
February 25, 2021 – Department Hearing Day 8
February 23, 2021 – Department Hearing Day 7
February 12, 2021 – Department Hearing Day 1

The Committee voted 4-0-0. Motion carried.

The next Regular Meeting of the BET Budget Committee will be held on Tuesday, September 14, 2021, at 1:00 P.M.in the Town Hall Meeting Room, or in the event that a Primary Election is scheduled for that date, the Budget Committee meeting will be held on September 15 at 1:00 hP.M.in the Town Hall Meeting Room.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Mr. Duus, to adjourn the meeting at 2:22 P.M., the Committee voted 4-0-0. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary



Leslie L. Tarkington, Budget Cmte Chair