

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

**MINUTES
Cone Meeting Room**

Tuesday, September 16, 2014

Committee

Present: Marc V. Johnson, Chairman; Mary Lee Kiernan, Jeffrey S. Ramer, Leslie L. Tarkington

Board: Michael Mason, BET Chairman; John Blankley, William Drake, William Finger, Sean Goldrick, Randall Huffman, Arthur Norton, Nancy Weissler

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Roland Gieger, Budget Director; Debbie Flynn, Business Office Manager, Department of Health; John Crary, TOG Administrator; J. Wayne Fox, TOG Attorney; Peter J. Siecienski, Fire Chief; Robert Kick, Assistant Fire Chief; Frank Mazza, Chairman Harbor Management Commission; Sandy Kornberg, Glenville Volunteer Firefighter; Sean Turpin Glenville Volunteer Fire Fighter

Selectmen: Peter Tesei, First Selectman

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 P.M.

Mr. Johnson welcomed attendees to the meeting and announced that there would be an Executive Session.

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Committee voted to enter Executive Session at 6:35 P.M. to discuss two legal matters.

The Committee exited Executive Session at 8:21 P.M.

Requests for Budget Adjustments

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| <u>SE-2</u> | <u>First Selectman</u> | <u>Additional Appropriation</u> |
| \$17,600 | A208 57100 | Settlement – Thai vs. TOG |

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the application and forward it to the Board of Estimate & Taxation.

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| <u>SE-3</u> | <u>First Selectman</u> | <u>Additional Appropriation</u> |
| \$1,240,000 | P935 57350 | Settlement – Worth Construction |

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the application and forward it to the Board of Estimate & Taxation.

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| HD-2 | Health | Approval to Use |
| \$5,644.00 | F40328 & various codes | Misc. Services & Supplies |

Ms. Flynn requested approval to accept a grant from the State of Connecticut Department of Health's Lead Poisoning Prevention and Control Program. She noted that this would be the fourth year that TOG received this grant to reach residents and owners of homes built prior to 1978 where lead toxin might exist. The program includes information on nutrition, diet, and remediation techniques to abate potential poisoning. The grant would cover the costs of a translator, advertising, supplies and transfers.

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the application and forward it to the Board of Estimate & Taxation.

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| RV-1 | Registrar of Voters | Transfer |
| \$20,000.00 | A120 53070 | IT Supplies |

Mr. Gieger advised the Committee on this request from the Registrar of Voters Office. The amount is for the purchase of polling station laptops to apply technology to the voter process to lower costs and to provide voter information availability real time. The purchase will replace computers that were budgeted to be leased, as considerable money will be saved through purchase. This was a request to move it to the appropriate account.

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the application and forward it to the Board of Estimate & Taxation.

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| SE-1 | First Selectman | Additional Appropriation |
| \$52,000.00 | F834 & various codes | Expenses of Harbor Mgmt. Comsn. |

Mr. Cray introduced the request for an additional appropriation to supplement the Harbor Management Commission account. Mr. Gieger explained that it was a non-lapsing fund with its balance carried forward from year-to-year and that the BET annually reviewed its expenditures during the budgeting process. Mr. Mazza commented that this was the first year of the Harbor Management Commission. He explained that \$26,000 of the \$52,000 requested was for consultant fees and expenses to help write a Harbor Management Plan. There were a number of questions from the Committee regarding other expenses and fees and the roles of the Commission and Harbormaster (appointed by the State).

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the application and forward it to the Board of Estimate & Taxation.

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| FD-1 | Fire Department | Release of Conditions |
| \$457.080 | A 205 51100 | Overtime |

Mr. Johnson prefaced this discussion by saying that it was the Committee's intent to hear reports from the Fire Administration and the Volunteer Fire Chiefs on progress towards gaining approval on a Memorandum of Understanding between the two parties. Given that some of the Volunteer Chiefs were not able to attend this evening's meeting he would recommend postponement of this item until the Budget Committee's October meeting. Chief Sicienski did

provide an update on positive steps being taken regarding joint responses and training between career and volunteer firefighters. He also mentioned that he was meeting with volunteer firefighters on Friday September 19, 2014 to discuss more specifics of recruitment and retention. In response to Mr. Johnson's question to Mr. Kornberg and Mr. Turbin on their satisfaction with progress to date, the volunteer firefighters noted that access to joint training, cooperation on accountability at fire scenes and joint staffing of apparatus were most welcome. They looked forward to further conversations at the October meeting. Ms. Kiernan suggested postponement of the item until after these meetings take place and after full reporting out by the Volunteer Chiefs.

Upon a motion by Ms. Kiernan, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to postpone release of conditions until the October 14, 2014 meeting of the Budget Committee.

Old Business

- **Update on 2015 Budget Committee Regular Meeting Schedule** – Mr. Johnson commented that the new start time for Budget Committee meetings in 2015 would be 5:00 P.M. He wanted to make sure members of the Committee were in agreement.
- **Conservation Department Requests to Approve Grants** – Mr. Johnson suggested further discussion was needed to clarify the Committee's intention on the FEMA grant reimbursement process. The matter will be discussed at the October 14, 2014 meeting.

New Business

- **Report – Status of Current Economic Conditions** – Mr. Gieger reported that revenues continue to be strong and are better than last year and those projected for the 2014-2015 Budget. He also suggested that the Committee consider inviting Nathaniel Witherell to attend its December 11, 2014 meeting to review operating expenses and revenues.
- **Budget Guidelines FY 2015-2016 First Draft** – Mr. Johnson presented his first draft of Budget Guidelines. He mentioned that prior to writing this draft he discussed budget issues with a number of Town leaders including the First Selectman, Comptroller, Budget Director, Assessor, Schools CFO, Chairs of Finance and Budget Overview Committees and others. He noted a number of challenges that lie ahead including escalating healthcare costs, support for pensions and retirement benefits and a risk of cost overruns with major projects underway such as MISA, soil remediation and the Central Fire Station. Included in the draft was an estimated budget for FY16 from which the Committee, working with department heads, may need to find savings of over \$9 million to bring a tax rate increase in line with the previous three years.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the major points of the guidelines including operating budget caps, capital project guidelines and a targeted mill rate tax increase. He suggested that the Committee members review the draft, discuss with their caucus members and provide comments to him and Ms. Kiernan within ten days. At that point he and Ms. Kiernan would get together to try to reach consensus on the final document. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the final guidelines at its October 14 meeting. Mr. Johnson did apologize for not providing a copy of the first draft to the Committee in advance as he was still meeting with officials and collecting data prior to this meeting.

Ms. Kiernan expressed concern that the Guidelines were being distributed in a public meeting

before the Committee had reviewed the information and despite several requests for the document. She explained that this was a different process from years past, when Budget Committee members worked together to develop a draft before presentation at a Budget Committee meeting. Ms. Kiernan explained that as a result, the public present and watching on tape don't have the opportunity to hear either substantive comments from all four of the Committee members or a complete airing of the important issues covered in the draft guidelines. She expressed hope that the process going forward would be more transparent and collaborative.

Mr. Finger pointed out that in previous seasons, when a draft of the guidelines had been published in advance of a vote, it had been counterproductive. Mr. Ramer concurred that the draft could be mistaken as coming from the BET rather than the Budget Committee. He suggested workshops and a public meeting to allow for ample discussions before the final draft was prepared for a vote.

Mr. Ramer proposed that the Chair of the Budget Committee prepare a cover sheet to clarify the origin of the draft budget document before posting on the Town's web site. Mr. Johnson agreed.

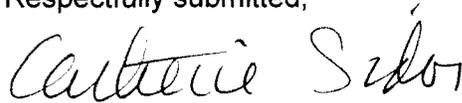
July 15, 2014 – Regular BET Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Kiernan, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the Minutes of July 15, 2014 Regular Monthly BET Budget Committee Meeting as amended by Ms. Tarkington.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:53 P.M. upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, by a vote of 4-0-0.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, October 14, 2014 at 6:30 P.M. in the Cone Room.

Respectfully submitted,



Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary



Marc V. Johnson, Chairman