MINUTES of a Special Meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation held on Tuesday, October 4, 2016 in the Board Conference Room, Board of Education – Havemeyer Building Greenwich, CT.

Chairman Michael Mason called the meeting to order at 7:06 P.M. He thanked attendees and explained that the meeting had been posted for public attendance according to FOI rules, that attendance was being taken and Minutes would be available after approval by the BET. He noted that eleven (11) members of the BET were present.

Board members in attendance:

    Michael S. Mason, Chairman
    Arthur D. Norton, Vice Chairman
    William Drake, Clerk
    John Blankley
    Mary Lee A. Kiernan
    James A. Lash
    Leslie Moriarty
    Jill K. Oberlander
    Jeffrey S. Ramer
    Leslie L. Tarkington
    Nancy Weissler

Board member absent: Elizabeth K. Krumreich

Staff:       Peter Mynarski, Comptroller

Selectmen:  Peter Tesei, First Selectman; John Toner, Selectman

RTM District and Standing Committee Chairmen and Members:

    Abby Large          D-9  Transportation Chair
    Alan Small          D-10
    Alexis Voulgaris    D-6
    Arline Lomazzo      D-7
    Bill Galvin         D-3
    Bob Allen           D-6
    Bob Cenci           D-6
    Bob Krasnor         D-5
    Bob May             D-12
    Carol Zarrilli      D-9
    Chris Sandys        D-1
    Coline Jenkins      D-6
    Danyal Ozizmir      D-6
Mr. Mason began the dialogue with an overview of the factors that would impact BET decision-making during its process of arriving at the Town's 2017-2018 Budget: the Fire Department; construction of a new New Lebanon School building; Town union labor negotiations; The Nathaniel Witherell finances; the School Lunch Fund; cost of Town employee healthcare; and, the Retirement Fund. Background information was provided on the BET's experience with each of the factors. He then noted that the Town’s revenue from fees was less than several years ago, interest on cash was reduced, and there was a concern that the State might reduce its contributions to the Town. He concluded his introductory remarks by reviewing the Town’s Capital Project commitments.

Members of the RTM then asked questions about the Town’s operating costs.

Mr. Mason referred attendees to a handout of the Town of Greenwich 10 Year Budgetary Forecast (Fiscal Years of 2005 – 2015), noting that those earlier projections were fairly accurate. He suggested that policy changes would be needed to reduce the Town’s operating costs. Lucia Jansen, Chair of the RTM Budget Overview Committee had recently circulated a letter expressing concern about a potential “looming budget crisis”; she commented that the letter contained recommendations for “zero-based” budgeting; 1.5% salary increases for the BOE, Fire and Police; consolidation of duplicative positions and full disclosure of each department’s employee costs to be factored into departmental budgets.

A discussion of the cost of maintenance and Capital Improvement Projects was referred to Mr. Tesei for his comments. He noted that the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) process was based on prioritization of projects, maintenance and new initiatives that served the Town’s population. He indicated that a survey of Greenwich residents’ opinions in October would inform the First Selectman’s Office recommendations for the 2017-2018 CIP list.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,