



**TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM
Wednesday, October 12, 2022 – 4:00 P.M.**

Committee

Present: Leslie L. Tarkington, Chair; Nisha Arora, Laura Erickson, Leslie Moriarty

Staff:

Roland Gieger, Director, Budget & Systems Management, Finance Department; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Ferdinand F. de Arango, Assistant Town Attorney, Barbara Schellenberg, Town Attorney, James Heavey, Greenwich Chief of Police, Dr. Toni Jones, Greenwich Public Schools Superintendent, Michael S. Lynch, Esq., Lynch Law Group, Martha C. Gaythwaite, Esq., and Brett R. Leland, Esq., Verrill Dana LLP via telephonic call-in.

Board:

Dan Ozizmir, Chairman, Karen Fassuliotis, Harry Fisher, Jeff Ramer, Stephen Selbst

Other:

Don Conway, GCTV, Ken Borsuk, Greenwich Time

Ms. Tarkington called the meeting to order at 4:06 P.M.

1. Executive Session Joint with BET Law Committee

The BET Budget Committee held a joint executive session between Budget Committee and Law Committee members. A discussion on legal cases and Greenwich Public Schools (GPS) safety issues was held to discuss the following matters:

- Palosz v. Town of Greenwich
- Perrone v. Town of Greenwich
- Schools for Safety Application

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Ms. Arora to enter into Executive Session at 4:03 P.M. to discuss the above noted legal cases and GPS safety issues, the Committee voted 4-0-0. Motion carried.

The two Law Committee members made a motion to exit the Executive Session at 5:14 P.M. The vote passed 2-0-0.

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Ms. Arora to close the Executive Session at 5:29 P.M., the Committee voted 4-0-0. Motion carried.

2. Request for Budget Adjustments

<u>Number</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
<u>SE-4</u>	<u>First Selectman</u>	<u>\$xxxxxx</u>	<u>Settlement</u>
	<u>P935-57350</u>		<u>Palosz v. Town of Greenwich</u>

This item was discussed in Executive Session and no action was taken.

<u>PD-2</u>	<u>Police Department</u>	<u>\$271,000</u>	<u>Additional Appropriation</u>
	<u>A217</u>		<u>Additional GPD Overtime</u>

This matter was discussed in Executive Session and no further discussions were held in regular session.

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Ms. Arora, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to appropriate \$271,000 for additional Greenwich Police Department overtime. Motion carried as a Routine matter.

<u>NW-2</u>	<u>Nathaniel Witherell</u>	<u>\$13,000</u>	<u>Additional Appropriation</u>
	<u>H450 59560 23393</u>		<u>Chapel Window Replacement</u>

Ms. Tarkington want it noted that the total amount of for the Chapel Window Replacement project had been donated by the Friends of Nathaniel Witherell, including the recent additional donation of \$13,000. Mr. Gieger reported that the Finance Department had received a check for \$13,000 from the Friends of Nathaniel Witherell and the money has been deposited.

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Ms. Arora, the Committee voted to appropriate \$13,000 for the The Nathaniel Witherell Chapel Window Replacement project 4-0-0. Motion carried as a Routine matter.

BET members Ms. Fassuliotis and Ms. Tarkington took this time in the meeting to recognize the contributions of Fred de Arango, Assistant Town Attorney who was retiring October 31, 2022. Their comments were very kind in recognizing the time Fred worked for the Town of Greenwich in the Law Department. They wished him well and good luck in his retirement.

3. NEW BUSINESS

• **Economic Conditions Report**

Mr. Gieger presented this item and highlighted the performances of conveyance taxes, building permits and interest income on his report. He reported that there is a dramatic increase in interest income.

Regarding expenses, Mr. Gieger stated that there were three payrolls recorded in September 2021 versus two payrolls this year. He said that a fair comparison of matching expenses year-to-year would be more appropriate at the November Budget Committee meeting.

• **FY Budget Guidelines – First Read**

Ms. Tarkington asked Mr. Gieger to detail some of the highlights of Exhibit I, the Estimate Budget, in the Budget Guidelines document. Mr. Gieger offered the following highlights: salaries budgets reflect existing and anticipated labor contract settlements; utilities show a 54% increase to reflect expected pricing; healthcare budget is increasing 12% based on input

from the Town's consultant; school lunch fund is budgeted to be self-sustaining, so no Town contribution.

Ms. Tarkington added follow up comments to Mr. Geiger's' comments. She noted that Capital Projects are budgeted for \$95 million including \$67.5 million for Central Middle School. Prior year losses for The Nathaniel Witherell (TNW) are lower than last year lowering use of fund balance to cover this expense; and the Town contribution for TNW operations was held at the same \$500,000 level. The Grand List is estimated to increase at 0.7%. Ms. Tarkington further identified this budget includes a Challenge amount to lower the operating cost of the Town and the BOE. She indicated the Town and BOE can determine the staffing or operational changes needed to meet the Challenge budget.

Ms. Moriarty offered her comments and questions on Exhibit I. She commented that inflation is underestimated at 2%. Mr. Gieger indicated that he thought that the 2% was aggressive. Ms. Moriarty questioned the assumptions in Revenues, Senior Tax Relief, Capital Projects and the Capital Tax Levy. Finally, Ms. Moriarty felt the use of presenting only the "Challenge Budget" is misleading. She offered several suggestions for a better presentation on this approach to reducing taxes.

Ms. Erickson talked about the presentation of the level services budget in addition to the Challenge budget, and on the need to better understand the status of Open Capital with department heads.

Ms. Arora supported the Challenge budget as it may help identify more efficient ways to perform services.

Ms. Moriarty made several comments on portions of the text of the draft Guidelines. Key objections included the determination of the Challenge budget amounts, the stated requirement for a consolidation of a Town and BOE department, the stated requirement for a BOE-approved plan for closing a school, the derivation of the \$400 million limit on 5-year capital plan. Ms. Moriarty also expressed concerns about meeting capital needs at the levels of FY24 and 5-year capital limit, and lack of planning for future capital funding.

Ms. Tarkington identified the next steps to include editing the draft Guidelines to reflect this discussion and scheduling a Special Meeting on Monday, October 17 to review a revised draft of the Guidelines. The full BET will take up the Guidelines at its meeting on October 17 If the Committee can conclude its work at the Special Meeting.

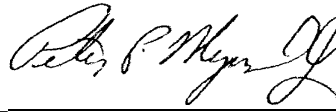
4. Approval of BET Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Ms. Arora, to approve the Minutes of the Regular BET Budget Committee Meeting of September 13, 2022 the BET Budget Committee voted 4-0-0. Motion carried.


5. ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Ms. Arora to adjourn the meeting at 6:33 P.M., the Committee voted 4-0-0. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Peter Mynarski, Recording Secretary



Leslie L. Tarkington, Budget Cmte Chair

The next Regular Meeting of the BET Budget Committee will be held on Tuesday, November 15, 2022, at 1:00 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room.