



**TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
BUDGET COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM
Monday, October 17, 2022 – 9:00 A.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;

Board: Dan Ozizmir, Chairman, Harry Fisher, Miriam Kreuzer, Jeff Ramer

Other: Don Conway, GCTV, Ken Borsuk, Greenwich Time

Ms. Tarkington called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

1. **FY Budget Guidelines – Discussion and Approval**

Ms. Tarkington stated that this was a Special Meeting of the BET Budget Committee to approve the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Guidelines and she thanked everyone associated with the process.

Ms. Arora made a motion to put forward the FY 2024 Budget Guidelines before the BET Budget Committee for discussion purposes, seconded by Ms. Moriarty.

Ms. Tarkington identified the changes to Exhibit 1 in the recently circulated version of the guidelines. The inflation rates were increased to 2.3% for non-salary accounts, which is similar to rates being used for contractual labor increases. The Challenge budgetary reduction was increased to reflect the impact of the higher inflation, so that the total Challenge reduction is higher by about \$300,000 to \$4.4 million. Capital, Current Year Projects was increased from \$95 million to \$100 million. The Capital Tax Levy was increased by \$1.5 million to \$53.5 million.

Ms. Moriarty commented on the changes to the text of the Guidelines. She indicated the language about possible consolidation of services between the Town and Board of Education was improved. She indicated the reference for a BOE-approved plan for closing a school was changed to request a Facility Utilization Study to address declining schools' enrollment. She indicated the BOE Special Education comments were modified to focus on developing a common understanding of the costs and expectations.

Ms. Moriarty also commented on the Challenge Budget target and methodology which treats the Town departments and Schools differently, and suggested modifications. Regarding the Capital Budget, she stated that the \$100 million budgeted figure is too low, especially since the Central Middle School request is currently estimated at \$85 million as opposed to the prior \$67.5 million

budget number. She stated that the Capital Tax Levy request at \$53.5 million is too low to support the future capital plan. She stated that the 5-year capital request is too low at \$400 million when compared to the requests in the budget's outyears and more deliberation is required to solidify this number.

Ms. Arora reminded the Committee that the Board of Education budget has been increasing over recent years despite a substantive decline in the enrollment of students. Ms. Arora felt that the size of the proposed Central Middle School project is too large relative to State of Connecticut school construction building guidelines and relative to the forecasted enrollment for that building.

Ms. Erickson echoed Ms. Moriarty's previous comments. She expressed concern that the referenced \$67.5 million cost for CMS would be viewed as a maximum cost the BET would authorize and indicated there needs to be flexibility for new information.

Ms. Erickson had several questions about certain enrollment figures contained in the report. It was agreed the Ms. Erickson would work with Mr. Gieger, who concurred, to enter the correct figures into the Guidelines.

As a result of the aforementioned comments, the following motions and votes were made:

Ms. Arora made a motion to approve the Budget Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2023-24 as presented, seconded by Ms. Tarkington.

Ms. Moriarty made a motion to amend the guidelines. Her motion was to increase the current estimated project cost for the Central Middle School project from \$67.5 million to \$85 million, seconded by Ms. Erickson. The vote was 2-2-0 (Ms. Tarkington and Ms. Arora opposed). Motion to amend failed.

Ms. Moriarty made a motion to amend the guidelines. Her motion was to increase the Capital Project request from \$100 million to \$125 million, seconded by Ms. Erickson. The vote was 2-2-0 (Ms. Tarkington and Ms. Arora opposed). Motion to amend failed.

Ms. Moriarty made a motion to amend the guidelines. Her motion was to increase the Capital Levy from \$53.5 million to \$55 million, seconded by Ms. Erickson. The vote was 2-2-0 (Ms. Tarkington and Ms. Arora opposed). Motion to amend failed.

Ms. Moriarty made a motion to amend the guidelines. Her motion was to increase the 5-Year Capital Forecast from \$400 million to \$475 million. The vote was 2-2-0 (Ms. Tarkington and Ms. Arora opposed). Motion to amend failed.

Ms. Moriarty made a motion to amend the guidelines. Her motion was to amend the Challenge Budget to equalize the budgetary reductions between the Town and the Board of Education by using the same 1.4% budget reduction calculation. Ms. Erickson seconded the motion. The vote was 1-2-1 (Ms. Tarkington and Ms. Arora opposed. Ms. Erickson abstained due to a lack of adequate backup). Motion to amend failed.

Regarding the original motion by Ms. Arora to approve the Budget Guidelines, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the vote was 2-2-0 (Ms. Moriarty and Ms. Erickson opposed).

2. ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Ms. Arora to adjourn the meeting at 10:50 A.M., the Committee voted 4-0-0. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Peter Mynarski, Recording Secretary



Leslie L. Tarkington, Budget Cmte Chair