



MINUTES of the regular meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation held on Monday, October 20, 2014 in the Town Hall Meeting Room, Greenwich, CT.

Chairman Michael Mason called the meeting to order at 6:34 P.M., after which the members pledged allegiance to the flag.

Board members in attendance:

Michael S. Mason, Chairman
Arthur D. Norton, Vice Chairman
William Drake, Clerk
John Blankley
William R. Finger
Sean Goldrick
Randall Huffman
Marc V. Johnson
Mary Lee A. Kiernan
Jeffrey S. Ramer
Leslie L. Tarkington
Nancy Weissler

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Roland Gieger, Budget Director; Lauren Elliott, Assessor; Robert Shipman, Assistant Assessor; Peter J. Sicienski, Fire Chief; Robert Kick, Assistant Fire Chief; James Heavey, Chief of Police; John Crary, Town Administrator; Joseph Siciliano, Director of Parks & Recreation; Tom Greco, Assistant Director of Parks & Recreation

Selectmen: Peter Tesei, First Selectman; Drew Marzullo, Selectman

Other: Alice Melly

Mr. Mason asked Mr. Drake to present the routine applications agenda. Ms. Weissler requested to separate out item CC-3 from the Routine Applications because she is a grant recipient and needed to recuse herself from voting on the item.

ROUTINE APPLICATIONS

PD-1	Police	Approval to Use
\$ 36,100	F21714 51100, 57050, 53550	OT, Benefits, Mechanical Supplies

Upon a motion by Mr. Drake, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the application.

PD-2	Police	Transfer
\$ 6,000	F2131 53950	Canine purchase

Upon a motion by Mr. Drake, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the application. D-3 Police Approval to

<u>Use</u>		
\$ 7,000	N/A	Donation

Upon a motion by Mr. Drake, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the application.

<u>PD-4</u>	<u>Police</u>	<u>Approval to Use</u>
\$126,800	F2139 53070, 53550, 52360	Acquire & install computer Hardware & software

Upon a motion by Mr. Drake, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the application.

<u>PR-1</u>	<u>P&R</u>	<u>Release of Conditions</u>
\$433,000	Z822 98300 15186	Greenwich Commons Upgrade

Upon a motion by Mr. Drake, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the application.

<u>CC-3</u>	<u>Conservation Comm.</u>	<u>Additional Appropriation</u>
\$2,503,813	F172 55400	Hazard Mitigation Grant

Upon a motion by Mr. Drake, seconded by Mr. Johnson, the Board voted 11-0-1 to approve the application. (Ms. Weissler recused herself.)

Before moving to vote on the Non-Routine Applications, Mr. Ramer expressed thanks to Mr. Siciliano for facilitating the public/private partnership that enabled the PR-1 project.

NON-ROUTINE APPLICATIONS

<u>FD-1</u>	<u>Fire</u>	<u>Release of Conditions</u>
\$457,080	A 205 51100	Overtime

Mr. Johnson commented that this application had been postponed from September in order to hear progress and additional steps that would be taken on unresolved issues hindering full acceptance of the MOU between Fire Administration, career and volunteer firefighters. A meeting of the Volunteer Association is scheduled for 10/27/14. Mr. Johnson noted that the Budget Committee had voted 4-0-0 to recommend this release to the BET.

Upon a motion by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Board voted 11-0-1 to approve the application. (Abstain: Blankley).

<u>PR-2</u>	<u>P&R</u>	<u>Additional Appropriation</u>
\$ 75,000	Z816 59300	Skating Rink Compressor Unit

Mr. Johnson reported that an older compressor had failed and needed to be replaced ASAP as the skating season was about to open. Replacement of this compressor was earmarked for FY2016. The Committee did ask if a capital project from FY2015 could be deferred to help pay for this. As it turns out two FY2015 projects have been closed out with ample excess funds to be used for the new compressor.

Upon a motion by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the application.

ASSESSOR'S REPORT

Ms. Elliot informed the Board that work on the Grand List was very near completion. Contracts for the 2015 Revaluation are being finalized. Mr. Norton congratulated Ms. Elliot on the number of settlements that had been achieved since she assumed Assessor responsibilities and looked forward to November's report where as many as a total of 128 cases will have been resolved.

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Finger, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the Assessor's Report.

COMPTROLLER'S REPORT

Mr. Mynarski commented on two issues identified during the implementation of the new payroll system: 1) quality of data input, and 2) the multiple interfaces with TOG's various specialized departmental payrolls. He noted that a problem occurred disbursing wire transfer payments for payroll tax obligations which required substantial effort on ADP's part to correct so that TOG would not be deemed late or penalized.

Mr. Mynarski noted in his written monthly report that interface of the QDS system used by the Tax Collector with the MUNIS General Ledger had been a challenge and that Mr. Geiger would be focusing on this issue to meet the goal of completing the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and Audits for review by the Audit and BET at their December meetings.

Ms. Weissler thanked the HR Department for their dedication to ensuring the success of the new ADP payroll system and their diligence in managing the complexity of the first payroll run on October 17.

Upon a motion by Mr. Norton, seconded by Mr. Finger, the Board voted 12-0-0 to accept the Comptroller's Report.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE TREASURER'S REPORT SHOWING INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO ACTIVITY FOR SEPTEMBER 2014

Upon a motion by Mr. Norton, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Board voted 12-0-0 to accept the Treasurer's Report.

BET Standing Committee Reports

None

BET Liaison Reports

First Selectman Tesei spoke to the Board about an October 22, 2014 Capital Improvement Projects meeting when discussion would begin on the Capital Budget with a review of TOG's 10 Year Plan. He noted that 40% of the RTM members who originally participated in preparing the Plan, had revolved off the RTM. He suggested that identifying and differentiating Capital Maintenance expenditures from current and new items would be part of the discussion; further, only new projects would be ranked. He commented that the text of Charter provisions on CIP would be distributed at the meeting because these would be helpful to neighborhood association members who were new

to the process.

Mr. Mason thanked Mr. Ramer and Ms. Weissler for their planned participation at the October meeting of RTM District 5 to discuss fire staffing issues.

BET Special Project Team Reports

MISA – Ms. Tarkington informed the Board that 50% of the project was complete. She suggested that a meeting with the MISA Building Committee could be expected shortly where they would be applying for the release of condition on the contingency and a partial release on the FF&E which would be installed shortly.

Nathaniel Witherell Building Committee – Mr. Norton updated the Board on the number of TCOs that had been received and that 5 zones were still awaiting Building Department inspection. He commented on the Punch List of construction items being completed and indicated that a CO should be received no later than the first week of November.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of the 2015 BET Meeting Calendar – adjustments requested at the September meeting had been integrated into the calendar that was distributed.

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the calendar.

OLD BUSINESS

Budget Guidelines FY 2015-2016

Draft Submitted 10-14-2014 – Budget Committee Meeting Vote 2-2-0 Mr. Johnson introduced this Draft and recommended it for adoption. It is intended to assist in building department budgets; provide a framework of low and predictable taxes; and maintain a less than 3% mill rate increase. He indicated that this draft incorporates changes from the Budget Guideline Workshop as well as from the Budget Committee's 10-14-2014 Meeting where the vote was 2-2-0. These Guidelines reflect the region's low inflation rate of 1.3% and Greenwich's stable population; they call for departmental operating budgets to be held to a 2% increase over FY2015 and no net headcount increase.

Members of the Board engaged in extensive discussion of viewpoints on the proposed Draft. Mr. Johnson emphasized that this Draft reflected TOG's commitments to current major capital projects as well as anticipated future capital improvement projects.

Upon a motion by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Board voted 7-6-0. (Opposed: Blankley, Finger, Goldrick, Huffman, Kiernan, Ramer). Guidelines approved.

Draft Submitted 10-20-2014 – Blankley, Finger, Kiernan, Ramer

Mr. Finger made a motion to amend the Budget Guidelines and asked Ms. Kiernan to make a presentation on behalf of the four proposers.

Ms. Kiernan summarized three key differences between the majority democratic guidelines and the other two sets of guidelines:

1) A 2% increase in departmental operating budgets except for the BOE, where 2.3% was proposed, recognizing the differences among Town departments;

2) Flexibility in dealing with the heavy capital tax levy on taxpayers, and proposing that the BET amend bonding resolutions to provide for lengthening bond maturities to slow the debt service burden on taxpayers; and

3) A mill rate increase to be set: a) after the BET has considered long term financing and the use of fund balance during the winter budget process; b) after departments submit operating budgets and capital requests and c) after the BET receives the FY 14 audit and further performance data from FY 15.

Ms. Kiernan also stated that these guidelines follow the traditional goal of past guidelines, which is to outline fiscal constraints faced by the town, to provide guidance on operating budgets and capital for those departments with capital requests, and to offer specific recommendations to departments where appropriate. She indicated that these guidelines address the appropriate target audience: department heads and appointing authorities.

Upon a motion by Mr. Finger, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Board voted 4-6-2. (Opposed: Drake, Johnson, Mason, Norton, Tarkington, Weissler. Abstained: Goldrick, Huffman) Motion failed.

Draft Submitted 10-17-2014 – Goldrick, Huffman

Mr. Goldrick offered a Budget Guidelines proposal summarized as follows:

- Reduce capital tax levy through a revision of the debt policy to permit flexible financing.
- Increase use of fund balance to \$14.78 million.
- Impose tipping fee on commercial haulers. FY16 increase in revenues of approximately \$3 million.
- Maintain discount rate on pension fund at 7.25%.
- Review of GPD active positions.
- Eliminate contribution to risk fund- \$500,000 savings to taxpayers in FY16.

Mr. Huffman added that this draft would reduce the burden on taxpayers who now bear the expense of 50-year projects over a 5 year financing period. He suggested that the Reserve Fund balance was excessively high given Greenwich property tax value and the probability that taxes will be paid. He emphasized that the institution of a tipping fee would discourage trucking in trash from Westchester and lessen environmental impact.

A discussion ensued. Several members indicated that this draft functioned as a statement of policy preferences, not as budget guidelines. Mr. Goldrick responded that the proposal was a bottom-line oriented strategy that achieved a lesser Mill Rate, kept taxes low and was proposed as a philosophical approach to the upcoming budgeting process.

Upon a motion by Mr. Goldrick, seconded by Mr. Huffman, the Board voted 2-10-0. (Opposed: Blankley, Drake, Finger, Johnson, Kiernan, Mason, Norton, Ramer, Tarkington, Weissler). Motion failed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular BET Meeting Minutes September 22, 2014

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the Regular BET Meeting Minutes from September 22, 2014.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Mason commented on how the Budget Guideline drafts did not differ radically on certain items: the dollars were not far apart; and, the Mill Rate not radically different.

Where the presentations differed was the issue of debt policy. He asserted that the 12-member BET was setting policy, devising initiatives and that the guidelines would set goals and objectives to set the path of the affairs of the Town. He emphasized that the creation of guidelines was not a re-examination of the Town's debt policy, a separate matter. He reminded Board members of their important task of serving the Town and taxpayers.

ADJOURNMENT

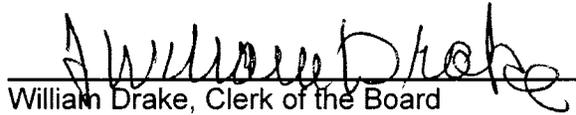
Upon a motion by Mr. Blankley, seconded by Ms. Weissler, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:43 P.M.

The next Regular Meeting of the BET is scheduled on Monday, November 17, 2014 in the Town Hall Meeting Room.

Respectfully submitted,



Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary



William Drake, Clerk of the Board



Michael S. Mason, Chairman