



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

**BUDGET COMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, November 9, 2020

Virtual Meeting

**Committee**

**Present:** Leslie L. Tarkington, Chair; Andy Duus, Leslie Moriarty, Jeffrey S. Ramer

**Staff:**

Caroline Baisley, Director, Health Department (Dept); Mark Dawson, Fire Marshall, Fire Dept; Roland Gieger, Director, Budget & Systems Management, Finance Dept; James Heavey, Chief, Police Dept; Jenny Larkin, Information Technology Dept; James Michel, Deputy Commissioner, Public Works Dept; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller, Finance Dept; Heather Smeriglio, Tax Collector; Deborah Travers RN, Director of Family Health, Health Dept

**Board:**

Michael Mason, Chairman; Laura Erickson, Karen Fassuliotis, Miriam Kreuzer, Elizabeth K. Krumeich, David Weisbrod

**Selectmen:**

Jill K. Oberlander, Select-person

**RTM:**

Michael Basham, (D-5) Chair, Finance Committee (Finance), Member, Labor Contracts Committee (LCC); Brooks Harris, (D-5) Finance; Barbara O'Neill (D) Education; Danyal Ozizmir, (D-5) Vice Chair Budget Overview Committee, Chair, LCC; Brian Raney, (D-9) Parks & Recreation; Lucy Von Brachel, (D-1) Education

**BOE/GPS:**

Dr. Toni Jones, Superintendent, GPS; Sean O'Keefe, Chief Operating Officer, GPS

**Public:**

Horst Tebbe, GCTV

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 A.M.

**REQUESTS FOR BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
HD-2	Health	Approval to Use
\$43,311	F403 Various	PHEP Grant

Ms. Baisley explained that this Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) grant was to pay for an emergency preparedness coordinator to oversee tasks such as mobilizing the medical

reserve corps, participating in a regional strike team monitoring essential workers, and organizing drive-thru flu clinics that will model future COVID-19 vaccination clinics; and is a reimbursement grant. The expenses for the part time emergency preparedness employee will be totally covered by the Grant. The Health Department has sufficient supplies of PPE materials for its staff and to share with local doctors in case of an emergency.

HD-3	Health	Approval to Use
\$115,597	F403 Various	ELC COVID -19 Grant

Ms. Baisley explained that the COVID-19 Grant would cover the cost of replacing current volunteer “contact tracers” and new refrigeration equipment needed to store COVID-19 vaccines at an extreme low temperature. The Committee reviewed expenditures to date to understand if sufficient revenue was available and how the Department anticipated spending the Grants’ second- and third-year allocations. The Committee expressed appreciation for the Health Department’s work during the pandemic emergency and thanked Ms. Baisley for her leadership.

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Mr. Duus, to approve the use of HD-2, PHEP Grant for \$43,311, and HD-3, ELC COVID-19 Grant for \$115,597, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to recommend the applications to the full BET as Routine Applications. Motion carried.

ED-4	BOE	Hiring Authorization
	B680 5960 21254	Additional Custodial Staff

Mr. O’Keefe reported that the BOE would like to restore custodial staffing to its 2018 headcount level of 85 custodians for the following reasons: COVID-19 required deep-cleaning, and increased square-footage per custodian that required cleaning. He reported that the salary expense would be less than the current cost of overtime being spent to cover FLMA, vacation and sick time. The District would be able to cover the cost of benefits carried by the Town, which would be offset by reductions in budgeted overtime and transportation costs. Some members of the Committee offered suggestions such as hiring temporary part time staff until February’s Departmental Budget Hearings, scheduling variations of part time hours, outsourcing, and consulting with the Town’s Maintenance Department to discuss staffing alternatives, like permanent part-time staff. The Committee requested follow-up information on suggested temporary solutions prior to the upcoming full BET meeting.

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, the Committee voted 2-2-0 (Opposed: Duus, Tarkington) to approve the additional staffing presented. Motion failed.

PW-2	Public Works (DPW)	Additional Appropriation
\$2,500,000	Z312 59620	South Stanwich Road Causeway

Deputy Commissioner Michel explained that due to the collapse of a 55-foot segment of the south side of South Stanwich Road on September 14, the road has been closed. The re-routing of all vehicles, including Fire, Police and GEM emergency vehicles, increases destination arrival time by approximately 5 minutes. Since the causeway divides Aquarion Water Company’s Rockwood Lake reservoir, land records have been researched to identify ownership of the road as the Town’s. The Committee was told the 500-foot causeway does not qualify as a bridge.

Mr. Michel proposed using the design-build process to expedite the emergency repair to both sides of the road due to favorable factors such as the current drought low water level, state health

department approval, and availability of esthetically appropriate stone materials currently being removed from a nearby Aquarion reservoir. Aquarion is using a Town approved on-call contractor for that project, and the contractor could be used for the Town’s approximately 450 feet long dry stone laid wall repair with completion estimated at the end of March. Aquarion’s collaboration with the Town is expected to continue with Aquarion’s objective to refill the reservoir beginning in April. The project is presented with a 40% contingency.

Various sources for funding were considered for this interim appropriation including bonding, and use of General Fund or Capital Non-Recurring Fund balance. After considering the estimated life of the repair of 50 to 75 years or more, continued unknowns including the impact of COVID-19, and input from Mr. Mynarski, the Committee is recommending bonding.

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the request for \$2.5 million accompanied by a bond resolution and recommend the application to the full BET as Non-Routine Application. Motion carried.

PD-3	Police	Acceptance of a Gift
	Z213 59000	Body Cameras

Chief Heavey requested permission for the Police Department to accept an anonymous donation of 4 new motor-powered bicycles valued at \$19,044. When the 3-year warranty expires, the Department could choose to extend the warranty with the payment of \$700. The Department’s intention is to use the bicycles to patrol Greenwich Point Park, Greenwich Avenue, and other Town parks. Currently, the Department has only 3 useable bicycles.

The Committee discussed the anonymity of the gift and how the gift policy of the Town applied. Mr. Mason confirmed that since this was not a gift of cash, the application was not in the BET’s purview. Chief Heavey suggested he would discuss the gift policy with the Town Attorney to be prepared to answer questions from the RTM when the acceptance request would be presented at the next meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- **Discussion of Economic Conditions**

Mr. Gieger, Director of Budget & Systems Management, commented that since the Budget Committee meeting occurred so early in November, the Town revenues and expenses were in the process of being posted.

- **Discussion of Tax Collections and Tax Delinquencies**

The Tax Collector, Ms. Smeriglio, reported on Departmental improvements including: the first official direct mailing which successfully netted collection of \$2.2 million of delinquent taxes; mailing to delinquent car tax mailing netted \$84,000; and, the tax collection rate for was currently 102%. Ms. Smeriglio noted that the Tax Collector Office maintained its goal of same day processing and deposit of checks even during COVID-19 epidemic closure of local banks. Concern was expressed that certain delinquent tax debts had now become unenforceable under the fifteen-year statute of limitations. It was discussed that control mechanisms need to be put in place in collaboration with the BET Liaisons to monitor expiring tax debts, and any determinations not to enforce such debts need to be shared decisions, perhaps by a process involving the BET Audit Committee. The Tax Collector

concurred, and undertook also the review of enforcement procedure with the Town Attorney.

### **Old Business**

- **Department of Human Service budget update**

Ms. Tarkington referred the Committee to a memo in the Meeting Package in which, the Human Services Department indicated that after its previous meeting with the Committee, it had followed the recommended guidelines and reviewed in-place staffing and no longer needed the additional financial resources requested earlier. Additionally, the issues with external entities had been resolved and extra savings were found because of the reduction of client transportation requirements due to COVID-19 facility closures.

### **Approval of the BET Budget Committee Meeting Minutes**

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Committee voted 3-0-1 (Abstain: Duus) to approve the Minutes of the Budget Committee Special Meeting of October 8, 2020. Motion carried.

The draft October 13, 2020-Regular Meeting Webinar minutes were deferred for approval until the next meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 1:08 P.M. Motion carried.

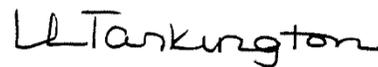
Next Regular Meeting of the BET Budget Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, December 15, 2020 at 1:00 P.M. The Meeting is scheduled a virtual webinar meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



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Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary



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Leslie L Tarkington, Budget Committee Chair