

TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION

BUDGET COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Cone Meeting Room
November 15, 2005

Present:

Committee: Valeria P. Storms, Chairman
Jara Burnett, Laurence Simon, Stephen Walko

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Roland Gieger, Budget Director; Chris DeMeo, Risk Management Director; Wayne Fox, Town Attorney; Aamina Ahmad, Law Department; Sue Wallerstein, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services (Board of Education); Ed Gomeau, Town Administrator; Ray Butler and other staff from Department of Social Services

Board: Current: Kathryn Guimard, Michael Mason, Alma Rutgers, Peter Tesei
Incoming: Nancy Barton, Jim Himes, Art Norton, Leslie Tarkington

Board Ex Officio: James Lash, First Selectman; Peter Crumbine, Selectman

Other: Anne Drake, Russell Turk, co-chairs, Board of Social Services, and other board members; Greg Howard, AON Risk Consultants; Lou Caravella, Tax Collector

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 P.M.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The committee voted unanimously to enter into executive session at 6:32 to discuss a settlement of legal claims.

In attendance were:

Roland Gieger: Budget Director

Peter Mynarski: Comptroller

Wayne Fox, Aamina Ahmad : Law Department

Ed Gomeau: Town Administrator

Mssrs. Himes, Mason, Norton, Simon, Tesei, and Walko: current and incoming BET

Mmes: Barton, Burnett, Guimard, Rutgers, Storms, and Tarkington: current and incoming BET

Peter Crumbine, Ex Officio BET

The committee voted unanimously to conclude the executive session and resume the regular meeting at 6:44 PM.

SE-1 FIRST SELECTMAN - Additional Appropriation - \$65,000

Request for additional appropriation:

\$65,000	to	P935-57350	Settlement
\$65,000	from		Risk Fund Balance

This request is being made by First Selectman's office for \$65,000 for settlement of Vincent Ambrose v. Town of Greenwich. The settlement has been approved by the Board of Selectmen, the Claims Committee of the RTM, and the Law Committee of the BET.

The committee voted unanimously to approve the request and forward it to the Board of Estimate and Taxation as a routine application.

Department of Social Services Update

Ann Drake and Russell Turk, the new co-chairs of the Board of Social Services, and Ray Butler, acting commissioner of the department, were present to discuss with the committee what their plans are, at least in the short term, for the department. The following subjects were included in the discussion:

- Difficulties in moving ahead with many plans before a new commissioner is in place.
- Progress made as EVOLV is being used in the implementation of outcome based budgeting.
- The need for job descriptions from the HR Department in order to plan for the restructuring of the department as recommended by the recent study.
- Imminent release of the final draft of the community needs assessment report authorized by the board.
- Brief overview of '07 budget.
- The need to define those to be served by the department in its role as provider of a social services safety net.
- Programs under review: Community Gifts, Campership, BANC, Youth Conservation, Homemaker Services.

ED-1 BOARD OF EDUCATION – Additional Appropriation - \$352,000

Request for additional appropriation:

\$352,000	to	A6501792-54950	Maintenance NOC
\$352,000	from		Contingency

Recent heavy rainfall resulted in extensive property and structural damage at Old Greenwich School because the sewer pipes could not maintain capacity during storm surges. This was further exacerbated by a sewer line break in the neighborhood. Several classrooms were evacuated due to contamination; some bathrooms were closed, and school was closed early on October 14, 2005. Remediation has been both challenging and expensive, as it requires asbestos abatement work in confined spaces.

The school district will continue to work with the Town Risk Manager and Director of Emergency Preparedness to seek reimbursement for these unanticipated expenditures, which include asbestos abatement, cleaning and disinfecting of damaged areas, environmental testing, custodial and maintenance overtime, outside moving services, and reconstruction of structural damage. The work is estimated to take five weeks.

Dr. Wallerstein presented the application. She explained that this was an extraordinary natural disaster that no one anticipated, resulting in flooded classrooms. While the original requested amount was \$300,000, additional documentation received after the application was submitted shows that an appropriation of \$352,000 is needed. She stated that there is not enough money in the BOE's budgeted maintenance allocation for this item. She therefore requests that the immediate cost be covered by this interim appropriation, although she expects that 75% to 100% will eventually be reimbursed by a combination of money from FEMA and the Town's insurance.

The committee voted unanimously to approve the request and forward it to the Board of Estimate and Taxation as a routine application.

ED-2 BOARD OF EDUCATION- Approval to Use - \$9,279

Request for approval to use:

\$9,279	to	Z6801792-59830-26067	Cos Cob Playground
\$9,279	from		Gift

The Cos Cob School received capital project funds in 2005-06 for the purchase and installation of new playground equipment. In addition to the approved capital project, the Cos Cob PTA wishes to donate \$9,279 to the Town to be used to purchase supplemental playground equipment, with the understanding that this contribution must cover all associated costs including removal of existing equipment, selection, purchase, and installation. While the PTA has identified specific equipment for purchase, the final selection, purchase, and installation of playground equipment purchased with PTA funding will be at the sole discretion of the Town.

Dr. Wallerstein presented the application. She stressed the importance of maintaining a commitment to universal playground standards, which include access by individuals with disability.

The committee voted unanimously to approve the request and forward it to the Board of Estimate and Taxation as a routine application.

APPROVAL OF FINANCE DEPARTMENT, ASSESSOR, AND TAX COLLECTOR BUDGETS:

Peter Mynarski reviewed the Finance Department's budget.
Roland Gieger reviewed the assessor's budget
Lou Caravella reviewed the tax collector's budget.
Operating plans were not presented with the budgets but requested by the time of the BET meeting on Monday, November 21, 2005.
They are all within BET budget guidelines.

The committee voted to approve the Finance Department's, assessor's, and tax collector's budgets for submission to the Board of Estimate and Taxation.

MONTHLY PRESENTATION TOPICS

Workers Compensation and Risk Management

Chris DeMeo, Risk Management Director, provided answers to questions about workers compensation issues to the committee. Mr. Simon asked if Risk Management is continuing to reduce workers compensation claims and is devoting enough time to process them effectively. Mr. DeMeo pointed out that current cases are being reviewed extensively to see if they can be moved along through the process quicker throughout the year. Mr. Simon asked if there were more resources available, would costs be reduced for workers compensation? Mr. DeMeo replied that while it might seem that more staff working on claims would speed up the process, due to the number of departments that review the claims, more staff would make little difference. The Law Department, Risk Management, CIRMA, and Human Resources are just some of the departments that see a claim.

Mr. DeMeo said that it is possible that case reserves are being set too high; therefore he plans to look at them more often than once a year, which has been the current practice.

Wayne Fox, Town Attorney, explained the claim process. Once a claim comes in it is referred to Mr. DeMeo and also to CIRMA. CIRMA does a limited evaluation and it is returned to the Law Department for evaluation and review. The review process can be quite thorough. Statements, photographs, and other materials need to be evaluated and reviewed as well. Communication and sharing of information between the many people reviewing each case is the key to processing claims in an efficient manner. Mr. DeMeo said that communication with the Law Department has greatly improved.

Greg Howard presented the June 30, 2005 AON analysis of Town risks. The loss reports are obtained from CIRMA, which handles insurance claims. Discussion followed regarding how claims are paid out. It was pointed out that for many claims that are incurred, especially the larger and more serious ones, the payout is usually several years away.

Change of Tuesday, January 10, 2006 Budget Committee meeting to Wednesday, January 11, 2006.

Upon a motion by Mr. Simon, and seconded by Mr. Walko, the committee voted unanimously to change the Tuesday, January 10, 2006 Budget Committee meeting to Wednesday, January 11, 2006.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon a motion by Mr. Simon, seconded by Mr. Walko, the committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the October 11, 2005 Budget Committee meeting.

There being no further business before the committee, upon a motion by Mr. Walko, and seconded by Ms. Burnett, the committee voted 4-0-0 to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Zebrowski
Valerie Zebrowski, Recording Secretary

Valeria P. Storms
Valeria P. Storms, Chairman