TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION BUDGET COMMITTEE

MINUTES – Town Hall Meeting Room

Tuesday, November 15, 2016

Committee Present: James A. Lash, Chairman; Mary Lee A. Kiernan, Jeffrey S. Ramer, Leslie L. Tarkington

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; J.W. Fox, Town Attorney; Aamina Ahmad. Assistant Town Attorney; Todd Laudonia, Tax Collector; Mary Pepe, Human Resource Department Director; Erica Mahoney, Human Resource Department, Assistant Director

Board: Michael Mason, BET Chairman; William Drake, Beth Krumich, Leslie Moriarty, Arthur Norton, Jill Oberlander, Nancy Weissler

BOE: Laura Erickson, BOE Chairman; Jim Hricay, BOE Managing Director of Operations

Other: Ken Borsuk, Reporter, Greenwich Time

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 P.M.

Mr. Lash welcomed Committee members and attendees.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Discussion of Claim Update

Mr. Lash called for an Executive Session to discuss a Claim Update.

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Committee voted 4-0 to enter Executive Session at 5:01 P.M.

The Committee exited Executive Session at 5:31 P.M.

The Committee voted 4-0 to end the Executive Session at 5:31 P.M.

Requests for Budget Adjustments

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<tr>
<th>HR-1</th>
<th>Human Resource Department</th>
<th>Transfer</th>
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<td>$12,129</td>
<td>A109 51940</td>
<td>Offset RTM Budget Adjustments</td>
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Ms. Pepe explained that the request was to reduce six (6) Budget Object Codes (Other Services - $2,220.00; Other Salary Expense - 450.00; Telephone - $2,200.00; Transportation - $1,000.00; Supplies & Materials - $1,100.00; and, Legal Advertising - $5,159.00) to reallocate funds to cover the RTM adjustments to the department's budget. Mr. Lash asked if the amount of the transfer of funds would have been returned to the General Fund or if a shortfall was anticipated; Ms. Pepe responded the majority of the amount would have reverted to the General Fund at yearend.

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Committee voted 4-0 to approve the transfer of funds and forward the application to the Board of Estimate and Taxation as a Routine Application.
Mr. Hricay explained that unanticipated environmental testing and remediation planning at Western Middle School's fields required the transfer of funds from the Maintenance of Building/Supplies Object Code to Professional Architect & Engineering Budget Code. Mr. Lash asked if any of the work had begun, to which Mr. Hricay responded that these funds would be used to identify contaminated areas on a distant playing field. Explaining that funds he was requesting to transfer would be for non-Capital items, possibly leaving some maintenance items undone, Ms. Tarkington asked why funds were being transferred from the Operating Budget rather than being appropriated in capital and bonded with funding over a seven-year period similar to the MISA/GHS testing and remediation projects. Mr. Mynarski assured the Budget Committee that this could be adjusted accordingly at a later meeting. Ms. Kiernan asked whether this was all the funds needed for testing and Mr. Hricay explained that there would likely be a further request for testing money in an application for funds to remediate the fields. Ms. Kiernan also pointed out the further funding option of utilizing funds from the Capital Non-Recurring account, which is part of Fund Balance. Mr. Hricay responded that when the size of the project was known, the transferred amount would be reimbursed to the Maintenance of Buildings Object Code but currently this step was being taken to seek RTM approval at its January meeting. Mr. Lash recommended that a standard process be instituted for this type of Test/Solve/Oversight project in the future.

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Committee voted 4-0 to approve the transfer of funds and forward the application to the Board of Estimate and Taxation as a Routine Application.

Mr. Laudonia requested re-instatement of cuts made in the Tax Collector's budget to rectify a shortfall anticipated before the end of FY2016-2017.

Mr. Lash asked for further justification for re-instating the funds cut from the Department's Budget. Mr. Ramer asked whether the Tax Collection Department has instituted any changes or cuts or economies since the Budget reduction was imposed, or whether the Tax Collector was simply asking for the cut to be reinstated in toto without any changes at his end. The Tax Collector indicated that he had made no changes. Ms. Kiernan noted that the circumstances had not changed since March, when the BET voted on the Tax Collector's reduced budget or February, when the BET asked Mr. Laudonia to provide thoughts on efficiencies and new ways of doing business in the Tax Collector's office; that the RTM had approved the Tax Collector's reduced budget and made an additional cut of $2,040 to the department's budget; and, that there appears to be no plan to reduce costs or increase departmental efficiencies. Mr. Lash encouraged Mr. Laudonia to reduce the department's "spend-rate" because the alternative was to run out of money by May 15, 2017. Mr. Mynarski added that the consequence of running out of funds would mean that the department would close. Ms. Tarkington recommended that Mr. Laudonia take advantage of the balance of months in the FY2017 Budget pointing out that other Departments had brought forward savings by transferring funds within their Department's Object Codes. She
suggested that the Department address both its FY 2017 budget as well as the FY 2018 budget during the February budget meetings.

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington to approve the appropriation, no second was forthcoming; the motion failed.

Mr. Mason remarked that furloughs were not an option because no return date was being offered. Layoffs, while reducing spend-rate, still had associated costs of unemployment. He asked if the Committee had a plan to offer. Mr. Lash responded that the plan would be for Mr. Laudonia, as elected Tax Collector, to work with the HR Department to identify options and the personnel rules which would apply to the situation.

Old Business

None

New Business

Approval of Finance Department FY17-18 Budget and Operations Plan - Mr. Mynarski began his comments by noting that a 1% increase over the previous year’s Departmental Budget was planned. He noted that salaries would be increasing by 1.7% because of savings resulting from retirements, reduction in longevity payments and overtime. He added the cost of the BOE single audit of $56,700 would be charged back to BOE and that the RTM budget cuts would be absorbed in the Department’s Budget 100s Object Code. Mr. Mynarski indicated that the Finance Department’s Operation Plan was ready for the process of BET approval after review by Mr. Mason and Ms. Kiernan. He commented that the streamlining proposed by the First Selectman’s Office had been incorporated in the Finance Department planning.

Upon a motion by Ms. Kiernan, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to accept the Finance Department Budget & Operations Plan and forward it to the Board of Estimate and Taxation for its consideration.

Approval of the Assessor’s Office FY17-FY18 Budget and Operations Plan

The Committee agreed to forward the Assessor’s Budget and Operations Plan directly to the Board of Estimate and Taxation for its consideration.

Approval of BET Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Committee voted 4-0 to approve the Minutes of the Budget Committee’s Regular Meeting October 13, 2016.

Adjournment

The Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:16 P.M.

Next regular meeting will be November 15, 2016 at 5:00 P.M. in the Cone Room.
Respectfully submitted,

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Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary

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James A. Lash, Chairman.