MINUTES of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation held on Monday, November 16, 2020 in a virtual Zoom webinar, Greenwich, CT.

Chairman Michael S. Mason called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

Board members in attendance:

   Michael S. Mason, Chairman
   Karen Fassuliotis, Vice Chairman
   William Drake, Clerk
   Andreas Duus III
   Laura Erickson
   Debra Hess
   Miriam Kreuzer
   Elizabeth K. Krumeich
   Leslie Moriarty
   Jeffrey S. Ramer
   Leslie L. Tarkington
   David Weisbrod

Staff:   Lauren Elliott, Assessor; Roland Gieger, Director, Budget & Systems
        Management, Finance Department; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Heather
        Smeriglio, Tax Collector

Selectmen: Fred Camillo, First Selectman; Jill K. Oberlander, Select-person

BOE/GPS: Sean O'Keefe, Chief Operating Officer, GPS

RTM: Irene Dietrich, (D-8), Health & Human Services; Lucia Jansen, (D-7), Chair, Budget
      Overview Committee; Janet Stone McGuigan, (D-6), Education; Brian Raney, (D-9) Parks & Recreation

Public: Patrick Arden; William Auerswald, CFO, Greenwich County Day School; Nancy
        Better, Ken Borsuk, Reporter, Greenwich Time; Nancy Brown; Thomas Hasley, Eagle Hill School; Richard Kaufman, Reporter, Greenwich Sentinel; Barbara
        O’Neill; Adam Rohdie, Headmaster, Greenwich Country Day School; Horst Tebbe, GCTV

Chairman Mason reminded the meeting’s audience that pursuant to a State Executive Order, the
meeting was authorized to be held as a virtual meeting.
### Request for Budget Adjustment

The Board of Estimate & Taxation (BET) traditionally votes immediately on Routine Applications without requesting a Budget Committee report.

The Clerk of the BET, Mr. Drake, read the following Routine Applications requesting Budget Adjustments.

#### ROUTINE APPLICATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HD-2</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Approval to Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$43,311</td>
<td>F403 Various</td>
<td>PHEP Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HD-3</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Approval to Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$115,597</td>
<td>F403 Various</td>
<td>ELC COVID-19 Grant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mr. Drake made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to Approve the Use of both the PHEP Grant for $43,311 and the ELC COVID-19 Grant for $115,597 for the Health Department. The Board voted 12-0-0. Motion carried.

#### NON-ROUTINE APPLICATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PW-2</td>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>Additional Appropriation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2,500,000</td>
<td>B312 59620</td>
<td>South Stanwich Road Causeway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ms. Tarkington reported that Deputy Commissioner Michel, Police Chief Heavey and Fire Marshal Dawson requested the Additional Appropriation to shore-up the Town’s closed Causeway collapsed roadway to reduce response time of emergency vehicles and take advantage of optimal circumstances of reservoir water-level and Aquarion donation of esthetically matching materials. The Budget Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the appropriation and recommended bonding as the means of funding the project.

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, to approve the additional appropriation of $2,500,000 to repair the South Stanwich Road Causeway. The Board voted 12-0-0. Motion carried.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FI-2</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Bonding Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2,500,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>South Stanwich Road Causeway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ms. Tarkington reported that the Budget Committee considered the funding alternatives (Bonding, Capital Non-Recurring Fund, or Fund Balance) and unanimously voted to recommend borrowing $2,500,000 through a Bonding Resolution after considering the useful life of the repaired causeway to be 50-75 years.

The Board discussed the funding recommendation and considered that a bonding resolution would be the faster of the funding alternatives. Mr. Mynarski explained that the amount was small for a stand-alone bonding resolution. He recommended using $2.5 million from the Capital Non-Recurring Fund, seeking RTM project approval at its December meeting and then combining $2.5 million into the annual January 2021 Bond sale. In the event that the project is completed and requires less than the $2.5 million, the funding can come from alternative sources than bonding during the February/March Budget Hearings.

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Ramer, to approve Using $2.5 million interim appropriation from the Capital Non-Recurring Fund, the Board voted 8-3-1 (Opposed: Drake, Hess, Mason) (Abstain: Fassuliotis) Motion carried.

ASSESSOR’S REPORT

The Town Assessor Ms. Elliott, highlighted the following items from her written monthly report: all field work for the real estate portion of the 2020 ReVal has been completed, no appraisers are in the field due to COVID-19 but there are still 1,265 residential, 245 commercial and 136 tax exempt properties to be inspected in the Spring; approximately 2,000 Personal property declarations were returned by the November 2 deadline of which 716 were returned electronically. Several 2018 and 2019 tax appeal ligation cases have been settled, and one new tax appeal has been received. Ms. Elliott will send a follow-up report to the BET on the impact of the tax settlements on the Grand List and add the calculation to the Assessor’s monthly report going forward.

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Board voted 12-0-0 to accept the Assessor’s Report. Motion carried.

COMPTROLLER’S REPORT

Comptroller Mynarski drew the Board’s attention to topics in his written Report: the Town’s external auditor, RSM US Tax & Consulting, will make a presentation of the FY2020 Audit at the Audit Committee on December 2, BET members could attend the credit rating agency review meeting on December 17, subject to FOIA rules. Bond amounts are estimated to be $30 million this year, in comparison to the previous year’s ranging between $50-$55 million; capital spending is down, however 23 capital projects were not started due to the pandemic. The Board requested a list of these projects.

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Board voted 12-0-0 to accept the Comptroller’s Report. Motion carried.
TREASURER’S REPORT

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Mr. Weisbrod, the Board voted 11-0-1 (Abstain: Krumeich) to accept the Treasurer’s Report. Motion carried.

BET Standing Committee Reports
None

BET Liaison Reports

Nathaniel Witherell – Mr. Duus and Ms. Krumeich reported that many responses are expected to the October 29, 2020 RFP to purchase or manage the Nathaniel Witherell. The BET was reminded that both the Nathaniel Witherell Strategic Planning Committee and the Consultant (Health Dimensions Group) recommended pursuing the strategic options in their Final Reports, moving these options from theoretical possibilities to practical options which can be considered for execution. Proposals are due by December 15, 2020 and thereafter will be evaluated.

BET Special Project Team Reports
None.

OLD BUSINESS
None

NEW BUSINESS

• Tax Collector Policy regarding delinquent property taxes

The Tax Collector Ms. Smeriglio, noted that $206 million of the $260 million total had been collected in October, under the extension granted. She described the process underway to collect delinquent Real Estate taxes before the 15-year statutory cut off deadline. After a discussion with the BET Liaisons, Ms. Fassuliotis and Mr. Ramer, Ms. Smeriglio had asked for clarification of BET Policy on monitoring and enforcement. The Board requested a list of delinquencies, market values, outstanding amounts, and an aging report to assist in developing a collection policy and enforcement program. An Ad Hoc Committee, Ms. Smeriglio, the Assessor, the BET Liaisons, and the Law Committee, will be formed to discuss the requested clarification.

• Tax Policy for Residential Real Property Owned by Private Schools

The Assessor made a presentation on status of taxing of off-campus (Group #1) and on-campus faculty housing (Group #2). Ms. Elliott commented that a decision as to when and whether the properties might be added to the tax roll needs direction from the BET. Discussion ensued.
Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, to continue the discussion on the policy until the next BET meeting. The Board voted 3-9-0, (Opposed: Drake, Duus, Erickson, Fassuliotis, Hess, Kreuzer, Mason, Tarkington, Weisbrod) Motion failed.

Ms. Fassuliotis, as a member of the BET Liaison team, presented the Liaisons’ proposed Statement of Policy and commented that it provided the Assessor with authorization and direction as to how to proceed. The key paragraph reads: *(The BET hereby authorizes the Assessor to conduct a review of residential structures owned by private schools within the Town of Greenwich for the housing of faculty, staff and their families and to determine whether the circumstances and facts of such ownership and use allows or disallows said property to be exempt from taxation in accordance with State law; and the BET further authorizes the Assessor to notify those private school property owners determined not to be exempt from real estate taxation of the change of status of said property pursuant to the notification requirements required by State law.)*

Mr. Mason made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ramer, to modify the key paragraph by inserting “Group #1” between “a review of” and “residential structures” in the first sentence to read as follows “a review of Group #1 residential structures”.

Mr. Ramer made a motion to amend, to delete all the key paragraph leaving only: *(The BET hereby authorizes the Assessor to conduct a review of residential structures owned by private schools within the Town of Greenwich for the housing of faculty, staff and their families. Motion withdrawn.)*

Ms. Fassuliotis made a motion, seconded by Ms. Krumeich, to approve the Statement of Policy proposed by the Liaisons to the Assessor’s Department as originally presented.

The Board members had a lengthy discussion. Some said a policy from the BET was not needed, and others said a policy was needed. Some said the Assessor already had the appropriate authority as a job responsibility; questioning whether there was any need for a BET Resolution. Other topics were separating the Resolution into two Resolutions – one for Group #1 and a second for Group #2; only authorizing the Assessor to do research; or, authorizing her to give the properties notification that the Assessor is exploring the matter.

Ms. Kreuzer made a motion to amend, seconded by Mr. Ramer, to remove the text after the semi-colon in the key paragraph to read as follows: *(The BET hereby authorizes the Assessor to conduct a review of residential structures owned by private schools within the Town of Greenwich for the housing of faculty, staff and their families and to determine whether the circumstances and facts of such ownership and use allows or disallows said property to be exempt from taxation in accordance with State law.)*
Board voted 5-7-0. (Opposed: Drake, Duus, Erickson, Fassuliotis, Hess, Mason, Tarkington) Motion failed.

Upon the motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Ms. Fassuliotis, to approve the original text of the Statement of Policy as presented in the BET package, the Board voted 8-3-1. (Opposed: Hess, Krumeich, Moriarty) (Abstain: Erickson)

COVID-19 Grants – Discussion and approval of resolutions to accept COVID-19 Grant Funds

Ms. Fassuliotis made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to approve the resolutions in the BET package to accept the COVID-19 Grant Funds. Motion withdrawn.

Ms. Fassuliotis added FY2020 – FY2021 to the last sentence of each Resolution to provide a sunset date consistent with the receipt of grants.

Ms. Moriarty made a motion to amend, seconded by Mr. Drake, add the following at the end of the first paragraph: *The Town is also authorized to apply for and accept funds from the Federal Government and the State of Connecticut under legislation and/or regulations enacted in FY21 relating to COVID-19 and subsequent acts and such funds shall become appropriations upon approval by the Board of Estimate and Taxation. Equivalent language is added to the second thru fifth paragraphs with minor changes as appropriate to each.*

(Opposed: Fassuliotis, Hess, Tarkington, Duus) (Abstain: Mason) Motion carried by vote of 7-4-1.

The Board vote unanimously in favor of the Policy Statement as amended. Motion carried.

Acceptance of OPEB Actuary Report

Mr. Duus reported that the IAC had voted 4-0-0 to accept the annual actuarial valuation for July 1, 2020 presented by Boomershine Consulting of the Actuarially Determined Employer Contribution (ADEC) amount for fiscal 2022: $3,835,004. Although higher than the previous two years, it is less than the FY2019 ADEC of $4.4 million. The OPEB Trust fund maintains a higher discount rate of 7% because it expects a higher yield and has a larger investment in equities. The Trust advisors are financial professionals who volunteer their expertise on the OPEB Trust Board, which also reduces costs.

The Board vote unanimously in favor of accepting the annual Actuarial Report. Motion carried.

Chair’s Report
Mr. Mason commented that meetings with the First Selectman and Town Administrator were scheduled monthly. He met with the new Finance Department Executive Assistant, Ms. Davis, and encouraged each BET member to introduce themselves. The First Selectman’s Downtown initiative and other new initiatives are going forward. The Town’s nonprofits are expressing concern about their financial stability and suggest they may need assistance if the pandemic further disrupts their peak fundraising period.

**Approval of BET Meeting Minutes**

Upon a motion by Mr. Drake, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, the Board voted 12-0-0 to postpone approval of the Minutes of the Regular BET Meeting of October 19, 2020 as amended. Motion carried.

Upon a motion by Mr. Drake, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the Minutes of the Special BET Meeting of October 29, 2020. Motion carried.

**Adjournment**

Upon a motion by Ms. Erickson, seconded by Ms. Kreuzer, the Board voted 12-0-0 to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 P.M. Motion carried.

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation is on Thursday, December 17, 2020 at 6:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signatures]

Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary

William Drake, Clerk of the Board

Michael Mason, Chairman