

TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION BUDGET COMMITTEE
MINUTES – Town Hall Meeting Room

Tuesday, December 13, 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; Mary Pepe, Human Resource Department Director; Ben Branyan, Town Administrator; Chief James Heavey, Police Department; Mark Kordick, Captain, Police Department Detective Division, Aleksandra Moch, Land Use, Conservation Department; Paul Curtis, Volunteer, Greenwich Community Television

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

Selectmen: Peter Tesei, First Selectman

BOE: Barbara O'Neill, Vice Chairman, BOE Chairman; Jim Hricay, BOE Managing Director of Operations

RTM: Ajit Laroia, RTM District 11

Public: Juliana Moch, Student, Greenwich High School, Safe Rides Program; James Boutelle, Director, TAG; Mike Miller, Board Member, Treasurer, TAG; John Strong, GEMS Fiscal Officer; Tracy Schietinger, Director of Operations, GEMS

The meeting was called to order at 5:06 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 5:07 P.M.

The Committee exited Executive Session at 5:27 P.M.

The Committee voted 4-0 to end the Executive Session at 5:27 P.M.

Requests for Budget Adjustments

<u>SE-10</u>	<u>First Selectman</u>	<u>Additional Appropriation</u>
\$14,000	A440 5722	Contribution to Channel 79

The Committee voted 4-0 to postpone action on this Budget Adjustment Request.

<u>SE-11</u>	<u>First Selectman</u>	<u>Additional Appropriation</u>
\$65,000	A440 572221 & 57231	Contribution to TAG & Safe Rides

Ms. Kiernan advised Mr. Lash that she would abstain from the discussion and voting on this item due to an affiliation with the Greenwich YWCA, which contracts with TAG for a transportation program.

Chief Heavey provided an overview of the Safe Rides Program's history and operations. He explained that when the Program partnered with the Police Department, the Town of Greenwich was responsible for its liability. It was moved out of the Town Budget and TAG assumed the responsibility. Mr. Boutelle commented that an \$18,000 interim appropriation was needed to continue the program's Friday and Saturday night Safe Rides transportation to students between 10:00 P.M. and 2:00 A.M, as the First Selectman unintentionally had not included the Safe Rides program request in his Budget. The appropriation would fund compensation for two adult drivers and an adult in the office who worked with the 60 student volunteers. During the previous year, it had operated on 72 nights. Mr. Boutelle commented that TAG pays for the fixed costs, and the Town pays for the variable costs. Mr. Boutelle shared that when the program was run by the Red Cross it ran 10 nights a year for key high school events. TAG has expanded the program to operate every Friday and Saturday during the school year.

Juliana Moch remarked that use of the program was on the increase, relying on its 60 public and private high school student volunteers to be available to manage the program's social media, answering phones and directing drivers to locations. When Mr. Lash asked if other taxi or Uber services could be substituted, Ms. Moch said that cost, dependability, and trustworthy reputation made the Safe Rides program preferable. She said that the Safe Rides program is free to the students, whereas use of, its route, and cost of an Uber ride would be identified on a student's or his parent's credit card bill.

Mr. Tesei advised that there had been funding from two foundations that he had contacted on behalf of TAG, which when supplemented by a few thousand dollars of unused funds contributed from his own Re-Election Campaign Fund, provided approximately \$15,000, that Mr. Tesei said he understood were to be for the FY 2017 budget of the Safe Rides program of TAG. Mr. Tesei reminded the Committee that teens driving licenses had restrictions on their hours of use, and that this life safety program took priority in his hierarchy of needs. Mr. Boutelle added that Mr. Tesei and the foundations' contributions were used to fund shortfalls in the previous year's Safe Rides program.

Mr. Ramer suggested that TAG and the Program return with a Budget to the Committee's February Hearings, so that the program could be evaluated among other programs requesting funding. Mr. Boutelle responded that TAG's negotiation with Norwalk Transit were taking place and he needed to know whether to inform Norwalk Transit that the program might be canceled due to inadequate reimbursement of other contracted programs or if TAG would be able to continue. Mr. Lash commented that despite the program receiving 15-20 calls per weekend and transporting 40-50 passengers, a more cost-efficient way to provide this service needed to be identified. The Committee discussed the average cost of a Safe Rides trip, which exceeded \$40.

Mr. Boutelle suggested that it was TAG's intention to encourage Safe Rides to become a stand-alone 501(c)(3) so that its fundraising could be more effective, but lamented the time and paper work required for the IRS application.

Mr. Boutelle then moved on to the balance of the Additional Appropriation request for TAG

services to offset deficits being incurred due to inadequate reimbursements by Norwalk Transit for TAG's ADA services; Mr. Miller commented that their request was urgent because the disabled population's growth was accelerating and Norwalk Transit needed to be advised by March 17, 2017 if TAG intended to discontinue this Service. He suggested that the timetable of the February Budget Hearing, BET vote and RTM voting would not allow TAG to maintain its budget without an additional appropriation.

Each member of the Budget Committee shared their thinking on the issue and Mr. Lash proposed that Mr. Boutelle seek an authoritative answer from the state whether the state or Greenwich was required to provide the service. He added that the Budget Committee would take up the issue in January or February after Mr. Boutelle had that information.

The Committee vote 3-0-1 to postpone action on this Budget Adjustment Request (Abstain: Kiernan).

PD-1	Police Department	Approval to Use
\$52,500	F2173 5110 & 57050	Overtime Services & Benefits

Chief Heavey requested that the Police Department be authorized to accept a grant for DWI enforcement; 75% of funding would come from the grant and 25% would come from funds accumulated from ticket citation payments.

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

PD-2	Police Department	Approval to Use
\$0	F2173 51100 & 57050	Jet Ski Donation

Chief Heavey requested the ability to accept a donation of a Jet Ski, trailer and floating dock which would be used to conduct rescue operations in shallow areas.

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Kiernan, the Committee voted 2-2-0 to approve the application and forward it to the Board of Estimate and Taxation as a Non-Routine Application. (Opposed: Lash, Tarkington)

PD-3	Police Department	Approval to Use
\$182,869	F2139 53070	911 Grants/Municipal

Mr. Lash asked Captain Kordick where the new equipment fit in the Police Department's IT and communication plan; Capt. Kordick responded that the equipment which would be purchased from the Grant was already planned for in the Department's 15 year plan. Ms. Tarkington asked if there was a cost advantage if the equipment was purchased in December; Capt. Kordick replied that the equipment would be purchased with state contract pricing so there was no seasonal pricing advantage. She also suggested prioritizing the amount of the request (\$58,288) for telephone switching equipment and the two back-up battery packs to allow review with the other IT purchase requests in the February budget discussions. Chief Heavey pointed out that the timing of the installation upgrade was integral to the Police Department's plan for its IT and would be purchased at no cost to the Town as funds were being used from the 911 Fund charges collected on land lines.

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Kiernan, the Committee voted 3-0-1 to approve the application and forward it to the Board of Estimate and Taxation as a Non-Routine Application. (Abstain: Tarkington)

<u>GM-1</u>	<u>GEMS</u>	<u>Release of Conditions</u>
\$182,869	F2139 53070	911 Grants/Municipal

Mr. Strong and Ms. Schietinger requested the release of funds based on the presentation of the GEMS budget and current operations' report. The Committee noted that there was a favorable expense and revenue report and inquired about GEMS fundraising activity. Mr. Ramer noted that administrative salaries had decreased, as well as overall salaries being less than previous year; Mr. Strong responded that there was a seasonal character to overtime reflected in the costs.

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

Old Business

None

New Business

Discussion of New Lebanon School Building Committee – In the absence of Mr. Walko who was detained, Mr. Drake offered to update the Committee. He reported that no modular classrooms would need to be installed, that students would remain in the current building; an RFP had been published seeking a Clerk of the Works; a Gilbane construction management employee was being changed; and the school design was being submitted to an independent consultant for review of the structure. The RTM had approved the MI status. A community forum had been held in September, but fewer than the expected number of local residents had attended.

Mr. Drake announced that a model of the new school's design was on display at the Byram Library and Ms. Tarkington asked if it would be possible for it to be displayed at Town Hall as well. Ms. Kiernan reminded the Committee of the next State steps for the New Lebanon School Building Project State funding: Bonding Commission Hearing; review by the Education, Finance and Bonding Committees; presentation to the General Assembly and finally review and acceptance by the Governor in May or June of 2017.

Approval of BET Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Committee voted 4-0 to approve the Minutes of the Budget Committee's Regular Meeting November 15, 2016.

Adjournment

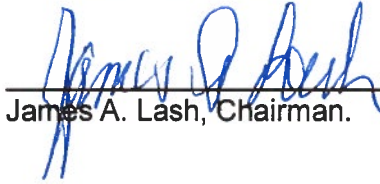
The Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:05 P.M.

Next regular meeting will be January 10, 2017 at 5:00 P.M. in the Greenwich High School Media Center Rooms 1 & 2.

Respectfully submitted,



Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary



James A. Lash, Chairman.