MINUTES of the Special Meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation held on Tuesday, December 15, 2020 in a virtual Zoom webinar, Greenwich, CT.

Chairman Michael S. Mason called the meeting to order at 7:00 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: Benjamin Branyan, Town Administrator, Office of the First Selectman; Brian Koczak, Assistant Fire Chief; Joseph McHugh, Chief, Fire Department, Peter Mynarski, Comptroller

RTM: Jude Collins, (D-2) Appointments Committee (Cmte); Irene Dietrich, (D-8), Health & Human Services; Philip Dodson (D-8) Education; Brooks Harris(D-10) Finance; Lucia Jansen, (D-7), Chair BOC; Arline Lomazzo, (D-6), Public Works; Richard Neuman,(D-11 Chair Town Services; Diana Singer, (D-10); Joanna Swomley (D-11) Education

PUBLIC: Ken Borsuk, Reporter, Greenwich Time; David Chass, VP, Round Hill Volunteer Fire Department; Michael Dawson, Robert Finn, Senior Manager, Matrix Consulting Group; Richard Kaufman, Reporter, Greenwich Sentinel; Horst Tebbe, GCTV
Fire Department Response Time Study – Review and Discussion with Matrix Consulting Group and Acceptance of Report

Upon a motion by Mr. Drake, seconded by Mr. Ramer, to open the discussion of the Fire Department Response Time Study and vote to accept the Report.

Mr. Finn provided an overview of the Report and remarked it was developed with the help of the BET Steering Committee, interviews with more than 60 firefighters and members of the RTM, under the leadership of Town Administrator Branyan and Comptroller Mynarski. He commented that he understood that after the Report was accepted by the BET, there would be a Public Hearing and a follow-up meeting 90-days after the implementation of the Report’s recommendations based on the Center for Public Safety Excellence standard.

During a Question & Answer period, a member of the BET questioned the designations of urban and rural determined by residents per square mile, pointing out that the Report assigns a “rural” response to most of the Town, including the greater portions of RTM Districts 7 and 9 and to all of RTM Districts 8, 10 and 11, whereas the Town taken as a whole qualifies as “urban”, and every RTM District taken individually qualifies as “urban”, except for Districts 10 and 11. Question was raised also to the Report’s proposed “rural” response to the risk factors (schools, nursing homes, places of public assembly) found on upper King Street. It was pointed out that the Report proposes the development now of a career firehouse at the current volunteer station at Round Hill to enhance response in the northern sectors of Town, and proposed further the consideration of still another firehouse on North Street in future years. Another member of the Board inquired about service supported by volunteers. Mr. Finn explained that Matrix’s expertise and their extensive review of the Fire Department’s performance data provides a thorough baseline to set goals and develop recommendations. Matrix noted that after implementation of the recommendations, an evaluation could then be made whether to acquire additional apparatus and add an additional fire station.

Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weisbrod to attach the responsive comments from a former leader of the Fire Department (former Assistant Chief) to supplement the Matrix Report.

Discussion ensued as to the pros and cons of supplementing the Report with the attachment of the views of the former Assistant Chief. Some members felt comments were appropriate, treating the Report as subject to a supplement or addition. Other members commented that Matrix Report responded to an RFP for a study from a knowledgeable source independent of the Fire Service, and the former Assistant Chief’s responses should not be attached.

The Board voted 6-6-0. (Opposed: Drake, Duus, Fassuliotis, Hess, Mason, Tarkington) Motion failed.

Upon the original motion by Mr. Drake, seconded by Mr. Ramer, to accept the Matrix Report, the Board voted 12-0-0. Motion carried.

Chairman Mason commented that a group including the Fire Chief, Selectmen and Volunteers should be assembled to complete the work by prioritizing the recommendations, setting a timeline for a Public Hearing date and a date for the 90-day review of actions taken.
Adjournment

Upon a motion by Ms. Erickson, seconded by Mr. Weisbrod, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 P.M. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary

William Drake, Clerk of the Board

Michael Mason, Chairman