MINUTES of the regular meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation held on Monday, December 21, 2009 in the Town Hall Meeting Room, Greenwich, CT.

Chairman Stephen Walko called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., after which the members pledged allegiance to the flag.

Board members in attendance:

Stephen G. Walko, Chairman
Robert S. Stone, Vice Chairman
Leslie L. Tarkington, Clerk
Nancy E. Barton
James S. Campbell
William R. Finger
William G. Kelly
Edward T. Krumeich, Jr.
Michael S. Mason
Arthur D. Norton
Jeffrey S. Ramer
Laurence B. Simon

Selectmen: Drew Marzullo

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Roland Gieger, Budget Director; Ted Gwartney, Assessor; Robert Shipman, Assistant Assessor

Other: Randall Huffman and Joseph Pellegrino, Board members-elect

ROUTINE APPLICATIONS – from Budget Committee:

GM-1 GEMS – Release of Conditions - $1,606,989

Release of Conditions:
$1,606,989 to A440-51490 Professional – NOC
$1,606,989 from Release of Funds

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Mason, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the application for release of conditions.

ASSESSOR’S REPORT
Mr. Gwartney presented the Assessor’s Report to the Board. A discussion followed regarding property sales as compared to their assessed value, pending court cases, senior tax credit information, and the Grand List. The Assessor’s letter to seniors on the tax credit and deferral programs will be presented to the Board for its review at its January 25, 2010 meeting.

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

BET COMMITTEES’ and SPECIAL PROJECT TEAMS’ REPORTS

Audit Committee, December 9, 2009 – Mr. Norton
OPEB Trust and Ad Hoc OPEB Committee, December 7, 2009 – Mr. Stone
Glennville School Building Committee, December 2009 – Mr. Norton
Nathaniel Witherell Town Building Committee, December 2009 – Ms. Tarkington
Human Resources Committee, December 16, 2009 – Ms. Tarkington
GHS Auditorium, December 2009 – Mr. Kelly

COMPTROLLER’S REPORT

Mr. Mynarski presented the Comptroller’s Report to the Board and gave an update of both the RFP process regarding shared services and the CIP ranking.

Upon a motion by Mr. Norton, seconded by Mr. Finger, the Board voted 12-0-0 to accept the Comptroller’s Report.

ACCEPTANCE OF TREASURER’S REPORT SHOWING INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD OF NOVEMBER 1, 2009 – NOVEMBER 30, 2009

Upon a motion by Mr. Norton, seconded by Mr. Simon, the Board voted 12-0-0 to accept the Treasurer’s Report.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

BET Regular Meeting, November 16, 2009

Upon a motion by Mr. Simon, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of the BET from November 16, 2009.

OFFICER’S REPORT

In his farewell to the Board, Mr. Stone thanked the staff of the Finance and Assessor’s Departments. Mr. Stone encouraged the Board to be more proactive in dealing with financial challenges facing the Town, including but not limited to the employment rolls and the use of debt, and said that time is not on the Town’s side. The direction the Town continues to be pointed must be corrected by tough-minded financial leadership. He wished the Board the best.
Ms. Tarkington thanked Maria Bocchino, Board's recording secretary, for her dedicated and excellent work over the current Board's two year term.

Mr. Walko stated that the Board of Education approved its budget and the operating budget is within the BET guidelines, as presented. Glenville School opened, and they had their ribbon cutting ceremony. Sue Wallerstein is retiring, but is coming back for another month helping the Board of Education on their budgeting and CIP issues. The Board wishes her well. Regarding the CIP budget for FY 2010-2011, the two largest capital projects, Nathaniel Witherell and the GHS Auditorium, will require significant land use approvals. HDG seems to have a full understanding as to what the desire of the BET is relative to Nathaniel Witherell's Project Renew and it is expected that a presentation will be provided at the January 2010 BET meeting.

The RTM rejected an amendment to increase the minimum allocation for the Senior Tax Credit. Also the RTM Budget Overview Committee’s sense of the meeting resolution, which in part called for a five percent reduction in operating expenses, failed. However, there are many people who are extremely interested in where the BET heads with the budget and what the mill rate projection will and should be.

Mr. Walko thanked Mr. Simon for his efforts in planning the 100 year celebration, which was a great success. Mr. Walko recognized Mr. Stone and Mr. Krumeich, stating that they have both served the Town long and they have done so with poise and offered a lot of help in all areas. Finally, he wished all a happy holiday season and new year.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Ad Hoc OPEB Resolution – Re: Investment Downgrades**

Mr. Stone presented the resolution to the Board. A discussion followed regarding limitations.

RESOLVED, that the Town Treasurer be given the authority to accept or decline Columbia Management's recommendation to retain in the Trust's investment portfolio a security which, subsequent to its purchase by Columbia Management, is downgraded below the investment guidelines by either S&P or Moody's, but not both, resulting in a split rating.

Upon a motion by Mr. Stone, seconded by Mr. Simon, the Board voted 12-0-0, to approve the resolution concerning the OPEB Trust investment portfolio.

**Credit Rating Agency Usage – Re: Number of Agencies to Use**

Mr. Mynarski gave an explanation for the request and presented information provided by IBIC. A discussion followed regarding the selection process, use of two or three credit rating agencies, costs, and financial benefits.
Upon a motion by Mr. Norton, seconded by Mr. Simon, the Board voted 2-10-0 against utilization of two credit rating agencies, Standard & Poor's and Moody's with Mr. Norton and Ms. Tarkington voting for.

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Mr. Krumeich, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve selection of credit rating agencies to be at the discretion of the Comptroller, to accept at least two agency bids, but up to three agency bids at his discretion.


Mr. Norton acknowledged two unresolved items in the management letter: interest earned on education grant funds and prior year findings involving the Munis financial management systems.

Upon a motion by Mr. Walko, seconded by Mr. Norton, the Board voted 12-0-0, to approve the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, Federal and State Single Audits, and Management Letter for the Year Ending June 30, 2009.

**Retirement Board Actuarial Assumptions for FY 2010-2011 to 2012-2013**

Mr. Mynarski presented the Retirement Board Report to the Board and stated that the Town contribution for the Retirement Board was going to spike and gave an overview of the Actuary's preliminary findings under various actuarial assumption changes.

A lengthy discussion followed regarding the discount rate, asset smoothing years, asset smoothing corridor, amortization, and rates of inflation assumptions and the resolution. Mr. Stone suggested that the Board evaluate the assumption changes against other Towns and a non-profit such as Greenwich Hospital. Mr. Simon said that he didn't think that the Board can vote on alternatives unless the Retirement Board recommends them. As this was a first reading of the Retirement Board Report, Mr. Walko suggested that action on this item be postponed until the Board's January 25, 2010 meeting.

**Comments**

Mr. Krumeich said that after fourteen years on the Board he is saying farewell. He spoke to the other Board members and said that they understand the toll serving on the BET takes because they have all done the same thing and made the same sacrifices. What makes it worthwhile is the satisfaction of contributing in some small measure to making the Town a better place.

It has been Mr. Krumeich's privilege to witness hundreds of volunteers over the years who come before the Board and who sat on the Board all because they wanted to make a contribution to the community. He continued that his belief is that the genius of the BET is that it is a balanced Board in which no political party enjoys a majority. That the members must cooperate to achieve a majority has meant that most decisions are made by consensus and are not political.
ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]
Maria Bocchino, Recording Secretary

[Signature]
Leslie L. Tarkington, Clerk of the Board

[Signature]
Stephen G. Walko, Chairman