

TOWN OF GREENWICH  
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION BUDGET COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
Cone Room  
Tuesday, December 9, 2008

Committee:

Present: Michael S. Mason, Chairman; Laurence B. Simon, Robert S. Stone,  
Edward T. Krumeich, Jr

Board: Jim Campbell, Steve Walko, Bill Finger, Nancy Barton, Leslie  
Tarkington, Jeff Ramer

Ex-Officio

Board Member: First Selectman Peter Tesei

Staff:

Roland Gieger, Budget Director; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller  
Debbie Flynn, Business Office Manager, Health Department  
J. Wayne Fox, Town Attorney; Eugene McLaughlin, Assistant Town  
Attorney, Fred D'Arengo, Assistant Town Attorney  
Ted Gwartney, Tax Assessor  
John Crary, Town Administrator  
Amy Siebert, Commissioner; Dave Thompson, Chief Engineer; Al  
Monelli, Superintendent, Public Works  
Joe Siciliano, Director; Dave D'Andrea, Operations Manager, Parks &  
Recreation  
Susan Wallerstein, Asst. Superintendent; Richard Calcavecchio, Director  
of Budgets, Board of Education

Other:

Catherine Brennan; Laurie Jackson, Commission on Aging  
Nancy Weissler, Chairman; Leslie Moriarty, Vice-Chairman, Board of  
Education  
Charlene Tufts; John Strong, Finance Officer, GEMS

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 P.M.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Upon a motion by Mr. Simon, seconded by Mr. Krumeich, the committee voted  
unanimously to enter into executive session at 6:35 P.M. to discuss litigation  
matters.

In attendance were:

Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Roland Gieger, Budget Director, John Wayne Fox,  
Eugene McLaughlin, Fred D'Arengo, Joe Siciliano and Amy Siebert.

Peter Tesei, First Selectman

BET Members: Mason, Krumeich, Stone, Simon, Campbell, Finger, Walko, Barton, Tarkington, and Ramer

The committee voted unanimously to leave executive session at 7:07 P.M.

**Requests for Budget Adjustments**

**SE-11 First Selectman – Additional Appropriation - \$**

Additional Appropriation:

\$30,000	to	P935-57350	Settlement – Boucher et al vs. TOG
\$30,000	from		Risk Fund Balance

The Committee voted 4-0 to approve the request and forward it to the Board of Estimate and Taxation as a routine application.

**SE-14 First Selectman – Additional Appropriation - \$**

Additional Appropriation:

\$85,000	to	P935-57350	Settlement – United States vs. Compaction (Combe Fill South Land Fill)
\$85,000	from		Risk Fund Balance

The Committee voted 4-0 to approve the request and forward it to the Board of Estimate and Taxation as a routine application.

**SE-15 First Selectman – Additional Appropriation - \$**

Additional Appropriation:

\$	to	P935-57350	Settlement – Pompa vs. TOG
\$	from		Risk Fund Balance

No action was taken on this item because the balance requested is below \$25,000 and this matter was first decided by the Law Committee.

**GM-1 GEMS – Release of Condition - \$1,560,010**

Release of Condition:

\$1,560,010	to	A440-51490	Professional - NOC
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Mr. Strong stated that this is a request for the release of funds for the second half payment for the current FY contract. A quarterly report, including operational statistics and financial statements, was reviewed. A discussion followed regarding fuel costs, the volume of calls, receivables and collections. In response to Mr. Simon, Ms. Tufts stated that their ability to meet response times and to be geographically where they need to be, with the fourth station making a difference in services provided. Call volume, traffic and congestion are increasing, but GEMS is still able to

meet their target response times. In response to Mr. Stone, Ms. Tufts stated that their bad debt rate at 13 percent is very low compared with other areas and that they do well by keeping collections done in house.

In response to Mr. Simon, Ms. Tufts stated that the next year budget increase at 2 to 3 percent would maintain their current services, without increasing hours for Medic 4, which currently operates 24 hours on weekends only.

The Committee voted 4-0 to approve the request and forward it to the Board of Estimate and Taxation as a routine application.

PR-2 Parks & Recreation – Additional Appropriation - \$175,000

Additional Appropriation:

\$ 175,000	to	M824-59560-28084	Admin. Bldg. & Pro Shop
\$ 175,000	from		Griffith E. Harris Fund Balance

Mr. Siciliano gave an explanation for the request to execute the contract. Mr. Monelli gave an overview of the bid process for this project. A discussion followed regarding contingency funds and loan payments from the Golf Course Revolving Fund.

The Committee voted 4-0 to approve the request and forward it to the Board of Estimate and Taxation as a non-routine application.

PW-3 DPW – Approval to Use - \$190,080

Approval to Use:

\$ 190,080	to	F361-50650-29089	Wet Weather/Nutrient Removal
\$ 190,080	from		Grant Funds

Ms. Siebert gave an explanation for the request to accept Grant Funds from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to supplement a current appropriation. A discussion followed regarding the availability of other Grant Funds.

The Committee voted 4-0 to approve the request and forward it to the Board of Estimate and Taxation as a routine application.

PW-4 DPW – Additional Appropriation - \$150,000

Additional Appropriation:

\$ 150,000	to	Z312-59620-28008	Porchuck Road Bridge Repl
\$ 150,000	from		Capital Non-Recurring Fund

Ms. Siebert gave an overview of the bid process. Ms. Siebert then explained that in compliance with the State of CT, in order to proceed with the work, the construction administration has to be awarded a contract first and then the construction itself. Ninety percent of the funds will be

refunded from the CT DPW. In response to Mr. Stone, Mr. Thompson explained the reimbursement process.

The Committee voted 4-0 to approve the request and forward it to the Board of Estimate and Taxation as a non-routine application.

### Report on Status of Current Economic Conditions

Mr. Mason stated that tonight we are trying to establish the current magnitude of the problem, not just for 2009, but also 2010. We want to try to lay out a framework of what we are attempting to do. We want to put into place our new monitoring and communications channels to all the appointing authorities. And obviously, at budget time if need be, offer suggestions or recommendations.

At Mr. Mason's request, Mr. Gieger presented a hand-out regarding TOG revenues, including the spending rate for the town, based on the first five months of the current fiscal year. A discussion followed regarding TOG revenues and spending for the remainder of the current fiscal year, as well as over the next two years.

Dr. Wallerstein gave an overview of the anticipated Hamilton Avenue school construction reimbursement. Mr. Calcavecchio stated that the ECS Grant is going to be cut for FY09-10 and the BOE should receive about \$3.4 million this year.

Mr. Simon stated that based on the results shown, if we continue at the same rate over the next seven months, we will do very well and will have a lower base level from which to appropriate money next year. Mr. Mason stated that the Budget Committee will look at the numbers each month and continuously remodel. We know what the magnitude of the problem is, we see that there is a plan, we are looking at the recovery over two years, and one suggestion is to lower the capital spending.

Ms. Weissler stated that the BOE knows the seriousness of the situation and gave an overview of the October BOE sense of the meeting resolution to minimize expenditures this year and to freeze vacancies of non-certified positions. Dr. Wallerstein gave an overview of the strategy that the school system is executing to minimize impact on teaching and learning. Mr. Mason requested that the BOE give an itemized report to the Finance Dept. A discussion followed regarding the Hamilton Avenue and Glenville Schools move.

Mr. Tesei stated that according to the town charter, as long as the existing entities have been appropriated funds, they can spend them, so legally the BET has no authority. The BET gives the guidance and direction, but it is up to the various authorities to execute what the BET wants them to achieve. To date, Mr. Tesei has been very pleased with the support and attitude by many of the department managers.

Mr. Mason stated that the BET is the appointing authority to the Finance Department, which is being barraged by emails and phone calls, as well as the Assessor, about what is the plan. The presentation tonight, on the magnitude of the problem, was directed to the BET on a possible

plan to go forward. Although we may have the ability to have strong persuasion, this is an update on our guidelines, it is a work in progress, and that is why we are closely monitoring the operational spending rates. Our persuasion can only be rewarded by the savings. If the savings are not achieved in this budget, someone will have to recommend a tax levy increase that is significant.

#### BET Budget Calendar of Monthly Topics

A discussion took place regarding the Budget Committee Discussion Topics and meeting dates for 2009. The Budget Committee changed the date of the January 2009 regular meeting from January 12 to Tuesday, January 20, 2009. A special meeting of the Investment Committee is scheduled on January 12, 2009 at 9:00 A.M. regarding the status of municipal bond/BAN markets – IBIC.

#### Seniors and Citizens with Disabilities Tax Relief Ordinance

Mr. Simon gave an explanation of the three changes made to the proposal since the last Budget Committee meeting. A discussion followed regarding exclusion of the disabled from the ordinance, income inquiries, and trusts.

The Committee voted 3-1-0 (Mr. Krumeich opposed) to the Budget Committee document as drafted on December 9, 2008 and forward it to the BET as changed.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Committee voted 4-0 to approve the minutes from the November 12, 2008, Regular Budget Committee Meeting.

The Committee voted 3-0-1 (Mr. Krumeich abstained) to approve the minutes from the November 17, 2008, Special Budget Committee Meeting.

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:02 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

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Maria Bocchino, Recording Secretary

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Michael S. Mason, Chairman