

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOF MEETING
Town of Chester, Connecticut
REGULAR BOARD OF FINANCE MEETING
Wednesday, October 19, 2017
Community Meeting Room
203 Middlesex Avenue
Chester, Connecticut

CALL TO ORDER

Virginia Carmany, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m. In attendance included: Chairman Carmany, Jon Joslow, Jennifer Rannestad, Charlie Park, Dave Cohen, Rick Nygard (seated for Bob Gorman) and John O'Hare, alt., not seated. Also in attendance: First Selectwoman Gister, Selectwoman Janecek, Selectwoman Linn and one audience member.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dave Cohen made a motion to approve the minutes from the 8/17/17 BOF meeting. Charlie Park seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Charlie Park made a motion to approve the minutes from the 9/28/17 BOF meeting as amended. Dave Cohen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Please see below paragraph provided by Jennifer Rannestad clarifying/correcting page 6 of the 9/28/17 meeting minutes.

.Looking to 2018, the percentage of expected expenditures **to unassigned balance** for Chester is among the lowest of the same towns. The graph covering both the budgeted and projected Grand List for Chester clearly indicated the impact a revaluation has on a municipality **and the graph shows a** ~~and further showed that projections for the future indicate a further reduction~~ **2017, an anticipated reduction 2018 to continue than a growth rate of .5%.** Using the historical information it could be predicted that the Chester mil rate could climb from its present 26.36 to as high as 35.47 by fiscal year 2024, a 6.04% tax increase **in 2018.** The base line of a **generally** flat Grand list (total property values) with projected expense increases of around 3% **will be affecting** our taxes. Additionally, as student population both declines and shifts, Chester's share of education costs is expected to increase in the same four-year period, increasing Chester's tax burden, ~~which could increase by 4.6%.~~

REPORTS

Monthly Financials were included in the BOF packet.

Virginia Carmany reported that Peter Evankow is monitoring the Hose Company's budget; i.e. the submission of data processing bills is currently going to be \$1,500 over budget. At this time, Peter is not recommending a transfer. Peter will update the BOF as appropriate.

First Selectwoman's Report

Lauren reported on the on-going lack of a State budget. As the newspapers have indicated, perhaps a bipartisan agreement has been reached.

The new cobra streetlights will be installed during the last week of October. Once installed, the “cobras” should be up and operational within a week. There is a delay in ordering the decorative lights and delivery is expected in late November.

After the new lights are installed and operational, a decision regarding adjustments to angles, locations, etc. will be made to address resident concerns. NO lights were removed, moved or changed per citizens requests.

OPEN ITEMS IN OLD BUSINESS

Main Street Phase 3

The DOT has reviewed the Town’s LOTCIP (Main Street Improvements) application. They have submitted questions and requests for clarification to RIVERCOG on same. The DOT is looking for clarification on the impact to private property owners (basement foundation modifications). Jacobson has addressed the State’s concerns and the BOF will discuss further at the November BOF meeting. Also, the BOF has received a request for the release of \$120,000 from Capital to enable the design phase of the project to continue. This request will also be discussed at the next BOF meeting.

Next Steps regarding Bulky Waste - no new information at this time.

Finance and Accounting Policy and Procedures Manual -

Lauren Gister reported that there was some concern regarding the structure of the manual as it pertains to the location of the state statutes. For ease of reading, she is currently working with the Administrative Assistant in the Selectman’s office to include the statutes that are currently in the appropriate chapter to be in an index.

Annual Report Dedication - a copy of the Annual Report Dedication was included in the BOF packet. This year, the Town’s Annual Report has been dedicated to Marie and James Ready for their work serving the Shoreline Soup Kitchen and Pantry.

Clarification Vote - approval of LED Conversion project and \$100,000 loan

Jon Joslow made a motion to approve a \$100,000 four year loan at 0% interest for the LED Conversion project. Charlie Park seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Fraud Questionnaire

Virginia Carmany distributed the annual Fraud Questionnaire. Auditors O’Connor Davies request that the BOF members fill out the form and return to them.

Robert’s Rules – for clarification purposes, Virginia Carmany distributed information on Robert’s Rules.

Visioning/Strategic Plan/POCD

Virginia Carmany distributed a “generic” draft survey developed by the consultant Malone & McBride, regarding the POCD. BOF members were encouraged to review the document and provide input.

Jon Joslow expressed concern regarding the role of the consultant and the process being used to facilitate the POCD. He stressed the importance adequate funding for projects that may be included in the plan and also the need for the POCD to be linked to the Visioning/Strategic Plan.

Mr. Joslow continued that it is important to be clear on our expectations of the Strategic Plan and to integrate plans to quantify any financial implications.

Virginia commented that it was beneficial to have various individuals provide input into the process. She expressed the importance of BOF input and participation into the questionnaire.

Lauren reported that Malone and McBroom is currently at the “data gathering” stage of the project. The questionnaire provided is meant to provide information/high level overview of what Chester wants in the future. At this point, the Advisory Committee/Malone and McBroom is interested in input from BOF members. Malone & McBroom will do public workshops, an on-line survey, pop up events etc. Their plan is to start at high level and drill it down. The current document is a generic survey that will be refined.

Members of the Advisory Committee, at this time, include EDC Chairman, BOF Chairman, First Selectwoman, P&Z Chairman, and a P&Z member. Several residents, with experience in updating the POCD have also been involved. By statute, the POCD is the responsibility of the P&Z Commission. Jon Joslow will also be a member of the Advisory Committee. He will attend their upcoming meeting and report back to the BOF. The Advisory Committee was formed because Chester added the Strategic Plan and Visioning process to the POCD project so this project would encompass more public involvement and a more project orientated function.

Virginia commented that the project is currently at the “gathering data” stage and the goal of the questionnaire is to be inclusive and to get individuals involved in the process.

Lauren Gister left the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

State of the State Budget – S&P and Moody’s downgrade of Bond ratings for 29 Connecticut Towns
Virginia distributed a recent Hartford Courant article reporting that the proposed new budget might fund Hartford’s deficit, does not include shifting teacher pension costs to the town, agreements on municipal aid to the towns will be impacted by giving more to the poorer towns, new limits on banding and several other points that may or may not actually happen.

Virginia reported that Deep River is going out for a note for \$1.5 million to fund operating expenses.

Virginia distributed a “possible reductions in Unassigned Fund Balance” document that includes options in the event of additional state cuts.

Future Agenda Items

- Main Street Project – request for \$120,000
- Solar at CES
- Presentation from Auditor

The BOF briefly discussed the recent R4 land acquisition. Peter Evankow will provide MBR amounts.

For budgetary prioritizing purposes, Jon Joslow will provide information on roads, bridges, and dams.

ADJOURNMENT

Rick Nygard made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m. Dave Cohen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk

Reviewed by Virginia Carmany