

These minutes are subject to approval at the next BOF meeting

Town of Chester Connecticut
Chester Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
April 20, 2017
203 Middlesex Avenue
Community Meeting Room

CALL TO ORDER

Virginia Carmany, BOF Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. In attendance included: Virginia Carmany, Bob Gorman, Charlie Park, Jennifer Rannestad, Richard Nygard (seated for Dave Cohen) and Lori Ann Clymas (seated for Jon Joslow).

Also present: First Selectwoman Lauren Gister, Peter Evankow, Accts. Manager, Selectwoman Charlene Janeczek and James Schaefer, Fire Chief.

Virginia Carmany made a motion to change the order of the agenda and discuss Review Policy Manual and vote to send to the BOS. Rick Nygard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OPEN ITEMS IN OLD BUSINESS

Review Policy Manual and Vote to Send to BOS

Richard Nygard made a motion to approve the Draft Policy Manual. Jennifer Rannestad seconded the motion. Discussion followed:

Please note that the Policy Manual is still in draft form and requires editing and “wordsmithing”; however, these “housekeeping” items can be addressed at a future date. At this time, it would be appropriate for the BOF to forward the document to the Board of Selectwomen for their consideration, updates and changes.

The motion passed unanimously.

Update from Library Building Committee

Denny Tovey, Chairman of the Library Building Committee, distributed a spreadsheet regarding the project. As the long-term debt obligations with Region 4 comes to an end, Denny suggested that these savings be used to fund the Library project. Denny stressed the importance of moving the project forward and expressed concern that the Town may lose the grant for the project if it is delayed further.

He discussed funding options for the library project including the possibility of using bonds, Fund Balance (to be repaid when funding from the State is received) and a 40-year loan from Dept. of Agriculture. The use of bonds for the proposed project would minimally impact the tax payer. Lori Ann expressed concern that using fund balance would hurt the Town’s bond rating. Options for the appropriate use of bonding funds and the Fund Balance will be pursued further with the Town’s Bond Counselor and Finance Office.

Uncertainty with the State's budget was discussed. The State's budget will not be finalized until after the Town votes on Chester's budget. Virginia stressed the importance of the Town's "big picture" vis a vis current financial obligations, i.e., schools, grand list reductions, infrastructure needs, etc.

The Library Building Committee will schedule Information Sessions on the project, tentatively, May 10th or the 11th and Saturday, May 13th.

Lauren Gister reported that other options for a Library were discussed in the past including adding on to the current building, use of the Goods Building, sharing a library with Deep River etc. This is an item that should be addressed during the presentations. Lori Clymas disagreed and felt that the current plan of the committee should be the focus of the presentation.

The process for the ultimate approval of any Library project includes: BOF approval, BOS approval and finally Town approval (either Referendum or Town Meeting vote).

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None.

REPORTS

Approval of Minutes – postponed until next BOF meeting.

Monthly Financials – Documents included in the BOF packet.

First Selectwoman's Report

Lauren Gister reported that of the 3 tax sales scheduled, two have been paid. The remaining tax sale will move forward as planned.

It is anticipated that the Union Contract will be discussed at the next BOF meeting.

OPEN ITEMS IN OLD BUSINESS

Main Street Phase 3: Kent & Frost revised estimate/Design Phase, cost of work on private property e.g. sidewalk tie in to building sills, Lotcip grant application, possible assessment
Lauren reported the DOT has not yet provided comments and questions regarding the project. She will follow-up with DOT.

Costs for new Town Garage Lights - No new information at this time.

Next Steps regarding Bulky Waste – Virginia reported that costs have been reduced by \$10,000 from last year. Lauren reported that discussions with Deep River are still on-going.

NEW BUSINESS

2016/17 Forecast

Lauren reported that at this time, CES is not anticipating any surplus funds. Currently, the net surplus at the end of this fiscal year is anticipated to be \$190,000.00.

Continued Discussion of 2017/18 Budget

The CES BOE has a meeting scheduled on 4/24/17. They have been asked to cut their budget.

Virginia reported that the other elementary schools intend to staff the Math Coach position with current staff. Lauren replied that the other two elementary schools have decreasing populations and in lieu of letting a teacher go due to these declining populations, they are moving staff to a Math Coach.

Lauren reported that the Library Board of Trustees will vote regarding the Gwendolyn Orton Jones Trust. The Town's portion of the Library's funding will not be affected by the use of the Trust.

The possibility of placing funding the Capital Budget for the Meeting House was discussed; including funds for the floor. Lauren reported that Kirtland Commons (Deep River) has two used boilers that may be suitable for use in the Meeting House. This option is being explored by John Divis and our Fire Marshal.

The Public Hearing on the Budget is scheduled on May 4th.

The BOF will tentatively meet on Monday, 5/8 to follow-up on the Public Hearing.

Lauren reported that there will be a FOIA Seminar on Monday, 4/24 at the Deep River Auditorium. All were encouraged to attend.

ASSIGNED AND PENDING OLD BUSINESS

Requested analysis of Roads, Buildings, Bridges and Dams - This item has been addressed by John Divis and the First Selectwoman.

Lauren reported that Prospect Street will be closed due to culvert work.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None.

ADJOURNMENT

Bob Gorman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jennifer Rannestad seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk