

Call to Order

▲ Introduction and seating of members

The Chester Board of Finance held its regular meeting on Thursday, February 20, 2014, at the Chester Town Hall, 203 Middlesex Avenue, Chester, Connecticut. In attendance were Virginia Carmany, Dave Cohen, Lori Ann Clymas, Charlie Park, Richard Nygard and Alex Stsrekel. Robert Gorman was also present but not participating as a Board of Finance member, but rather representing the Library Board. Chairman Carmany called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

▲ Approval of Minutes from Special Meeting January 16, 2014

Motion made and seconded to approve January 16, 2014 Minutes as presented. Unanimously approved.

New Business

▲ Presentation by Kevin Maloney from CCM (CT Conference of Municipalities) and Q&A

Kevin Maloney was present to request the Town's membership in CCM. Chester was an actual member of CCM about six years ago. It was noted all but two or three Connecticut communities participate in CCM activities. Mr. Maloney gave a brief overview of financial benefits that membership would afford the Town of Chester, such as reduced prescription costs for its residents, opportunities to reduce utility costs through bulk purchase of supplier electrical services and street light cost reductions. The estimated dues cost for Chester's FY 2014-15 membership is \$2,560. Mr. Maloney stated the Town would recoup this cost through active participation in CCM's legislative programs and taking advantage of CCM's staff research resources.

Chairman Carmany stated the Board of Finance would discuss membership later in the evening and when preparing the FY 2014-15 budget.

▲ Presentation by Chester Library Board and Q&A

Library Board Chairman Terry Schreiber, Librarian Linda Fox, and Board members Edith Prisloe, Denny Tovey and Robert Gorman were present to request the appropriation of \$20,000 in the FY 2013-2014 Budget to conduct a study of North Quarter Park (NQP) as a potential location for a new library. The form of that study would be a Master Plan of the 11.9 acre Park showing long range development options for multiple uses, such as library, community building, active recreation and open space conservation areas.

Mr. Gorman stated he was speaking tonight as a member of the Library Board and would not vote on the appropriation request.

Mr. Gorman submitted a summary of pro and con reasons for undertaking this Master Plan study (see attached). Also discussed was the concept plan and

recommendation contained in the 2009 Plan of Conservation and Development for possible library building at North Quarter Park. The recent experience of Lyme's approach to building their new library, construction costs and the single story floor plan layout was reviewed.

Library Board Chairman Terry Schreiber requested the Board of Finance to move quickly on approving the \$20,000 appropriation. It is the goal of the Library Board to complete the Master Plan and architectural building schematic drawings by late summer and apply for funding from the State Library Construction Grant Program (see attached).

▲ Presentation of First Draft of Full Year 2014/15 Budget

First Selectman Meehan circulated a preliminary draft dated 2/20/14 of the FY 2014-15 Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Program requests. At this early stage of budget preparation, several expenditure items are not yet known. Most significant are the Chester Elementary School and Region 4 requests, shared service costs with the Town of Deep River for transfer station use, employee medical insurance expenses and possible FY 2012-13 fund balance allocation options to modify mil rate. It is still too early to predict possible FY 2013-14 surplus that could be used to pre-fund FY 2014-15 expenditures.

Chairman Carmany noted the impact of the lower Grand List, down approximately \$59 million, 12% decrease. The Board also must take into account FY 2013-14 costs such as Chester Elementary School MBR in the amount of \$42,000, the \$20,000 Library Board NQP appropriation and higher winter maintenance expenses.

First Selectman Meehan summarized the budget review stating that revision to the CIP would reduce the preliminary \$759,600 FY 2014-15 cost by up to \$200,000.

▲ Other – none.

Audience of Citizens – none.

Reports

▲ Monthly Financials

▲ Consideration and Approval of Bills and Transfers

First Selectman's Report

Business

▲ Update on Chester Elementary School MBR Status

First Selectman Meehan reported he spoke with Dr. Levy and she is still waiting for the legal opinion discussed at the January meeting. A joint meeting of the

BOS/BOF and Chester BOE will be convened when this opinion is received. Meehan also reported he sent to Representative Miller and Senator Linares a briefing on the Town's MBR situation stating his concern that this legislation is not applicable to our Region 4 structure.

△ Discussion and vote on request from Library Board

Motion by Clymas, second by Nygard, to approve Library Board's request and transfer \$19,999 from Account #10-05-63-1165-125 Board of Finance Contingency to Account #10-02-36-1000-365 Building and Grounds for the purpose of retaining consultant services to prepare a feasibility and Master Plan for North Quarter Park showing the location of a new library building. Mr. Gorman stated he was not participating in this matter as a Board of Finance member and abstained. Mr. Park abstained stating his personal friendship with Library Board members. Voting in favor were Carmany, Clymas, Cohen, Nygard, Strekel. Opposed – none. Motion Carried.

△ Discussion and vote on request to join CCM

It was the consensus of the Board that membership offered Chester benefits that the Selectmen's Office and departments would find useful. The Board agreed to defer voting on membership until later in the FY 2014-15 budget preparation process.

△ Other – none.

Audience of Citizens – none.

Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Meehan, First Selectman

attachments -

PROS AND CONS FOR BUILDING A NEW LIBRARY IN NORTH QUARTER PARK VS RENOVATING AND EXPANDING THE OLD LIBRARY

PROS

- LESS EXPENSIVE - ROUGHLY \$450 PER SQFT VS \$700 - (\$2M VS \$3M FOR A 4000 SQFT LIBRARY).
- POTENTIALLY A ONE FLOOR LAYOUT IS BETTER THAN TWO. IT REDUCES STAFFING REQUIRED AND MAKES CONTROL EASIER AS THE NUMBER OF ENTRANCES/EXITS COULD BE REDUCED PLUS NO ELEVATOR WOULD BE REQUIRED. ALSO HANDICAP ACCESS COULD BE BETTER.
- IT IS A TOWN OWNED SITE WHICH WILL QUALIFY US TO COMPETE FOR THE STATE GRANT.
- IT IS A 12 ACRE SITE (NOT ALL BUILDABLE WITH SOME WETLANDS) WITH RECREATION/PLAYGROUND FACILITIES AND PARKING AVAILABLE. IT WILL MAKE FOR A GOOD SITE FOR CHILDREN TO USE THE RECREATION FACILITIES AND ALSO THE LIBRARY.
- COULD BE GREAT SYNERGY WITH THE MAIN ST PROJECT AS THE CURRENT PHASE COULD CONNECT DOWNTOWN VIA A NEW SIDEWALK TO A PARK WITH RECREATION FACILITIES, A LIBRARY AND POSSIBLY A COMMUNITY CENTER
- AMENABLE TO BUILDING AN ADJACENT OR CO-JOINED COMMUNITY CENTER.
- NO NEED FOR TEMPORARY LIBRARY SPACE FOR ONE TO TWO YEARS WHILE THE PRESENT ONE IS RENOVATED.
- POSSIBILITY FOR LIBRARY EXPANSION IN THE DISTANT FUTURE – SPACE IS THERE.

CONS

- COULD UPSET A GROUP OF SUPPORTERS WHO ARE ADVOCATES OF EXPANDING AT THE PRESENT SITE AND “SAVING” THE BUILDING
- DURING THE BUILDING PHASE, IT COULD ALSO INCONVENIENCE THE PEOPLE WHO USE NORTH QUARTER PARK FOR RECREATION.
- NEED TO DO A SITE PLAN AND BUILDING SCHEMATIC BY MID AUGUST TO QUALIFY FOR GRANT SUBMISSION – COST IS APPROXIMATELY \$25000.

BOF 2-20-14
BOS 2-18-14

FY 13-14
Budget Request

To: The Board of Finance
From: Chester Public Library Board of Trustees
RE: Request for immediate funding for Library Accessibility and Expansion Project
Date: February 12, 2014

The Chester Library Board of Trustees requests the allocation of \$20,000 from the current budget so that it can take the next steps toward improving the library building and position itself to apply for a construction grant of \$1,000,000.00.

As you know, the Library Trustees have undertaken extensive planning for an accessible and expanded public library building, having determined that expansion on the present site was possible and subsequently looking at two different concepts, one above and the other below grade. Much of the funding for this process was provided by a grant and donations from the Friends of Chester Public Library and the Trustees.

Now, based on a number of factors, among them the

- ability to design a facility driven by service needs and not constrained by lot size,
- immediate availability of town owned property in the town center,
- possible greater value for investment,
- reduced impact of construction on neighbors, at current site, and
- potential synergy that might result from combining a library with other town services

the Trustees have determined that a thorough evaluation of North Quarter Park (NQP) as a site for a new library building is desirable. Clearly, there are compelling reasons to investigate the feasibility of locating a new library at NQP, not insignificant among them is working in concert with the 2009 Town of Chester Plan of Conservation and Development.

Time is critical. In order to apply for the \$1,000,000.00 Connecticut State Library Construction Grant, the following steps need to be accomplished by mid-August 2014, as the state's two-year commitment to awarding grants to non-distressed communities ends with this grant cycle. This \$20,000 request is to cover the cost of the first two steps outlined below, as estimated by the architect who was involved in the initial feasibility study:

1. A Concept Plan for North Quarter Park (NQP) which would show potential location(s) for the new library, the recreational areas (playscape and T ball field), parking; and, perhaps the location for a future community center/senior center and a nature trail.
2. A Site Plan developed by appropriate engineering/landscape design professionals and including a review of topography, soil conditions,

wetlands issues, availability of sewer and water, and how best to lay this out . We will utilize the 2009 Plan of Conservation and Development which conceptually shows putting the library other town buildings and recreation areas in NQP.

3. Develop building schematics, plan view and elevations (funding for this step is being requested in 2014-15 Capital Planning).

Trustees will make themselves available to discuss this request at your convenience; if it is possible to be included on your February 20 agenda, that would be wonderful. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.