

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOF MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER CONNECTICUT  
REGULAR BOARD OF FINANCE MEETING  
Thursday, December 21, 2017  
Community Meeting Room  
Chester Town Hall

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Carmany called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. In attendance included: Mike Joplin (seated for David Cohen), John O’Hare (seated for Jennifer Rannestad), Charlie Park, Rick Nygard, Jon Joslow, Selectman Jamie Grzybowski, and Selectwoman Charlene Janecek.

Absent: David Cohen, Jennifer Rannestad

The BOF welcomed new BOF member Mike Joplin and Selectman Jamie Grzybowski.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*Rick Nygard made a motion to approve the minutes from the 11/16/17 BOF meeting as amended. Charlie Park seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

Corrections: page 1 – under “Audit Report” – note that “with the exception of Chester’s portion of the R4 debt, Chester is **bond** debt free” (not including the sewer loan).

Page 1 – under “Audit Report” – delete “in the event that the Teacher Pension obligation is transferred from the State to the towns” and add “a further impact item is the potential for the transfer of the teacher pension obligation from the State to the Town.”

Page 2 – under “Visioning/Strategic Plan/POCD” – add at the last sentence of paragraph 3 – “and that initiatives have some degree of prioritization.”

**REPORTS**

Monthly Financials – Monthly financial reports were included in the BOF packet. BOF members had no comments on the Revenue/Expenditure report.

Virginia reported that the tax collection rate is “in good shape”. Two years worth of tax collection data is helpful to the BOF.

**As requested, Virginia will follow-up with the Tax Collector with regard to the number of properties in foreclosure.**

FIRST SELECTWOMAN’S REPORT

Charlene reported that work at the Meeting House is progressing. Completed tasks include: insulation, electrical work, and furnace and chimney installation (the old furnace has been removed). The tank will be removed and the floor in the entry area will be completed in the near future.

The Town owned Water Street property is currently vacant. The location does not have potable water and the space is heated by electricity. There is no requirement to have potable water. There was some

discussion about the possibility of a new well for the property to increase the viability of the space and possibly increase the rent (the previous rent received was \$4,000 per year). The Water Co. has not been receptive to extending the water line to the property (not cost effective for them to do so). Charlene reported that the property will be listed for rent.

Charlene reported that Lee Vito, Sanitarian/Health Director and Dr. Kotrady plan to retire on 1/1/18. At this time, the BOS is reviewing options for Health Department services including joining the Health District or hiring a Health Director (both options will cost more than currently spent). Currently, Chester does not meet the standards established in a 1998 law that require all towns to have a Health Department working at least 35 hours per week and various other parameters of that law including a Health Education program. If Chester joins the Health District, all fees would go to the District, not the Town. More information will follow after the BOS completes their analysis of options.

Our State Trooper is being promoted and will be leaving Chester in January.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

2018 BOF Calendar - 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month – 7:30 p.m.

*Jon Joslow made a motion to schedule 2018 BOF meetings on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month @ 7:30 p.m. Rick Nygard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

Nominations for Vice Chair – this item was tabled until the next meeting. There was brief discussion on the possibility of Co-Vice Chairs.

Preliminary 2018/19 Town Budget Workshop Calendar - Virginia distributed a draft budget workshop calendar to BOF members. BOF members provided dates/times that they are available for workshops.

Jon Joslow stressed the importance of providing clear guidance/expectations to department heads as they develop their budgets. He suggested that justification is required on all increases requested.

**Virginia will ask Peter to provide 2 years worth of budgeted vs. actuals.**

As in the past, Peter will offer an “orientation” for new BOF members.

### **OPEN ITEMS IN OLD BUSINESS**

#### State Budget

The State’s approved budget showed a loss of \$38,000 in revenue to Chester; however, Chester budgeted for a \$130,000 loss. As a result of the most recent state budget correction, Chester lost an additional \$50,000. It is anticipated that additional cuts will be realized in January/February. If there are no further cuts, Chester will end 17/18 with a \$50,000 surplus.

As previously reported, Chester Village West has been sold to Masonicare, a not for profit organization and thus tax exempt. While PILOT funds will be provided to the Town (Lauren is currently negotiating the rate), it is estimated that approximately \$400,000 or 2/3 in tax revenue will be lost.

With the expected additional state cuts and the loss of tax revenue from Chester Village West, there is the potential for a \$150,000 loss in revenue to the Town.

John O'Hare suggested that all departments be made aware of this deficit as they develop their budget requests.

#### Visioning/Strategic Plan/POCD Update

Jon Joslow reported that the Advisory Committee has been disbanded. Their goal was to ensure that the process made sense and is transparent. The BOF will still be involved in the process and Virginia and Jon will be available to assist the Committee. Mike Sanders is on the Committee and is assembling members/representatives from all appropriate constituencies and working with the consultants. The 10 year Capital Plan will provide guidance for the group.

Mike Joplin reported that the POCD is a binding document on P&Z and an advisory document to every other commission in the town. He continued that it is appropriate for the BOF to work with P&Z on the document to prioritize proposals and recommendations. Virginia commented that the goal is for all Boards/Commissions to work collaboratively on the POCD/Strategic Plan.

Virginia reported that in addition to adequately funding community services, the BOF also takes into consideration investing in the community vis a vis good schools (approx. 70% of our tax dollars go to the school system), the Fire Department, Library, Main Street, etc.

It is expected that the next property revaluation will result in lower property assessments which will have an impact on Chester.

LOTICIP – Charlene reported that Chester's project is still under review. The intent is to continue the project with Commitment to Fund letters. There is still no word on whether or not the State will Fund Lotcip going forward.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

*Jon Joslow made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m. Charlie Park seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski  
Clerk