

These minutes are subject to approval at the next BOF Meeting

Town of Chester, Connecticut  
Chester Board of Finance  
Regular Meeting  
Thursday, February 15, 2018  
203 Middlesex Avenue  
Community Meeting Room

#### CALL TO ORDER

Virginia Carmany, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. In attendance included: Richard Strauss, (seated for Jon Joslow), Rick Nygard, Virginia Carmany, Dave Cohen, Jennifer Rannestad, Peter Evankow, Accounts Manager, First Selectwoman Gister, Selectman Grzybowski, and Selectwoman Janecek.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*Rick Nygard made a motion to approve the minutes from the 1/18/18 BOF meeting as amended. Jennifer Rannestad seconded the motion. The motion passed. Dave Cohen abstained from voting.*

Amendments/Clarifications:

Page 1 – under “Monthly Financials” – add “higher than expected” prior to “The Human Resource budget”.

Peter Evankow clarified that the line item reflects Tri Town and Estuary costs paid at the beginning of the year, not fuel oil.

#### REPORTS

##### Monthly Financials

Monthly financial reports were included in the BOF packet. The Tax Collector’s report reflects that 2018 collections slightly ahead of prior year.

Peter Evankow reported:

- The funds for the Resident State Trooper are “backloaded” and will be paid in June.
- Retirement Board – funds for the VSAP and the pension have not yet been transferred

For informational purposes, the Capital Budget was included in the BOF packet.

##### First Selectwoman’s Report

Lauren Gister presented a high-level overview of the current budget including:

- A budget status report reflecting revenues and expenditures to date that are areas of concern for overages or in the case of revenue short.
- An update on the decreases in State of Connecticut revenue – figures released today indicate an overall \$64,000 loss in State revenue on top of the budgeted revenue loss of \$139K.

- Conveyance taxes to date up are \$35,000 – due to the Chester Village West transaction.
- The Constables have begun issuing town tickets as appropriate. However, a large influx of revenue is not anticipated.
- Misc. Revenue is up \$12,000 – due to the town’s requirement for emergency services at the Tri Series events, a \$7,500 membership distribution from CIRMA and an insurance settlement.
- To date, the overall revenue projection is down approximately \$18,000.
- Expense overages include:
  - Police services due to community events (farmers market)
  - Tree maintenance – removal of aging and diseased trees.
  
- Areas identified as under budget include:
  - Assessor
  - Bulky Waste
  - Medical insurance

Lauren distributed a Budget Binders and the preliminary summary of the proposed 2018/19 budget including revenue and expenditure estimates. Note that the proposed budget assumes that Chester joins the Health District; however, either joining the Health District or establishing an in-house Health Department that would meet all requirements increases the health budget. The proposed budget represents an overall increase of \$269,206 or 2%. Detail will be reviewed during the Budget Workshops to start later this month.

Expenditures estimates include the contractual 3% wage increase for town employees.

Lauren reported:

- The state revenue remains a “moving target”.
- The salary for the new State Trooper is unknown at this time.
  - Charlene Janecek reported on the protocol for replacing/hiring the new Trooper.
- Capital needs have not yet been analyzed.
- Masonicare negotiations regarding taxes are on-going. The anticipated tax loss may be graduated over several years.

The BOF discussed the proposed school budgets, both Region 4 and CES. To date, the CES budget is up \$118,009 - 2.59%. Lauren reported on the significant cuts to CES and Region 4, including teachers, librarian hours, etc. Currently, Region 4 is at 0%; however, Chester’s portion of the Region 4 budget reflects an increase due to ADM shifts. Note these numbers have yet to be reviewed by BoEd Committees.

Lauren reported on the status of the LOTCIP funding; There will not be any LotCip this year. At a recent COST meeting, Commissioner Redeker reported that projects are on hold. The protocol for the use of federal funds is onerous and the State does not have the manpower to facilitate the process. It is anticipated that LOCIP will be available but next year’s allocation will be less than prior years.

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### Request for Cedar Lake Weed Removal - \$12,000

Lauren reported that the Cedar Lake Watershed Commission has provided a comprehensive overview of the invasive species weed issue at Cedar Lake. At this time, the lake is completely saturated with weeds

and poses safety concerns. Funding for weed removal has been budgeted in Capital; however, the problem is worse than previously anticipated and must be addressed immediately (this spring, prior to the start of the fiscal year). The weeds cannot be eradicated completely, only managed. The Cedar Lake Watershed Commission studied various options to address the weeds including hydro raking, diver assisted dredging and chemical applications.

The Commission is recommending that Solitude be retained to address the weeds. Camp Hazen has been included in conversations; however, because of continual use, weeds do not have the opportunity to grow in their beach area.

Carmany noted that in prior years the residents contributed to the cost of weed removal. Gister indicated that for safety reasons and better control of the weeds it was in the best interest of all parties if the Town got the job done.

The BOF discussed the need for the weed removal at the boat launch. The launch is regularly used by the Fire Dept. for emergency services. This area is the responsibility of the State; however, due to the States budget issues, it is unlikely the State will address this issue.

*Dave Cohen made a motion to transfer \$12,000 from the BOF contingency to the Outside Contractor, Buildings and Grounds to address the weeds at Cedar Lake as recommended by the Cedar Lake Watershed Commission and approved by the Board of Selectmen. Richard Strauss seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

#### Preliminary Education Budgets

The BOF discussed Region 4 and CES enrollment reports/projections provided by the superintendent's office. It was reported that many of the figures provided by the BoEd were incorrect as the report did not foot note the correct total numbers. Lauren has discussed this with Dr. Levy and the documents will be updated/corrected/revised.

BOF members were encouraged to attend the upcoming BOE budget meetings/workshops.

Richard Strauss attended a recent BOE meeting and reported on same. He additionally requested the BOF request the following:

- **Presentation from the insurance consultant regarding health insurance at schools**
- **A 10-year history on special education costs.**
- **Update on the cafeteria subsidy**
- **A copy of the school's audit**
- **School Capital Plan**

#### POCD/Strategic Plan Update

All reports are on the Town's website. Public Workshops are scheduled on 3/1/18 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Camp Hazen dining hall and 3/3/18 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at St. Joe's parish hall.

OPEN ITEMS IN OLD BUSINESS – None.

Budget Binders were distributed for BOF review.

ADJOURNMENT

*Jennifer Rannestad made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:43 p.m. Rick Nygard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski  
Clerk