

These minutes are subject to approval at the next BOF meeting

Town of Chester Connecticut
Chester Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
January 18, 2018
203 Middlesex Avenue
Community Meeting Room

CALL TO ORDER

Virginia Carmany, BOF Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m. In attendance included: Virginia Carmany, Jon Joslow, Rick Nygard, and Jennifer Rannestad. Seated for David Cohen was John O'Hare, seated for Charlie Park was Michael Joplin. Richard Strauss present but not seated. Also present: First Selectwoman Gister, Selectman Grzybowski and Selectwoman, Janecek.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jon Joslow made a motion to except the 12/21/17 Meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Rick Nygard. The motion passed with Jennifer Rannestad and Michael Joplin abstaining from voting.

REPORTS

Monthly Financials

Monthly financials (budget expenditures, revenues, tax collector's report, two capital reports) were included in the BOF packet of information.

Two additional packets of information had also been distributed: Mil Rates and Grand lists for CT towns, Chester's top 21 Tax payers, breakdown of Chester's residential vs. commercial properties and a few pages from GFOA Recommended Budget Practices.

Jon Joslow commented the capital plan is a very important document and will be discussed further at BOF meetings and within the context of the Budget. The report outlines the current standing and funding of town projects.

A question regarding the over expenditure in the Operating Budget Year to date regarding The Human Resource budget: it was explained this line reflects fuel assistance to qualified residents and it is not unusual for this line item to be fully expended at this time of year. Rick Nygard, regarding the capital reported, requested for clarification on the "balance" and "balance authorized" lines. Virginia clarified same vis a vis, one line is what is the balance in the account and one in the authorized line has been approved via a Town Meeting. **It was noted the Total Column needed to be reviewed as it incorrectly adds up all the columns.**

Carmany explained the expenditures to budget year to date report, at this point in the fiscal year, is typically half spent.

First Selectwoman's Report

Lauren Gister reported that conversations with Masonicare Chester Village have commenced regarding their tax/PILOT status. Town Attorney is currently researching the issue. The tax bill from Chester Village West is still due 1/31.

The town's Sanitarian and Health Director are retiring and the BOS is researching Health options.

The RiverCOG has had on-going conversations regarding sharing services to enable efficiencies and cost savings. Chester currently shares and Assessor with East Haddam. Gister noted a survey – not associated with the Town of Haddam Government was circulated across Haddam and has a general question regarding school regionalization with Haddam and Killingworth. She mentioned this only to point out that there is no effort to regionalize these school systems.

Ice dams and flooding have been seen at Castle View Extension, Ferry Road, Dock Road and Railroad Ave. A small area behind Water Street has also been affected although no damage was reported. Lauren issued a State of Emergency Declaration that serves to protect the Town and enable it to apply for FEMMA assistance/funds in the event of serious flooding and remediation expenses.

Trooper Ewing was promoted and has been reassigned to Troop I. An interim Trooper, Matt Webber, has been assigned to Chester. He will not be applying for the permanent position. The new position has been posted and closes 1/19. Lauren will participate in the interviews but ultimately, the decision is made by the State.

The Policy and Procedure Manual updates/recommendations have been forwarded to Virginia for BOF consideration.

Lauren distributed a joint letter sent by Virginia and Lauren regarding budget submissions. They requested a 0% increase budget. A budget meeting schedule was also distributed to BOF members.

The Supervision Budget proposal has been posted and the budget vote is in early February. The summary page indicates that the CES's portion is up 3.96% (\$50,000). Most of that amount is attributable to contracted services/salaries. Lauren also noted that there will be an increase in Region 4 to Chester due to a shift in ADM (Average Daily Membership) on which the allocation of Region 4 expenses are based. Chester is up, Essex is flat and Deep River is down; The implication is that Chester will be hit with an increase.

NEW BUSINESS

Nominations for Vice Chair

John O'Hare made a motion to nominate Jon Joslow as Vice Chairman of the BOF. Jennifer Rannestad seconded the motion. Discussion followed.

Jon Joslow reported that, for personal reasons, he does not feel he has the necessary time to accept the nomination.

John O'Hare withdrew the nomination.

Jennifer Rannestad nominated Rick Nygard. Jon Joslow seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Move Loan Amount for LED Conversion to Category "Debt"

Jennifer Rannestad made a motion to accept the request from the First Selectwoman to transfer the amount of \$6,288.85 from the streetlight account 10-03-47-1030-475 to the principal payments/debt account 10-05-59-1114-389. John O'Hare seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

This amount will be attributed to fy2017-18 for the LED light conversion loan previously approved.

Lauren reported that the Town was authorized to borrow up to \$100,000 from the Eversource program at 0% interest over 4 years. We did not need to borrow this amount because of the Eversource rebate and final costs of the conversion which came in at \$60,372.84. The first payment is due 02/15/18 and is currently in the streetlight account. We would like to have the item moved to the debt account to allow for proper accounting. The final monthly payment will be in Jan. 2022. 48 payments will be made when complete.

Suspense List

A copy of the Suspense List was included in the BOF packet. The Tax Collector has requested that the BOF approve the Suspense List (list of delinquent tax bills). These bills are predominantly vehicle tax bills. The list totals \$2,992.38. An amount of \$69.35 is for personal property and the balance is for vehicle tax bills. The bills will now be forwarded to a collection agency.

Rick Nygard made a motion to accept the Suspense List as presented in the amount of \$2,992.38. John O'Hare seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Review of Sept. 2017 Presentation regarding Chester Projections

Jennifer Rannestad presented an overview of Chester Projections as presented at the Sept 2017 Board of Finance Meeting. This presentation allowed the Board of Finance to fully understand the assumptions and calculations used for the overall presentation. The overall review of the Presentation, assumptions and calculations was extensive. The Board of Selectpersons and Board of Finance members requested this model be used during the Budget process as Actual numbers become available to keep tabs on Forecasts/projections of Revenue and Expenditures over time.

The BOF thanked Jennifer for her excellent presentation.

OPEN ITEMS IN OLD BUSINESS

POCD Update – Lauren reported that the consultant is in the process of one on one interviews of town staff. The next task force meeting is scheduled January 29, 2018. The first public workshop will be advertised (tentative date sometime in the 3rd week in February) and data gathered to date will be presented at that time.

State of the State Budget and Chester – Virginia distributed documentation. The State of CT is currently \$224M in the red. Though the State currently reported a \$900M revenue number, only \$10M can be used to offset the deficit due to a new law recently enacted requiring excess revenue funds be saved for future years.

It is expected that once the Legislature gets back to dealing with the deficit, there will be additional revenue reductions passed to the Towns: possibly as soon as the end of Feb. and another round possible after April 15, 2018.

LOTICIP – Lauren reported that these funds remain on hold.

Main Street Project – A meeting will be scheduled and advertised to review the status of the project.

BOF members were encouraged to attend the Region 4 Budget Hearing. The BOF briefly discussed the school budgets, recent Region 4 land acquisition, and hours for Referendum voting.

The BOF briefly discussed the possibility of a BOF liaison to the BOE.

Lauren will request BoEd monthly reports to be incorporated in Monthly Financials and if necessary will write a formal letter with Virginia to request same.

ADJOURNMENT

Jon Joslow made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 p.m. John O'Hare seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk

Reviewed
Virginia Carmany