

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVE AT THE NEXT BOF MEETING

Town of Chester, Connecticut
Chester Board of Finance
May 17, 2018
Regular Meeting
203 Middlesex Avenue
Community Meeting Room
Chester, Connecticut

CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Carmany called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m. In attendance included Rick Nygard, Jon Joslow, John O'Hare, seated for Charlie Park, Richard Strauss, seated for Jennifer Rannestad, First Selectwoman Gister, Selectman Grzybowski, Selectwoman Janecek and Susan Wright.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Rich Nygard made a motion to approve the April 18, 2018 BOF minutes. John O'hare seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Rick Nygard made a motion to approve the May 14, 2018 BOF minutes. John O'Hare seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS

Monthly Financials

Monthly financial reports were included in the BOF packet and included:

- Tax Collection rate is at 100.19% collected.
- The Collection rate budgeted is 98.75%.
- The Grand List showed a \$3 million increase which equates to an additional \$80,000 in revenue.

First Selectwoman's Report

Lauren reported that the State Legislature passed a budget and said budget reflects additional State Revenue to Chester in the amount of \$66,409. However, the State's portion of the Elderly Tax Relief funding in the amount of \$20,000 was eliminated. Chester's net increase in State revenue is approximately \$46,000 (mostly ECS).

TAR – \$190,222 is expected in the next fiscal year's budget. Lauren is following up with CCM and COST regarding the TAR funding for the second half of the current fiscal year.

The State was able to reduce the deficit due to the capital gains and interest that was received during this past tax season. Carmany added,, these monies are not anticipated beyond this year and the 19/20 State budget is expected to be \$2.6 billion in deficit and the 20/21 State budget is expected to be at \$2.6 billion in deficit.

Lauren updated the BOF on potential State funding that may be "at risk" including formula changes in ECS and transportation funds. Without a substantial, dependable revenue stream, i.e. tolls, lock boxes,

etc., for State transportation projects, the State Transportation Fund does not have the money to function.

Lauren reported that there have been “hints” that LOTCIP funding will continue to move forward and be available to towns on the priority list. Chester’s Main Street Project is the #2 project on the RiverCOG’s list.

Lauren clarified several items in the recent edition of the Valley Courier relating to the Chester budget (police protection line and Health Services Budget). Note that the DUI Grant will be reimbursed and Health Services Budget does not show an increase as presented in the news article.

Lauren distributed 2017/18 Budget Status Report (or YR End Forecast Rpt) dated May 17, 2018. Lauren reported:

- The second TAR installment remains unknown
- The non-profit status of Chester Village West has not been finalized – Masonicare is not yet ready to apply for non-profit status with the Town. Masonicare intends to improve the property which may affect the assessment of the property. Negotiations are on-going.
- Police Private Duty realized an increase due to an 8 week security project at Whalen.
- WPCA Assessment shows \$7,800 in revenue reflecting an advance payment possibly due to the sale of a property.
- Winter Maintenance expenses have increased due to the large volume of winter storms. These increases also reflect Chester’s portion of costs associated with opening the Shelter.

Carmany had questions related to the other funds, to which Gister noted the following:

- WPCA experienced equipment failure and costs were incurred to address same.
- Ambulance funds are now deposited directly into the General Fund and can now be closed.
- The Miscellaneous Grant Revenue Fund includes:
 - \$39,000 in Eversource rebate for the streetlight project and a \$5,000 Bright Ideas Grant
 - \$1,200 Friends of the Library
 - \$4,000 Historic Preservation Fund

Lauren will follow up on the status of the Gwendolyn Orton Jones Fund, the Health Services Grant and the Trees Grant.

Carmany requested Lauren research a recent bill to allow towns to start charitable organizations to receive contributions from residents in exchange for property tax credits. This will offset the SALT tax which caps State and Local income tax and property taxes at \$10,000 passed at the Federal level in Dec. 2017.



In response to Carmany’s request for correction of the population numbers used to set the cost for joining the Health District, Lauren noted she has negotiated a \$.50 decrease in the per capita fee with the Health District instead. The population numbers, though still incorrect are set by the State’s DPH. The \$.50 per person reduction will cover the population number that is approx. 200 too high.

Lauren reported that she met with the Rotary Club today regarding a NQP trails/boardwalk project.

NEW BUSINESS

Review Letter to Region 4

A draft letter to The R4 Board of Education regarding the 2018/19 Regional School District #4 and Supervision District budget process and practices, was included in the BOF packet. The draft letter includes requests for information, a return of operating surplus funds to towns, clarification on ADM calculations, clarification on the practices and procedures relative to the Capital Sinking Fund and financial policies affecting the 3 towns and the formation of a Region 4 Finance Board.

The BOF discussed, at length, the draft letter to Region 4. Richard Strauss and Rick Nygard will review/"wordsmith" the draft document further and present to the BOF.

POCD and Strategic Plan Update – no additional information at this time. The next meeting is scheduled at the end of May.

OPEN ITEMS IN OLD BUSINESS

Main Street Phase 3

Jacobson will "line" the street project.

Finance and Accounting Policy and Procedure Manual – information will be forthcoming.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Susan Wright thanked the BOF for their work on the budget and their interest in the R4 policies/procedures. Ms. Wright commended Madaline Mayer, Tax Collector.

Ms. Wright updated the BOF on a Rotary Club proposal for trails and boardwalks in the NQP/Laurel Hill Cemetery area. The Rotary Club has \$20,000 for the project and has enlisted the assistance of engineers. The Rotary Club is working on the project in conjunction with the Chester Park & Rec. Department.

The BOF recommended Susan present the proposed NQP project to the BOS for approval. Grzybowski indicated that the project was the same as that which is in the Budget and has received approval from the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen. However, as the project progresses it will need be reviewed.

Ms. Wright requested clarification on the BOF protocol used relative to the recent NQP/Library project. Virginia Carmany will provide information to Ms. Wright.

Ms. Wright also suggested that the Town publicize openings on Boards and Commissions.

ADJOURNMENT

John O'Hare made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 p.m. Rick Nygard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk

