

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOF MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF FINANCE
Regular Meeting
June 21, 2018
Community Meeting Room
203 Middlesex Ave.
Chester, Connecticut

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Carmany called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Board of Finance members seated were: Rick Nygard , Michael Joplin, John O'Hare and Richard Strauss. In attendance: Charlene Janecek and James Grzybowski

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Rick Nygard made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 30, 2018 BOF meeting. John O'Hare seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

MONTHLY FINANCIALS

Monthly financial reports were included in the BOF packet. Highlights of the report(s) included:

- Expenses - \$100,000 (in Planning and BOF) unspent in the General Government line vs. last year.
- Expenses – Additional \$14,000 needed in Building and Grounds Outside Contractor for upgrades to Water Street property (well and heating system).
- Revenue – Region 4 - \$28,248 surplus and Supervision District - \$10,385 surplus.
- TAR (Town Aid Road) funds - \$95,000 received from the State.
- On-going tree work expenses – Dead trees are prevalent throughout the State and Chester – Eversource is addressing many of the trees in the powerline areas. Chester's Tree Warden is also addressing the issue.
- Library Board of Trustees – line item still does not reflect funding from the Gwendolyn Orton Jones Trust.

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT - none

NEW BUSINESS

Post Mortem on Budget Process

The BOF discussed at length the budget process used by Boards, Commissions and Departments in presenting their budgets.

Currently, the Boards, Commissions and Departments submit their proposed budgets to the First Selectwoman and she, along with Peter Evankow, review and "fine tune" the budgets prior to forwarding them on to the BOF. This year, Health District, Library and Public Works were the only budgets discussed by BOF in detail.

Virginia Carmany reported that in past years, a BOF liaison was assigned to each Board/Commission. Said liaison attended meetings and reported to the entire BOF as appropriate but for several years that practice was abandoned in part due to tight finances and in part due to reducing the amount of time

required for all Board and Commission Chairs to present their budgets and lastly due to the similarity year over year in their budgets. At the beginning of this year's budget process, Boards, Commissions and Departments were asked to provide "bare bones" budgets. No Department submitted requests for major increases. If a major increase is requested, the BOF has the ability to request said Department present their budget to the BOF for potential questions, details, etc.

The process for presenting the proposed budget to the Town at the Annual Public Hearing was discussed. Presently, the First Selectwoman presents Town's budget and the Superintendent of Schools presents the school's budget, not the BOF even though it is the BOF's responsibility to perform all administrative tasks associated with the budget, including presenting it to the Town. Virginia reported that this process can be changed for next year's budget presentation; however, the BOF does not have administrative staff to whom collecting all budget data has been delegated. If the process was changed to have the Board of Finance collect collate and from all Department Heads, Chairmen etc. and present to the BOF would be very time consuming.

A history of the increases/variances over the years new budget to past actuals by department will be requested during the budget process next year.

Several BOF members expressed disappointment in the lack of attendance and public participation throughout the budget process. To encourage participation, it was suggested that a postcard mailing on the budget may be sent to all residents next year.

Jon Joslow provided his comments to BOF members via e-mail.

Key Issues for Coming Year

Key issues for the coming year include:

- As discussed above, a possible change in the protocol for submitting proposed budgets.
- On-going status/concerns regarding revenue from the State.
- Status of Masonicare
- Analysis of LED streetlight conversion

Michael Joplin reported on the status of the Main Street Project vis a vis LOTCIP. The project is currently at the 30% design mark. It is anticipated that construction documents will be finalized in February/March. If LOTCIP is funded, Chester's project is #2 on the list. To date, the BOF has released \$190,000 for the project and approximately \$73,000 has been spent. Phase 1 of the project was funded through STEAP grants.

OPEN ITEMS IN OLD BUSINESS

Review of Region 4 BOE letter and determine next steps

The BOF discussed, at length, the draft letter to Region 4. Virginia reported that the BOS is working with the BOE and the BOS has requested that the letter NOT be forwarded to the BOE; the BOS will not sign the letter.

BOF members discussed the BOE policy and revised policy pertaining to disposition of surplus funds. In the draft policy, the BOE eliminated the return of surplus funds to the Towns but did not identify where said funds would go. The lack of proper protocol (cancelled meetings, no minutes filed, lack of School's Finance Committee review of policies, lack of detailed reporting on funds forwarded to school's Sinking

Fund, lack of Capital Project policy) exercised by the BOE was discussed at length. The BOF expressed concern regarding the Region 4 BOE's lack of communication and transparency.

Details of the draft letter to the Region 4 BOE were discussed, including the creation of appropriate policies regarding Capital projects and use of disposition of surplus funds. Virginia reported that the new Chairman of the Region 4 BOE has indicated a willingness to work with the Boards of Finance from the 3 Towns. The BOF will request a copy of the Region 4 Annual Report as required per State Statute.

Rick Nygard will wordsmith the draft letter to the BOE for BOF review and comment.

Finance and Accounting Policy and Procedures Manual – the draft manual has been distributed to BOF members and will be discussed and reviewed by the BOF at a Special Meeting.

POCD and Strategic Plan Update

Virginia reported that the consultants are assembling a Task Force to develop another survey.

Seating and Board of Finance Alternate Members

Per State Statute, if a Regular BOF member is absent or disqualified, said member shall name an alternate BOF member to act in their stead. If absent member does not designate an alternate, the BOF members present at the meeting will "seat" an alternate. The BOF's current protocol is that the Chairman seats alternates to fill absent BOF members seats using a rotating basis.

The consensus of the BOF was to follow the Statute as outlined. Virginia will get word out to regular members that if they are not going to be present, they can designate which alternate BOF member they want to sit for them.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None.

ADJOURNMENT

John O'Hare made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:55 p.m. Michael Joplin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk

Reviewed by Virginia Carmany