

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOF MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING
July 19, 2018
203 Middlesex Ave.
Community Meeting Room

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Carmany called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. In attendance included: Chairman Carmany, John O'Hare, Jon Joslow, Rick Nygard, Dave Cohen, Charlie Park, Jennifer Rannestad, Mike Joplin, and First Selectwoman Gister. Alternates John O'Hare and Mike Joplin were present but not seated.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 14, 2018, May 17, 2018, June 21, 2018

Minutes were tabled due to lack of appropriate board members at this evening's meeting. Lauren will provide clarification on protocol for approval of minutes.

REPORTS

Monthly Financials

Monthly financial reports were included in the BOF packet.

Lauren reported that the estimated fund balance report is not yet final. This balance can be attributed to various departments/budget lines including Medial Insurance, Chester Hose, Town Office Operations (equipment maintenance line), Assessor (Chester not obligated to pay E. Haddam for Assessor's time off). Above budget line items are often difficult to determine when budget is being established.

Virginia reported that Peter will provide updated reports, including Capital, when all of the bills have been received. Final year end reports will be distributed in August with year end transfers.

Several revenue and expenditure accounts were discussed including P&Z (entire POCD has not yet been billed but is encumbered), Insurance line (must budget for maximum exposure), Elderly Tax Relief Program (State did not fund), and LOTCIP (funding has not yet been received).

Virginia explained the protocol vis a vis the Gwendolyn Orton Jones Trust.

Lauren will request Peter provide clarification on the lack of contributions to the Fireman's Pension Trust.

The Town received unanticipated Region 4 surplus funds. The amount of the surplus is dependent on the ADM per town. A rough calculation puts the sinking fund at least at \$150K.

The Tax Collection Rate and Grand List are higher than budgeted.

BOF members briefly discussed the capabilities of the Finance Department's software system and the estimated \$80,000 cost to upgrade same. Upgrades to software may be a Capital discussion during next year's budget cycle. There would also be a cost for ongoing maintenance of around \$15k a year.

Virginia reported that the Town has taken ownership of 59 Winthrop Road. All liens have been removed from the property that was sold at a tag sale. Virginia requested Lauren research how much the Town has invested funds (legal fees) in the property. In addition the former owner's property remains on the site and the Town can either evict the individual or auction the items off. The Town does not have any liability regarding the possible environmental issues on the property.

First Selectwoman's Report

Lauren reported the following:

- Chester Hose Company has re-elected the Fire Chief and new officers have also been elected. Many veteran Hose Company members have returned and the Hose Company is reviewing their by-laws.
- The normal summer "issues" at Cedar Lake are on-going.
- The cross walk at Camp Hazen was briefly discussed. Lauren will follow-up with Camp Hazen regarding the potential of a light to ensure the safety of Camp Hazen and residents while crossing the street.
- The Town has received all TAR payments from the State.
- Chester Village West (Masonicare) – they have not requested a tax exempt status therefore negotiations have not been initiated. They are currently paying taxes.
 - Jon Joslow suggested that the Town "re-look" at Ten Directions

Virginia explained the WPCA budget process. The WPCA budget is separate from the Town's budget and they have the ability to raise revenue. Their maintenance concerns experienced (due to a storm) may be covered by insurance.

NEW BUSINESS

Fraud Risk Questionnaire – Virginia distributed a questionnaire from the auditor. Members will fill out and return to Virginia.

OLD BUSINESS

Review of Region 4 BOE Letter and Determine Next Steps

A copy of the updated "draft" letter to the BOE was included in the BOF packet.

Virginia reported that she has met with Jennifer Clark, Chairman Region 4 BOE, and she provided draft information that was distributed to BOF members. Some of this information is what the BOF would have been requesting as part of the Region 4 Letter. Additional information from Region 4 is expected. Virginia reported that the meeting was productive and Ms. Clark is willing to work with the BOF.

Jennifer Rannestad requested that the BOE provide a copy of their audit to the BOF.

Lauren indicated she would be asking for a copy of the Audit.

The BOF discussed possibility “re-working” the current draft letter, having Ms. Clark and Chester’s Region 4 reps. attend a “face to face” meeting with the BOF, and tabling further action on the draft letter until after a “face to face” meeting.

Each member of the Board stated how they felt about the Region 4 letter and worked toward consensus. Ultimately, the BOF would like to see the BOE more supportive of the Town. If the letter is “wordsmithed” and sent to the BOE, it was suggested that it include specifics (not demands) on what the BOF is requesting; followed-up with a letter outlining what both parties have agreed to.

An expressed concern was if the letter to the BOE is not sent, the on-going concerns regarding requests for information with the BOE/Region 4 will not be addressed.

Finance and Accounting Policy and Procedures Manual

Virginia distributed copies of the Finance and Accounting Policy and Procedure Manual that was sent to the BOS for review and the BOS’s response to same. Virginia explained the format of the documents.

A special BOF meeting was scheduled on Thursday, 7/26/18 @ 7:00 p.m. and Thursday, 8/16/18 @ 7:00 p.m. for further BOF review of the document.

It was determined a special meeting would be convened on July 26th at 7 pm for review of the Policy Manual and the August meeting would start at 7pm for yearend transfers and finalizing the Policy Manual for returning to the BoS.

Main Street Phase 3 – Status Update – Kent & Frost – no update.

POCD and Strategic Plan Update – no update.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None.

ADJOURNMENT

Jon Joslow made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m. Charlie Park seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk