

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOF MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECICUT
Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
Thursday, October 18, 2018
Community Meeting Room
Chester, Connecticut

CALL TO ORDER

Virginia Carmany called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm. In attendance included: Virginia Carmany, Chairman, Jennifer Rannestad, Charlie Par, and Richard Strauss (seated for Rick Nygard). Jon Joslow (arrived at 7:42 and was not seated). James Grzybowski, Selectman, Charlene Janecek, Selectwoman, Lauren Gister, First Selectwoman (arrived at 7:42 p.m.) and Peter Evankow, Accounting Manager

Also attending Jennifer Clark, Region 4 BOE Chairman and Trisha Brookhart, BOE.

The BOF welcomed Region 4 BOE members to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jennifer Rannestad made a motion to approve the minutes from the 9/20/18 BOF meeting as amended. Charlie Park seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Correction: page 2 – under “Main Street Project” – add to second sentence: “Mike Joplin reported that the Town should strive to have the State take responsibility for sidewalk’s privately owned.” Add to the third sentence: “if it is only \$90,000”.

NEW BUSINESS

Discuss Concerns Regarding Region 4 with Chester’s Members of Region 4 BOE

Richard Straus reported on the BOF’s concerns regarding the Region 4 schools including:

- Several years ago, a Finance committee comprised of all boards of education was created to look at financial issues of the district. For a variety of reasons, including weather, the committee was not active last year. Currently, the committee has been meeting to discuss district wide policies and actively reviewing procedures.
 - Richard Strauss as well as other BoF members have been attending the recent meetings of this committee.
 - The policy for the return of surplus funds to the Towns was discussed by the committee and recently determined it would follow the policy as written and recommend returning all surplus to the towns though it had not been following this policy for last couple of years.
 - The committee has also agreed that a Capital Plan will be developed and funding for same will go through the budget process in accordance with State Statute.
 - Other items discussed by the committee include: bid protocol and the delegation of authority for approval of Capital expenses. Capital expenses must be approved by the BOE and not the Administration.
 - If necessary, an emergency/special BOE may be called to address emergency expenditures.

- A copy of the Procedural Manual for purchases has been distributed to all schools and is being implemented.
- The Committee directed the Business Manager to explore alternate but equal options for current medical insurance plan and the possibility of joining a consortium.
- The next meeting of the committee is scheduled 11/27/18.

Enrollment projections and development of same was discussed at a prior committee meeting. This information is instrumental when considering staffing needs at the schools and budgeting. The BOEF was concerned with the accuracy of the projections and is not confident with the numbers provided by the consultant. The Business Manager will work to provide clarification on enrollments. Virginia requested that the Business Manager provide a 5 year comparison of projections vs. actuals. She also indicated that the finance committee suggested that the school may wish to pursue the use of a second consultant.

Jennifer Clark reported that the Administration is working to provide, as requested by the BOF, a 5 year projection on Capital. This projection is dependent on information on the status of the buildings and properties and deferred maintenance items that is being developed by the new Facilities Director, Lee Rankin. Ms. Clark reported that said analysis and 5-year Capital Plan may not be available by December. She also indicated that it may be necessary to go out to Bond before the three retiring bonds mature, 2021, 2022 and 2023. The report will be forwarded to appropriate parties upon its completion. Lauren reported that she is meeting with the Business Manager on Monday, 10/22, to review the Capital Spreadsheet. Lauren has also talked with Lee Rankin and it is anticipated that estimates will be available for the next budget cycle.

Richard Strauss stressed the importance of sharing District policies impacting the community with all appropriate parties for possible input on same. Virginia reported that the school has been sending her, as BOF Chairman, agendas of upcoming meetings. Also, minutes from all committee meetings will be filed as per FOIA (note that the committee had not been filing minutes in the past).

The Policies that will be adopted will be posted on the Region 4 website. The policies referenced are the 3000 series.

Virginia reported and Richard concurred that these BOED issues seem to be being attended to in a timely manner.

The BOF thanked BOE members for attending the meeting.

REPORTS

Monthly Financials

Monthly financial documentation was included in the BOF packet.

Peter Evankow clarified that the Health and Human Services accounts reflect Chester's recent contract with the Health District. Also, Chester's portion of the Tri Town and Estuary Council fees are paid in a lump sum early in the year. Peter continued that the Trial Balance, Tax Collector's Report and Revenue figures do not match due to the timing of reporting the data.

Lauren will forward additional information, developed by the Business Manager, regarding the status of CES surplus funds vis a vis the Cafeteria Report. This item will be discussed at the next BOF meeting.

Peter clarified that the Library Board of Trustees Fund shows a \$0 balance in the prior year due to the timing of said report (July through September).

Virginia requested that “risks” and “opportunities” lines be added to the Budget Status Report.

It is important to keep the items from last year that are still risks in sight e.g. possibility of losing tax revenue from the State or other issues that were concerns last year during the budget cycle. Include the dollar amount possibly at risk.

First Selectwoman’s Report

- 1) Lauren updated the BOF on the recent flooding event (9/25/18) in Chester including:
 - Public Works’ first priority was to address safety concerns and they used local contractors to shore up culverts, fixed Goose Hill Road, etc. To date, approximately \$28,000 has been spent; however, not all bills have been received yet.
 - The total estimate for damages is approximately \$480,000, including roads, culverts, etc.
 - The Liberty Street Bridge is the largest project. Divers have inspected the bridge and determined that it is still “sound” and does not need replacement; however, there is some undermining on the bottom of the bridge that needs to be addressed and work in channel, roadway and railroad also needs to be done.
 - To ensure the integrity of bridges and dams, Jacobson has been asked to perform inspections on same.
 - Cost estimates to fix the bridge are \$320,000 to \$350,000
 - LOTCIP grants would not apply for this work; however LOCIP money may be used for the work. The current LOCIP balance is approximately \$30,000.
 - Insurance claims will also be submitted.
 - The Road Repair line was used to address the recent flooding and will be over expended by year’s end.
 - A report has been submitted to DEHMS to determine if Chester meets the threshold for State and/or Federal assistance.

The weather will play a factor in repair work on the Liberty Street Bridge as the asphalt plants will close soon and not re-open until Spring.

Lauren reported that because this incident was an emergency situation, the formal bid process was waived. Funding for the repairs will most likely come from the roads/capital account. These funds have been through the BOF and Town Meeting process. Projects currently funded by that account will be reevaluated and possibly “pushed” off to a later date. The BOS may request an appropriation to address projects. It was recommended that any request for additional funding wait until all costs are final.

Two issues were discussed: a) keeping history of emergency costs and b) not projecting that it is easy to find \$500K in the budget for these emergency costs.

Lauren will keep the BOF updated on the progress of the project(s).

- 2) Masonicare has requested not for profit status (they have not requested that this be retro-active). Their request has been sent to the Town Attorney for review. The Assessor will be involved, along with the First Selectwoman on negotiations with Masonicare.
- 3) The POCD Adoption Schedule was distributed to the BOF.

Lauren updated the BOF on the role of Malone and McBroom in the POCD and Strategic Plan project. The consultants are 75% through their contract. Their role is to develop the criteria for the Strategic Plan and a scoring matrix for the Advisory Committee. When the POCD is completed, projects can be discussed and prioritized per the scoring matrix. The Strategic Plan document will be used by the BOS, BOF and appropriate Boards/Commissions to put forward potential projects.

P&Z is responsible for the POCD and the deadline is March 2019. There will be a Public Hearing on the POCD.

The content/format of the surveys sent out to residents was also discussed. Many individuals had difficulty in filling out the survey.

The BOF again discussed their frustrations relative to the process of the POCD and Strategic Plan. Virginia reported that this may not be an appropriate time to do a Strategic Plan without the data we expected. Lauren suggested that the BOS/BOF may wish to develop a list of projects.

- 4) Lauren reported that an RFP for the Meetinghouse floor is being developed. The anticipated timeline of the project is next Spring, depending on the contractor and Meetinghouse schedule.
- 5) Lauren with the E-team is exploring ways to utilize the 40 Solar panels removed from the Chester Elementary school. No responses were received in response to an RFP to place the solar array at the Hose Company.

6) Grants

Lauren reported the following:

- The request for an extension to the \$1 million Library Grant was rejected and there is no current plan to re-apply for it. Lauren will update the Town on the matter in the next Events Magazine.
- She is currently working on submitting several grants including Parks/Trails, Brownfields and FEMA (Fire Fighter) grants.
 - Jamie reported that he will be applying for the FEMA grant for equipment (Scot Packs, fireboat and Jaws of Life). The total grant amount is \$220,000 on an 80/20 percent match basis.

OPEN ITEMS IN OLD BUSINESS

Status of POCD/Strategic Plan and Survey and Request for a Breakdown of Expenditures YTD – discussed under “First Selectwoman’s Report”.

Review Finance and Accounting Policy and Procedures Manual

The BOS will schedule a BOS meeting to review the BOF's comments on the document. A joint BOS/BOF meeting will be scheduled following their review. Virginia requested the two boards meet on this issue before the end of the year.

Dedication of Annual Report

A draft of the dedication was included in the BOF packet.

The BOF agreed that the draft dedication of the Annual Report in honor of Barbara Delaney was appropriate.

ADJOURNMENT

Charlie Park made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:18 p.m. Jennifer Rannestad seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk

Reviewed and edited by Virginia Carmany