

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS/BOF MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN/BOARD OF FINANCE
JOINT MEETING
Monday, April 8, 2019
Community Meeting Room

CALL TO ORDER

Virginia Carmany, Chairman, called the Board of Finance to order at 7:30 p.m. In attendance included: Richard Nygard, Charles Park, Jennifer Rannestad, Richard Strauss (seated for Dave Cohen), John O'Hare (seated for Jon Joslow), Michael Joplin in attendance but not seated.

Lauren Gister, First Selectwoman, called the Board of Selectmen to order at 7:30 p.m. In attendance included: Lauren Gister, Charlene Janecek and James Grzybowski.

Also in attendance: Superintendent Levy, Tyson Stoddard, Principal and members of the BOE, Assistant Superintendent, and Finance Office staff.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF CES BOE BUDGET

Superintendent Levy and BOE representatives were in attendance and presented a detailed overview of the proposed CES 2019/20 budget. Copies of the proposed budget were distributed to Board members. Highlights of their presentation included:

- Chester's portion of the Region 4 Supervision budget has increased significantly due to enrollments (ADM).
 - Dr. Levy explained the enrollment projections and actuals.
 - BOF members expressed disappointment with the inaccurate figures in the presentation on page 14
 - BoF suggested an RFQ for a consultant for all student enrollment projections
 - The importance of accurate ADM figures relative to budgeting for future years was discussed especially as it pertained to staff moving into Supervision District and being allocated back out to the Elementary Schools
- Major budget drivers for Chester Elementary include: contractual obligations due to salaries and benefits, special education services, security, maintenance, technology, health insurance (15% increase), out of district tuition, fuel/oil, supplies, Supervision District increase (\$244,722). Dr. Levy provided detailed information regarding the Supervision District increase to Board members.
 - Health Insurance costs and possible options, including self-funding, for same were discussed.
- The recently negotiated Teacher Contract and protocols for step and other increases was discussed. Step increases are based on years of service.
- Dr. Levy provided information on budget reductions.
- CES Staffing and class sizes were reviewed

- BOE staff explained the rationale for Supervision District positions and funding of same.
 - BOF members expressed disappointment that the financial benefits of consolidated services are not evident
- Chester's portion of ADM includes K-12 and totals 6.49% -
- Total increase: \$205,428 – 4.40%
- The Cafeteria budget and subsidy funds were discussed. The BOF's continued concerns relative to the Cafeteria budget and Auditor's comments on same were discussed.
- Cafeteria is carrying a deficit from year to year and that was questioned
- BOF members discussed the difficulty in "bridging" the increasing cost of the education budget with the revenues of the town without considerable tax increases.
- The Administration was asked to clarify the following:
 - What is the dollar amount and percent increase in the FY20 budget as compared with the approved FY19 Budget, not including debt service?
 - What is the dollar amount and percent increase in the FY20 budget as compared with the FY19 Projection, not including debt service?
 - What is the dollar amount and percent increase in the FY20 budget as compared with the approved FY19 Budget, including debt service?
 - Administration will forward additional responses to the BOF.
- The Chester Budget Hearing is on May 8th and the Referendum for the schools is May 7th. Budgets will be published/noticed as appropriate.
 - It is anticipated that the Valley Courier will publish an article on Chester's budget.
 - BOF members expressed concern that the school budget Referendum will be voted on prior to the vote on the Town of Chester's budget.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

An audience member expressed concern regarding increased education spending.

Audience members were encouraged to submit their questions directly to Dr. Levy for a response.

An Audience member commented that the school Administration must take responsibility and "make some cuts" relative to the continued increases in the education budget. The Town should not have to "take the hit". Lauren responded that the BOS and BOF have very little control over the education budget(s).

Meeting attendees expressed disappointment with the lack of public participation at town budget meetings.

Lauren recommended an additional Joint BOS/BOF meeting, prior to the budget hearing. A proposed date for the meeting is May 2nd and the purpose of said meeting would be a Public Information Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made and duly seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk