

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOF MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT  
BOARD OF FINANCE  
SPECIAL MEETING  
Wednesday, May 27, 2020  
Via ZOOM

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Carmany called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. In attendance included Virginia Carmany, Richard Strauss, Rick Nygard, Jon Joslow, Greg Merola, Michael Joplin (seated for Jennifer Rannestad), and Andrew Gardner (non-voting BOF member).

Also in attendance Selectwoman Janecek, Selectman Englert, First Selectwoman Gister, Jamie Grzybowski, Fire Chief, Peter Evankow, Finance Manager, Liz Netsch, Treasurer, Superintendent Brian White, Tyson Stoddard, Principal Chester Elementary School, Madeline Meyer, Tax Collector, Richard Huot, R4 Business Manager, and several other audience members.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS - None

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION OF FUNDING SOURCE FOR REPLACEMENT OF CES UNDERGROUND OIL TANK

Rick Nygard made a motion to recommend the sum of \$50,000 be used from the general fund balance to 10-05-62-1000-150 Capital Non-Recurring; and,

To recommend the following Capital transfer:

From 20-00-01-0000-007	BOS – Assigned	\$50,000
To: 20-00-90-0000-062	School – Oil Tank Repl.	\$50,000

and,

To recommend the expenditure of \$50,000 from the Capital Fund – School – Oil Tank Replacement line item #20-00-90-0000-062.

Richard Strauss seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Virginia Carmany explained the above funds will become available immediately; however, the remaining funds required for the project that are part of the Capital budget will not become available until July 1. James will be able to enter into a contract for the project but the work will not commence until after July 1.

CONSIDERATION AND DISCUSSION OF FY20/21 PROPOSED BUDGET

A copy of the proposed budget was available via ZOOM.

Lauren Gister stated while the BOS/BOF set a goal of no tax increases in the budget, after extensive joint BOS/BOF discussions, BoEd were not able to achieve this goal without impacting the educational programs and the Education increases were offset by use of reserve funds.

VOTE TO APPROVE THE FY2021 BUDGET

Michael Joplin made a motion to select the method of payment and due date of installments of property taxes in keeping with CT General Statutes 12-143 as follows:

- 1) Real estate taxes due in two halves, first half due July 1, 2020 and the second half due January 1, 2021
- 2) All motor vehicle bills due in one payment on July 1, 2020
- 3) All motor vehicle supplement bills due in one payment on January 1, 2021
- 4) Minimum interest charge of \$2.00
- 5) Negate all bills under \$5.00

Rick Nygard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Lauren Gister reported that tax bills are due; however, the BOS voted to extend the grace period, of no interest, for a period of 3 months (as a result of Covid-19/Executive Order). This information will be included in the tax bills.

Richard Strauss made a motion to adopt a budget for the Town of Chester for fiscal year July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 an amount totaling \$14,552,018.00. Michael Joplin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Richard Strauss made a motion to adopt a five-year Capital Budget, as recommended by the Board of Finance. Richard Nygard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Rick Nygard made a motion to authorize the First Selectman and Treasurer to borrow such sums of money from time to time as may be necessary to defray expenses of the Town in accordance with authorized appropriations of fiscal year ending June 30, 2021. Richard Strauss seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Lauren Gister reported that if the Town were to borrow money in the event of an emergency, BOS and BOF approval would be required; however, a Town Meeting would not be necessary due to it being an emergency.

Rick Nygard made a motion to authorize the following General Fund transfer, as recommended by the Board of Finance:

From	10-01-13-1000-125	Board of Finance – General Contingency	
		\$52,000	
From	10-02-30-1160-104	Highway – Winter Maint. – Overtime Payroll	\$12,789
From	10-02-30-1160-365	Highway – Winter Maint. – Outside Contractor	\$47,211
From	10-03-45-1000-117	Police Protection – Resident Trooper	\$25,000
From	10-05-55-1000-325	Employee Benefits – Medical Insurance	
		\$25,000	
To	10-05-62-1000-150	Capital Non-Recurring	\$162,000

Greg Merola seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Richard Strauss made a motion to authorize the following Capital transfer, as recommended by the Board of Finance:

From	20-00-01-0000-007	Board of Selectmen – Assigned	
		\$162,000	
To	20-00-31-0000-446	Infrastructure – Road/Sidewalk/Bridge Repairs	\$162,000

Rick Nygard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Richard Strauss made a motion to authorize the following Capital transfer, as recommended by the Board of Finance:

From	20-00-01-0000-007	Board of Selectmen – Assigned	\$3,000
To	20-00-31-0000-456	Infrastructure – Tree Removal	\$3,000

Rick Nygard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Richard Strauss made a motion to authorize the following Capital transfer, as recommended by the Board of Finance:

From	20-00-01-0000-007	Board of Selectmen – Assigned	
		\$243,548	
To	20-00-31-0000-446	Infrastructure – Road/Sidewalk/Bridge Repairs	\$243,548

Michael Joplin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Richard Strauss made a motion to authorize the expenditure of \$22,000 from the Capital Fund – Cedar Lake/Watershed - 20-00-01-0000-042, as recommended by the Board of Finance. Rick Nygard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Richard Strauss made a motion to authorize the expenditure of \$22,000 from the Capital Fund – Town Hall Computer Replacement line item # 20-00-01-0000-092, as recommended by the Board of Finance. Rick Nygard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Jon Joslow made a motion to waive the individual reading of items k through u of the agenda and take one vote on same. Greg Merola seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Richard Strauss made a motion to authorize the following expenditures k through u:

- 20,000 from the Capital Fund – Main Street Project line item #20-00-31-0000-048, as recommended by the Board of Finance;

To authorize the expenditure of \$443,548 from the Capital Fund – Road/Sidewalk/Bridge Repairs line item # 20-00-31-0000-446, as recommended by the Board of Finance;

To authorize the expenditure of \$8,000 from the Capital Fund – North Quarter Park/Playground line item # 20-00-31-0000-454, as recommended by the Board of Finance;

To authorize the expenditure of \$70,000 from the Capital Fund – Tree Removal line item # 20-00-31-0000-456, as recommended by the Board of Finance;

To authorize the expenditure of \$55,000 from the Capital Fund – NRCS Matching Funds 20-00-31-0000-458, as recommended by the Board of Finance;

To authorize the expenditure of \$25,000 from the Capital Fund – Chester Creek Dredging 20-00-31-0000-460, as recommended by the Board of Finance;

To authorize the expenditure of \$44,000 from the Capital Fund – Town Buildings – Repairs/Code Compliance line item # 20-00-36-0000-065, as recommended by the Board of Finance;

To authorize the expenditure of \$95,000 from the Capital Fund – Fire – Truck Replacement line item # 20-00-42-0000-062, as recommended by the Board of Finance;

To authorize the expenditure of \$35,000 from the Capital Fund – Fire – Equipment Replacement line item # 20-00-42-0000-235, as recommended by the Board of Finance;

To authorize the expenditure of \$55,000 from the Capital Fund – School – Oil Tank Replacement line item # 20-00-90-0000-062, as recommended by the Board of Finance; and

To authorize the expenditure of \$10,000 from the Capital Fund – School – Building Rehab & Enhancement line item #20-00-90-0000-090, as recommended by the Board of Finance.

Jon Joslow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Jon Joslow made a motion to vote on agenda items 6 and 7 together. Greg Merola seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Richard Strauss made a motion to authorize the First Selectwoman to enter into an agreement for a Connecticut Energy Fund loan of up to \$26,000.00 at the interest rate of 0% for a four year term to fund the cost of LED lighting retrofits at the Chester Elementary School, as recommended by the Board of Selectmen. Information about the Energy Fund Loan is available in the Selectman's office. The Town of Chester will realize a total net cost of approximately \$265.00 per year during the loan period after conservation incentives available through EnergizeCT, but will realize an overall cost savings of approximately \$6,000 per year once the loan period ends and to authorize the First Selectwoman to enter into a contract with Earthlight Solar and Energy Solutions to replace lights in the Chester Elementary School with LED (light emitting diode) fixtures as recommended by the Board of Selectmen. Michael Joplin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Richard Strauss made a motion to appropriate, as recommended by the Board of Finance, the sum of \$50,000 from the general fund balance to 10-05-62-1000-150 Capital Non-Recurring. Jon Joslow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Richard Strauss made a motion to authorize the following Capital transfer, as recommended by the Board of Finance:

From	20-00-01-0000-007	Board of Selectmen – Assigned	\$50,000
To	20-00-90-0000-062	School – Oil Tank Replacement	\$50,000

Rick Nygard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Richard Strauss made a motion to authorize the expenditure of \$50,000 from the Capital Fund – School – Oil Tank Replacement line item #20-00-90-0000-062, as recommended by the Board of Finance. Rick Nygard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Rick Nygard made a motion to set mill rate of 28.62 (.17 reduction) for taxes for fiscal year 2020-2021. Michael Joplin seconded the motion. Discussion followed:

Richard Strauss suggested that the BOF consider maintaining the current year’s mill rate in keeping with the stated goal of no tax increases and/or more fully consider the use of additional reserves to reduce the mil rate substantially in light of the impacts of Covid -19 on the community.

He stated that the BOF and BOS had established the goal of no tax increases during the budget process however, at the last budget workshop, there was a short discussion regarding a reduction to the mill rate and a small decrease was agreed upon.

Virginia Carmany responded to reiterate the consensus of the Board was to maintain the reserve in the event of cash flow issues as a result of reduced tax collection, or worsening conditions due to Covid-19 or other unknown factors including the potential losses in state revenue to the Town.

BOF members had extensive discussion on Mr. Strauss’ suggestion. The vote on the above motions was as follows:

The motion passed unanimously.

Jon Joslow made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m. Rick Nygard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski  
Clerk