

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOF MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, August 19, 2020
Via ZOOM

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Carmany called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m. In attendance included: Chairman Carmany, Rick Nygard , Greg Merola, Jon Joslow, Richard Strauss, John O’Hare, seated for Jennifer Rannestad (who arrived at 7:40), Andrew Gardner (not seated), Peter Evankow, Business Manager, First Selectwoman Gister, Selectwoman Janecek, Ray Guasp and Jamie Grzybowski.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Rick Nygard made a motion to approve the 6/18/20 BOF minutes. John O’Hare seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Clarification – page 2 – note that the BOF and BOS have approved the Policy Manual pending “Scrivener’s edits”.

Rick Nygard made a motion to approve the minutes from the 6/25/20 BOF meeting as amended. Jon Joslow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Amendment: bottom of page – delete “aligning cost with use”.

NEW BUSINESS

LONG TERM RECOVERY COORDINATOR PRESENTATION

A copy of the Long-Term Recovery Team’s presentation was included in the BOF packet.

Ray Guasp and Jamie Grzybowski thanked the many volunteers for their efforts in developing Long Term Recovery recommendations for consideration.

The Long-Term Recovery committee, formed to address the Covid-19 pandemic, tasked several sub-committees with developing recommendations to assist Chester residents and businesses affected by the Pandemic.

This evening’s presentation and request for funding is to address the immediate needs and a vision/discussion relative to addressing the pandemic long term (including potential financial implications) is on-going by the Long Term Recovery Sub Committees. The Coordinators will keep the BOS and BOF updated throughout the process.

Jon Joslow made a motion to add to the agenda a discussion and possible vote on the \$9,000 request from the Recovery Team. John O’Hare seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Virginia reported that this \$9,000 request is the first one submitted by the Recovery Team. The Town has a healthy fund balance that may be used to support the efforts of the Recovery Team. These unassigned funds are set aside for emergency use, such as Covid-19.

Discussion relative to the Long Term Recovery presentation included:

- They are currently developing a survey to be forwarded to businesses owners to collect data on what if any services businesses received; i.e. financial or mental health due to the pandemic, how will a potential shut down in the Fall affect their business, etc. Costs associated with the survey are currently being researched. The cost to facilitate the Re-Open Chester survey was less than \$1,000.00.
 - The importance of ample funds for follow-up to the survey was discussed. This is important to measure the success and progress of any plan developed as a result of the survey.
- The Social Services, Spirituality and Emotional Wellness Action Team recommends that the Emergency Fund be renamed to the Chester Cares Fund.
- Park & Rec has facilitated several socially distanced activities including yoga, movie night and karate. These activities are well attended and all social distancing protocols are being followed during the events. To enable social distancing, circles are painted at various locations through town (NQP, Meetinghouse lawn, school, etc.). The Recovery Team recommends the Town purchase the sprayer (information on the sprayer was included in the BOF packet). The costs associated with movie night (\$250 for licensing) was discussed. The movies are offered to residents at no charge and to date, donations have paid the licensing fees.
- The Long Term Recovery Coordinators are recommending locating a more aesthetically pleasing, handicap accessible porta potty to be located at the Water Street parking lot.

As the Pandemic continues, it is anticipated that the Recovery Team will be requesting additional funding for more “long term” items that they are currently prioritizing.

Lauren reported that the BOS unanimously approved the request for \$9,000 and forwarded same on to the BOF for further action.

The BOF discussed the appropriate format to account for funds allocated for Long Term Recovery/Covid. The consensus of the board was that a line item, “Long Term Recovery – Covid” in the Selectman’s Budget will be developed for tracking costs.

The BOF discussed the appropriate source for funding Covid expenses; i.e. Unassigned Fund Balance vs. BOF Contingency. The BOF Contingency is currently \$75,000.00. It was determined that the BOF Contingency was the appropriate source of funding.

Virginia Carmany made a motion to transfer \$9,000 from BOF Contingency to a new line item under the BOS’s budget entitled “Long Term Recovery-Covid”. Jon Joslow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Long Term Recovery Coordinators will keep the BOS and BOF updated as requested. To date, the schools have not provided estimates for potential extraordinary expenses relative to Covid.

Update on Chester’s Audit Report – Recommendations to Management

The Recommendations to Management report, developed by the auditors, was included in the BOF packet. The school has responded to the findings relative to the school district.

Peter is meeting with the auditors relative to their comments on Capital

Auditor issues relative to the Town Clerk's accounting software system have not yet been addressed due to the extensive new protocols now necessary, per the Secretary of State's Office, regarding the upcoming election i.e. absentee ballots and additional responsibilities for the Registrars.

Andrew reported that the Retirement Board is aware of the auditor's comments and a meeting is scheduled on Monday, 8/24 to address same.

Police Services Incident Report – 2018, 2019 and first half 2020

The BOF packet contained the Police Services Incident Report. Lauren reported that our new Resident State Trooper was unable to access our prior Trooper's files. He was also unsure of exactly what the BOF was requesting with regard to police coverage and reports associated with same. Lauren will work with the Resident State Trooper to provide appropriate reports. These reports/data will be used to identify trends and as a management tool for budgeting purposes.

Tax Collection and Revenue – Analysis Updated

The BOF discussed tax collection revenue as follows:

- Report indicates an approximate 15% difference from last year's collection.
- It is anticipated that real estate taxes will come in through September and a more accurate figure will be available sometime in October.
- There has been a delay in receipt of personal property taxes as many are working from home and the tax bill was mailed to offices. Madelyn is following up with businesses on same.
- Virginia will ask surrounding towns (Deep River and Essex) the status of their collection rates.
- The Tax Collector was unable to break down the payments received via escrow accounts vs. non-escrow.
- Motor vehicle tax payments may be delayed due to changes in motor vehicle registration protocols.
- Madalene is working with approximately 29 individuals on payment plans.

Year End Transfers

A copy of the Year End Transfers was included in the BOF packet.

Jon Joslow made a motion to waive the reading of each transfer. John O'Hare seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Year end transfers as follows:

Board of Selectmen

- **At the Board of Selectmen's request, please transfer the following:**

From	10-01-01-1000-106	Board of Selectmen – Outside Clerical	\$ 405
To	10-01-01-1000-111	Board of Selectmen - Temporary Part-Time	\$ 405

Harbor Management

- **At the Board of Selectmen's request, please transfer the following:**

From	10-05-55-1000-325	Employee Benefits – Medical Insurance	\$ 62
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To	10-01-19-1000-485	Harbor Management – Supplies	\$ 62
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Park & Recreation Commission

• **At the Board of Selectmen’s request, please transfer the following:**

From	10-01-11-1000-365	Assessor – Outside Contractor	\$ 7,562
To	10-01-24-1000-111	Park & Rec Comm – Temporary Part-Time	\$ 3,197
To	10-01-24-1112-230	Park & Rec Comm – Equipment Maintenance	\$ 4,365

Funds were used to replace sand, dirt and grass at the town parks and beaches as a result of the September 2019 storm. The timing of FEMA reimbursements necessitated the transfer. Damages paid out of the prior year FEMA reimbursement.

Highway

• **At the Board of Selectmen’s request, please transfer the following:**

From	10-05-55-1000-325	Employee Benefits – Medical Insurance	\$ 4,648
To	10-02-30-1080-103	Highway – Gen Main – Regular Payroll	\$ 3,652
To	10-02-30-1080-230	Highway – Gen Main – Equipment Maintenance	\$ 996

Highway

• **At the Board of Selectmen’s request, please transfer the following:**

From	10-02-30-1081-367	Highway – Tree Maint – Out Cont – Tree Warden	\$ 3,497
To	10-02-30-1081-103	Highway – Tree Main – Regular Payroll	\$ 3,497

Chester Hose Company

• **At the Board of Selectmen’s request, please transfer the following:**

From	10-03-42-1040-106	Chester Hose Company – Outside Clerical	\$ 700
From	10-03-42-1040-135	Chester Hose Company – Building Maintenance	\$ 2,016
From	10-03-42-1040-220	Chester Hose Company – Electric	\$ 1,006
From	10-03-42-1040-250	Chester Hose Company – Gas and Oil	\$ 5,077
From	10-03-42-1040-326	Chester Hose Company – Medical Exams	\$ 2,060
From	10-03-42-1040-365	Chester Hose Company – Outside Contractor	\$ 1,028
From	10-03-42-1040-395	Chester Hose Company – Professional Development	\$ 4,214
To	10-03-42-1040-103	Chester Hose Company – Regular Payroll	\$16,101

The Covid-19 Pandemic necessitated the transfer for additional staff.

Police

• **At the Board of Selectmen’s request, please transfer the following:**

From	10-05-55-1000-325	Employee Benefits – Medical Insurance	\$22,229
From	10-03-45-1000-112	Police – Resident Trooper Private Duty	\$ 1,866
From	10-03-45-1000-117	Police – Resident Trooper	\$30,711
From	10-03-45-1000-124	Police – DUI	\$11,616
To	10-03-45-1000-103	Police – Regular Payroll	\$ 3,207
To	10-03-45-1000-106	Police – Outside Clerical	\$ 84
To	10-03-45-1000-119	Police – Resident Trooper Overtime	\$ 1,851
To	10-03-45-1000-123	Police – Constable Private Duty	\$61,280

Note that Private Duty funds are reimbursed.

Emergency Service

- **At the Board of Selectmen’s request, please transfer the following:**

From	10-05-55-1000-325	Employee Benefits – Medical Insurance	\$ 371
To	10-03-47-1060-200	Emergency Communications – Emergency Comm Serv	\$ 371

Animal Control

- **At the Board of Selectmen’s request, please transfer the following:**

From	10-03-50-1000-126	Animal Control – Boarding Expense	\$ 85
To	10-03-50-1000-103	Animal Control – Regular Payroll	\$ 85

Municipal Insurance

- **At the Board of Selectmen’s request, please transfer the following:**

From	10-05-55-1000-325	Employee Benefits – Medical Insurance	\$ 3,664
To	10-05-57-1000-175	Municipal Insurance – Comp Bus Policy	\$ 1,367
To	10-05-57-1000-285	Municipal – Commercial Crime	\$ 2,297

Additional funds needed to insure the Skyview property (the intent is to sell same) and for a Commercial Crime Policy (now paid for the next 3 years).

Additional request from First Selectwoman

Police

- **At the First Selectwoman’s request, please transfer the following:**

From	10-05-55-1000-325	Employee Benefits – Medical Insurance	\$ 617
To	10-03-45-1000-119	Police – Resident Trooper Overtime	\$ 617

Jon Joslow made a motion to approve the proposed transfers (dated 8/13/20) as presented (note that the Police section at the end of the report should read “From” and “To”, rather than “From and “From). Rick Nygard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS

Monthly Financials

Monthly financial reports were included in the BOF packet.

The BOF had an extensive discussion regarding the \$500 budgeted for BOF legal fees and the appropriate protocol for use of an attorney for BOF matters. The BOF also discussed if the BOF needs an attorney vs. using the Town Attorney. Virginia will research the name of the attorney she has used in the past for BOF matters. This item will appear on a future BOF agenda for further discussion.

Budget Status Report

- Some items on the report; i.e. status of Masioncare, potential income from the sale of property, are on-going for future years.
- Lauren commented that the report is a “snapshot” of current items and is not meant to be a long-term planning tool.

- Some items on the report will be recurring.
- The status of the Teacher’s Retirement remains an unknown.

FIRST SELECTWOMAN’S REPORT

Lauren reported:

- Main Street Project
 - Binder pavement laid last week
 - Belgium block at base of wall installed
 - Rebuild of the stairs is on-going – issue to address degraded concrete under the stairs.
 - Utility poles and wires relocated.
 - Information relative to the project is regularly distributed via the townwide email.
- November Election
 - Charlene explained the logistics for absentee ballots and mail in votes. Due to recent changes per the Secretary of State, the Town Clerk and Registrars have incurred substantial additional responsibilities.
 - Additional computer equipment will be necessary to facilitate this work. (possible reimbursement from the State for same; State did provide funding for PPE at Primary).
 - We are awaiting additional information from the State.
 - Ballot Box installed – worked well for the Primary
- STEAP Grant Application
 - The State just opened an additional STEAP application period (due Friday, 8/28).
 - Maximum amount per town - \$128,000.
 - Chester’s application to include the installation of wifi capabilities on the streetlights in the downtown area. The BOS will discuss the application at their next meeting.
- A “better picture” of monthly financials will be available in October.
- Schools continue to work on their re-opening plans.
 - Financial implications of re-opening of the schools remain unknown.
- When information is available, Lauren will provide an update on the status of the Governor’s Executive Orders and the expiration and potential extension of same.

OPEN ITEMS IN OLD BUSINESS

5-10 Year Roads Projects

A copy of the 5-10 Year Roads Projects report was included in the BOF. The report will be further refined to create a more management friendly document, to include cost estimates per project, such a report will assist in prioritizing road projects for the following 5 years.

Energy Projects

A copy of the Completed Energy Savings Projects report was included in the BOF packet. Peter was asked to revise the report in order to better determine savings associated with energy projects. In addition, the importance of developing “benchmarks” to aid in measuring savings was discussed. It was suggested that the ETeam be invited to a future BOF meeting for further discussion.

Policy Manual – Scrivener’s Edits Complete

As previously reported, the Policy Manual has been approved by the BOS and the BOF, pending scrivener's edits. Virginia will forward a copy of the completed document to all BOF members for an additional review.

Future Agenda Items

- Discussion to consider a change to 10-year capital projects – data on “best practices” for municipalities was requested. Lauren will reach out to GFOA, CCM and COST for same.
- Follow-up on BOF attorney protocol
- Criteria for dedication of Annual Report
- Projections for potential revenue losses due to Covid-19 and also for potential funds allocated to departments but not spent due to the pandemic. Note that the BOF reviews expenses via the Budget Status Report on a monthly basis.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None.

ADJOURNMENT

Jon Joslow made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:35 p.m. Rick Nygard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Recording Clerk