

**Chester Board of Selectmen/Board of Finance Budget Workshop Meeting Held March 2, 2022
by ZOOM Meeting**

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Call to Order – 7:00 PM

Seating of Members, BOS and BOF

Board of Selectmen Call to Order – Charlene Janecek, Ed Meehan, Tom Englert present.

Board of Finance Call to Order – Rick Nygard, John O’Hare, Virginia Carmany, Bill Bernhart, Michael Joplin, Andrew Garder – all present and seated. Steve Cline, Michael Jordan, Deb Vilcheck – all present, alternates not seated.

Motion by Nygard, second by Gardner, to add two items to the agenda –

- **Move vote for body camera to after review of budget proposals**
- **Add vote for dredging project discussion after budget proposals**

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Motion by Meehan, second by Englert, to add two items to the agenda as stated in above motion. UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from 2/17/2022

Motion by Nygard, second by Gardner, to approve 2/17/22 Minutes amended as follows:

Add “and seated” to Call to Order and Steve Cline to attendees.

Under Status of Education Budgets: add to first sentence “Chester’s share of R4 education budget...” and add to third sentence “Chester’s share of Supervision District...”.

UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Motion by Englert, second by Meehan, to approve 2/17/22 Minutes as amended in above motion. UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

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Reading into the Record a letter from a Resident:
The following letter was from Karin Badger.

I object to the motion passed by the BOS to declare the Body cam purchase & monitoring an emergency, in order to bypass the competitive bid process. I would ask the BOF to not accept this.

This is only an "emergency" now, due the Town's inaction for years, for unknown reasons. Some towns started implementing this in 2015, the year the grant program was created. This law passed in 2020. By not addressing this unfunded mandate earlier, the Town has lost out on 100% and 50% reimbursement grants; is the 30% still available?

Additionally these quotes from these two companies total about \$120,000 which is a significant amount. How many officers do we have? Two, Three? How is the Town of Bethel outfitting their **40 officers** for about \$170,000?

I feel asking for competitive bids is prudent, considering the cost involved. The Town Budget is already cut very close.

Thank you,

Karin Badger

Audience of Citizens – none.

Procurement of Body Cameras for Chester Police Constables - Discussion now and possible vote later.

First Selectwoman Janecek noted it is imperative we get these body cams for our troopers. Telripco is the company that State Troopers use. We need to be compatible with what the State Troopers use. Trooper Matt noted the Telripco quote is for the hardware and implementation of the actual body cams for the 3 officers in Chester. Also includes mobile video recording for the 3 cruisers. He had been working on this since August and got quotes last October. It has been sitting since then. It's basically an emergency now. If by July 1st, there is no system, those officers won't be working. The cost is \$40,750 for the body cams, docking station and hard drives. Chester does not have any infrastructure for mobile video recording or for body cams. This includes 4 body cams, plus docking station, mobile video recording which is in car cameras one per windshield for the cruisers and hardware. Cost also includes the training of officers. The system has to be compatible with the State Police. He indicated town is welcome to go out for other bids but the system won't be compatible with the State Police. All of

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the equipment will have to be upgraded at some point. Gardner noted he appreciated Trooper Matt explaining everything and we should get this done as soon as possible.

Trooper Matt noted as of January 1st, the town has 3 active certified police officers. He explained the shifts and rotation schedules.

Review of FY 2022-2023 Budget proposals

- Public Works

Janecek noted Capital hasn't been done yet for Public Works. Carmany reviewed a spread sheet for Public Works including Regular Payroll which included one additional person, Overtime Payroll which was for call outs if a tree falls, etc., Catch Basin Cleaning, Electric, Equipment Maintenance, Gas and Oil, Telephone, Tree Maintenance, Road Maintenance, Road Sweeping. Also reviewed were Winter Maintenance (Overtime Payroll, Outside Contractors, Equipment Maintenance, Supplies), Building and Grounds (Regular Payroll including maintenance of landscaping, mowing, Outside Contractor (other), Outside Contractor (cleaning), Supplies, General Maintenance (Electric, Heating Fuel, Telephone, Water, Outside Contractor, Overtime Payroll, Actual Payroll).

Janecek noted part time seasonal will be going away, new equipment laborer is zero, Tree Warden and Landscaping were reviewed.

Current Capital at \$510,000 was reviewed. Some trucks will be moved out a bit, current status of Tree Removal, Roads, Highway Equipment, Buildings and Repairs were noted. Janecek again noted Capital hasn't been worked on yet.

Carmany asked for more information on Buildings, Roads, Landscaping as soon as possible. The Roads Spreadsheet contains a lot of information but hasn't been updated since 2016. The town has 31.62 miles of roads, parking lots, sidewalks.

Janecek noted Jacobson recently did updates for Haddam and Killingworth of every road in their towns. This type of update would give us a schedule of when roads need to be maintained and repaired. The cost would be \$30,000 and could be done in steps. It is a comprehensive plan with maps. Janecek and Meehan will review this road management/maintenance package.

Town Aid Road Grants and LOCIP were reviewed.

Nygaard noted the Grand List consists of real estate, real estate for elderly, motor vehicles and personal property. The 2021 motor vehicles list has gone up because the value of cars has gone up. Real estate Grand List has also gone up.

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Masonicare is listed at 50% but over time will be reduced by a legal case that will come out this spring. Peter has estimated it to be down to 5.2 million.

Collection rate is 98.75%. Meehan noted there are some tax appeals coming (Masonicare, 47 Ferry Road, 4 Water), all things that could reduce the Grand List if appeals are approved.

Carmany noted there could be an additional \$168,000 in to revenue.

Nygaard noted the Unassigned Fund Balance is \$3.5 million. Recommended State Balance is \$2.47 million. We may want to tap into some of that money. He also noted for the last number of years we have been budgeting Masonicare lower than their true value. However, they have paid at the full amount. We may have to repay \$750,000 depending on the legal outcome. The hearing is end of April/beginning of May.

Nygaard reviewed Budget Adjustments noting there would be a plus of \$148,000. He indicated there a lot of open items that need to be updated. Janecek noted what's in the budget now is what it will be. Payroll increase could be up to 5%.

Revenue Budget – education cost sharing increased \$142,000. Peter should double check with Madelyn on taxes. Building fees for building permits have been increased. Miscellaneous things seem high but bottom line seems low.

- First review of education budgets: Region 4, Chester Elementary and Supervision District

Meehan asked where the surplus from Region 4 and CES is shown. Carmany noted they are substantial numbers but aren't budgeted. It's almost \$260,000 and will be added to the Fund Balance. It was noted we should develop the questions for the Superintendent of Schools. Brian White, will be at our April 6th meeting.

Carmany noted CES would be increased by almost \$300,000 but part of that is Supervision District. What part is based on ADM. Nygaard noted Special Needs kids have been moved to Chester which were previously Essex. Region 4 is going down for Chester \$163,000 in part because of ADM shift.

Meehan noted Region 4 has no capital budget. Carmany noted they haven't finish the capital yet. The impact of the security project for Region 4 isn't done yet.

Questions – salary increases, significant amount; Supervision District is creating new program for children with Special Behavioral needs and hiring two paraprofessionals.

Votes:

Motion by Jordan, second by Gardner, to accept the Telripco bid for body cams and accutremments in the amount of \$40,750 on an emergency basis to be ordered as rapidly as possible. UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Motion by Janecek, second by Meehan, that the BOF authorize BOS to spend \$40,750 to purchase body cams and car cams for the Police Department as per the Telripco quote. UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Carmany noted the \$40,750 would come from 10-03-45-1000-230, Police line item Equipment Maintenance, and money to be transferred into that line item. This will allow the orders to be placed.

Chester Creek Dredging – this is a reimbursable grant but the town needs to put the money up first.

Motion by Englert, second by Meehan, BOS that BOF transfer \$100,000 from Capital line item 2000300000030 to Capital line item Chester Creek Dredging 2000310000460, subject to taking to Town Meeting. UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Motion by Nygard, second by Carmany, BOF to transfer \$100,000 from Capital Highway Equipment 2000300000030 to Capital Chester Creek Dredging 2000310000460, subject to Town Meeting approval. UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Motion by Nygard, second by Carmany, that BOF authorize the expenditure of \$100,000 from Capital to Chester Creek Dredging 2000310000460, subject to Town Meeting approval. UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Motion by Englert, second by Meehan, to authorize BOS to spend \$100,000 from Chester Creek Dredging 2000310000460, subject to Town Meeting approval. UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Audience of Citizens

Madeline Meyer noted Carmany did such a great job with the Road Spreadsheet, is there any chance that could be presented to Jacobson to save the town some money. She also noted that the first handicap spot in the town hall parking lot is sinking (spot to walkway). Don't know if this is dangerous. Janecek noted she would have it checked out. The Motor Vehicle Grand List could also be due to the fact used vehicles have increased big time. There is an increase in the number of cars because a lot of cars missed registration because of covid.

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Meyer noted the town has done really well in collecting back taxes and interest. There is one that is now out of bankruptcy and may come in before June 30th. No other large ones coming forward. There is the possibility of 37 liens.

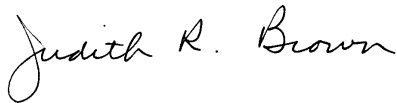
Pending Capital Items – Skyview Environmental Cleanup, Town Hall furniture replacement, Town Hall website rebuild (out to bid).

Adjournment

Motion by Carmany, second by Joplin, to adjourn at 8:58 PM. UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Motion by Englert, second by Meehan, to adjourn at 8:58 PM. UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith R. Brown".

Judith R. Brown, Recording Secretary