

**Town of Chester
Budget Committee
Draft Minutes
January 15, 2018**

I. Meeting to Order

Chair Michael Weider called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM on Monday, January 15, 2018.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Michael Weider led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Attendance

Chair Michael Weider
Vice Chair Lamphere
Selectman Stephen D'Angelo
Brian Shankey
Becky Owens
Brennan Holmes
Chuck Heuer
Royal Richardson standing in for Mike Romick

Absent:
Mike Romick, Vice Chair Chester School Board

IV. Announcements by the Chair -

V. Public Comment –
None

VI. BOS Update – Selectman Stephen D'Angelo

VIII. Committee Updates –

IX. Minutes –

The minutes of January 8th will be discussed at the next meeting as the documentation was incomplete without the PowerPoint.

XI. New Business -

a. School Board - Budget Review

Mr. Richardson is available to answer some questions, but he is not sitting in as a voting member.

The school board ratification meeting will take place on Wednesday for the teacher contract. It will then be forwarded onto the budget committee.

The following are questions that were sent to the chair to then be responded to by Mr. Richardson and discussed as a committee.

- 1.) On page 8, for line item [1100-5640](#) regarding **Textbooks**, there was a question why this line item was higher than the supporting document provided on page 16. (I know Darrell had explained this to me when I questioned this discrepancy but I drew a blank on the rationale for the additional cost.) Also, Chuck asked if this represented electronic media as well as traditional, paper media. – Reducing the number of physical textbooks, but licenses still need to be purchased. However, why is it at \$71,000 this year? – Taking part in a textbook improvement plan to replace particular levels of books year after year rather than having it scattered. The projection is \$52,000 but Royal will have to check with Darrell to see what the variance is. Page 16 has a target year over year chart.
- 2.) On Page 34, for the line items associated with **2140** for **Psychological Services**. Basically, the question from Chuck was whether or not the personal health insurance of the student's families should cover some portion of this cost of these services. (I told them that I doubted that would be considered as the same as making an appointment with a physician. However, I didn't feel comfortable addressing this further.) – Where are the payroll deductions for health insurance? It's important to budget the full amount, then put the 20% on revenues rather than only budgeting the 80% offset costs. This was something that Mr. Richardson stated they hadn't done.
- 3.) On page 45, for line items [2210-5111](#) and [2210-5112](#) for **Staff Development Coordinator** and **Curriculum Development**. The question here was what sort of work is done / funded under these items. (I wasn't comfortable with answering regarding the specifics on these items, so took it as an action item.) – This is in regard to the stipend positions, up to 11 facilitators are allowed, they had 9 and are looking to eliminate these with the new position. The budget line should be left at \$1 to allow for movement though rather than zeroing out. Page 80 has the curriculum development stipends at \$4,000 and page 45 has the staff development coordinator at \$7,000, what is happening with them?
- 4.) On page 45, for line item [2210-5240](#) for **Course Reimbursement**. The question here was whether or not this could be reduced from the CBA amount down to an amount closer to the most recent Actual spent. (I went over this with the CBC and also discussed how the demographic has changed and we have more teachers that may take advantage of this benefit to increase their wage base.) - This has tripled in the last three years. 16/17 – actual \$11,112, 17/18

– budgeted \$20,000, actual is not available. 18/19- requested \$30,000. It’s a contractual line, but can be requested up to \$30,000. There are 47 teachers, but there may be more usage of this line as the demographic of the teachers has changed.

5.) On page 45, for line item [2210-5580](#) for **Out of District Workshops**. Most recent Actual posted was \$21K and the budgeted amount is \$25K. The question was whether the usage of this line item consistent at this amount. Also, do we know if the current year is trending toward full usage of that amount this year? – Mr. Heuer would like to know the actual cost of the workshops.

Page 50 – There is a jump for the computer software. Line 5330-10 contracted management went down, and some of it is moving to software to make it more accurately trackable.

6.) On page 63 / 64 for Line items for [2600-5430](#) and [2600-5431](#) for **Operation of Plant**. The CBC questioned whether or not any of the items could be funded via the CIP. (I told them that these all seem to Preventative Maintenance and Repair items and my understanding was that those were not eligible for CIP funding. A discussion amongst the CBC members ensued regarding routine preventive versus pro-active replacement items eligibility. Ultimately, I told them that I would refer this to the Superintendent and Maintenance Director to review this prior to the next meeting.)

7.) On page 71 for line items [2721-5519](#) and [2722-5519](#) for **Transportation**. Chuck raised the issue regarding the alternative of Leasing Buses and managing them ourselves rather than contracting with a local provider. (Chairman Weider reviewed the response from Dr. Lockwood from last year that he was unable to find any School Districts following this process. Chuck and Brian asked if we had any empirical comparison of the costs so that we could say that we knew that contracting was the best direction, versus creating and managing our own program. Due to the costs associated with Transportation for both Regular Education and Special Education, they felt this was, essentially, a due diligence item.)

8.) On page 61 for line items associated with the new **Director of Student Affairs**.

a. Brian had asked for an analysis of three local / adjacent school districts regarding how they staff this workload. We discussed the fact that Darrell had already given this overview at the 1/8/18 meeting. However, Brian was looking for “socio-economic” comparisons that justify the staffing: I asked him specifically what he was requesting and he asked for population data, per capita income, tax-base, tax rate, and student population in each community. After some discussion we agreed that we could provide him information for three communities (**Auburn, Candia and Hampstead**) with a description of how they staff this workload but we wouldn’t be providing the other data.

b. Brian had asked for a **Job Description** for the role of the Assistant Principal and Director of Student Affairs: we had furnished a breakdown of the responsibilities for each role but it got to the individual CBC members too late for any review. Brian asked for a breakdown, by percentage, for each task in terms of the scope of the role. In other words: *Assistant Principal ~ Curriculum: 20%; Instruction: 10%;*

Assessment & Data: 5%.... – This is being asked to see if this new position will really be able to focus 100% on curriculum or will he/she be needed for other areas and not focus 100% on curriculum. The current math scores are below state standards and that is unacceptable.

The following are questions/discussion that did not arrive in the email of questions and responses.

A state committee for safety failed the phone system but that has been updated.

Inspection for the water cistern - \$12,000 for inspection, there is currently no budget for repairs if they are needed. The school board needs to put money into the budget for possible repairs if they want this cistern to be all in their control. The board is hoping that the town will help with any other cost. The FD and school are covered by the same fire protection cistern. Should the school budget \$25,000 for inspection and repairs and what is not used is then returned to the town? Or should the town fund the rest?

Why are the custodial costs up? What is the summertime – weekend – public use of school building? Page 66, overtime for weekend use such as teams may be able to use the building for no charge, and a custodian must be present to open and close the building and they need to be compensated. Summer help is above and beyond custodial staff because all of the rooms need to be emptied.

Vice Chair Lamphere would like to know the number of special ed case managers? There are currently 18 paras, and the additional 2 were there, but not funded as they had to be added last year.

Mr. Shankey – Why wouldn't you consider a warrant for a leadership position? No means no if it's voted down. It is somewhat of a controversial position. The process should be consistent for positions.

Dr. Gaffney is the assistant principal and will remain in that position with focus on academic excellence with the same salary. The new hire will be in charge of the day to day responsibilities.

Mrs. Owens – There's a bill coming to the state floor that is common core related. There is a disconnect with math scores so they're thinking of hiring more people to mediate providing math support to get kids where they need to be. Theoretically, should someone be hired to drill down and find out what the actual problem is before creating this new position?

The budget is built for 18/19 based on budget for ½ of this year's use rather than the actuals for 16/17. It's \$830,000 difference and returned \$500,000. Each year a lot of money has been returned to the town. 2017 – 500k, 2016 – 260k, 2015 – 165 k, 2014 – 242 k, 2018 – 218k?

Mr. Richardson can't say that the board is confident they're over budgeting by 100k so they can't take anything out. However, they will return what can be returned.

Page 86 – the total after revenues is \$8,156,005. Last year it was \$7,584,909 which is a variance of \$571,096. They're working on finding out the actual variance, and normalizing the amount of money returned.

Chair Weider has suggested to keep the budget at as close of a 1% increase as possible. He highlighted some things in the budget that are “nice to have” that may help be able to lower the requested amount.

BC will bring the budget forward, and the contract they will either support or they won't.

A heavy discussion ensued about stance on the proposed school board budget.

Member Comments

XIV. Public Comments –

XV. Next Meeting Date – January 22, 2018

XVI. Adjourn -

Mr. Heuer made a motion to adjourn. Selectman D'Angelo seconded the motion. All in favor, the Budget Committee meeting of January 15, 2018 adjourned at 10:11pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sarah DeLisle, Recording Secretary