

**Town of Chester
Budget Committee
January 16, 2017
Approved Minutes**

I. Meeting to Order

Chairman Weider called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm on Monday, January 16, 2017.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Weider led the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Attendance by Roll Call

Present were:

Stephen D'Angelo
Chuck Heuer
Becky Owens
Brian Shankey
Michael Weider, Chairman

Richard Trask, Selectman @ 7:06 pm

Absent:

Vice-Chair Lamphere

IV. Announcements by the Chair – Welcome

V. Public Comment

Members of the Public present at meeting/in meeting room audience – none.
Special Guests – none.
News media present in the meeting room – none.

VI. BOS Update – Richard Trask

Mr. Trask was asked what he felt were the three financial priorities facing the Town that the Board of Selectmen are currently aware of. Mr. Trask reported that they were still in the process of talking to individual departments, so nothing is finalized. There are

several priorities in already: the Public Works Director position; Fire Department's request for three (3) vehicles; searching for a new IT contract; and part-time to full-time staffing of the Building Inspector's department.

Public Works Director.

Mr. Trask updated Mr. D'Angelo who was not present at last month's meeting, as to the procedure for hiring a public works director by the town, not requiring a special warrant article.

Vehicles. The Fire chief has requested three vehicles and the Road Agent has requested a Class A plow truck (used), some road work in there, a tractor. One of the fire dept. trucks, a tanker, was requested a couple of years ago and was pushed back, now we have three. The legislative body was not given a good number. The fire department can do some refitting to put the utility truck back into commission by using the chassis from the older forestry truck and only have to replace the forestry truck. The command vehicle was donated and never owned and is intentionally set up so that in multiple alarm scenarios could be run by another captain or chief if our chief is unable to be in that vehicle or needs to leave the command vehicle for any length of time. \$513,000.00. Mr. Heuer expressed that funds should be set aside yearly for big ticket items so that the budget will not be impacted so hard by one department alone.

IT Contract. The Town has formed an IT Search Committee to research contract costs and improving current services with Boston Systems. Mr. D'Angelo expressed his concerns with the high cost charged by Boston Systems, the inadequacy of having to come on-site to fix problems and the potential security threats of servers versus *The Cloud* citing as an example how archaic servers can be easily hacked, that the City of Revere was held up for \$35,000 to gain access to their server again. Mr. Heuer recommended polling the town to see if there were any local IT professionals. Mr. Trask would also like to see the Fire and Police have WIFI access in their vehicles.

Building Inspector. Position that was previously shared part-time with Raymond became full-time and with that administrative support, shared with BOS, has become full-time. This change, while showing an increase of 56% to the budget now, demonstrates the ability to become self-funding in the very near future. As they are now able to process more applications, the result is more revenues coming in on fees. \$60,000 in revenues were projected, we're at over a hundred, they're making money. The building inspector collects those fees and splits it up, needs support staff for that. If someone wants to build 60 houses, they pay fees associated with that, \$11,000.00 to build a four-bedroom home.

Other:

Mr. Trask would like to see the LED lighting conversion translate into a large savings on electricity costs while Chairman Weider remained doubtful that the conversion costs versus the less than promised life-span of the implements was less than promised and that

sports lighting requirements for the MPR were very specific concerning shadows and injuries resulting from bad lighting, to be cautious there.

Recreation. The Recreation Department has requested a full-time person (for the fifth year in a row).

Chairman Weider reported that the Police and Fire didn't go up that high, the police chief was doing well and the fire department has a ton of changes going on. Mr. D'Angelo spoke with him briefly at the town fair and it was agreed that the board should probably sit down with them. Mr. Heuer expressed that it had been a few years since they have made a visit.

Mr. D'Angelo inquired as to guarantees on snow plowing contracts, if someone could get back to him on that.

VII. School Board Update (Mike Romick)

Tabled, no one present from School Board.

VIII. Other Committee Updates –

None.

IX. Minutes

October 17, 2016 – Mr. Shankey motioned to accept these minutes, as written. Mr. D'Angelo seconded his motion, with Ms. Owens abstaining, 5 voted in favor, so moved.

January 9, 2017 – Mr. Shankey motioned to accept these minutes, as written. Mr. D'Angelo seconded his motion, however abstained from voting as he was not present at that meeting, 5 voted in favor, so moved.

X. Old Business

XI. New Business

a. Review December Financial Reports

b. First Review of Chester School District's 2017-2018 Budget

Mr. Shankey wished to express for the record, his thanks to Superintendent Lockwood for coming here last week with a good presentation and thorough

answers. Mr. Shankey wondered about going back to Superintendent Lockwood with potential suggestions for reductions to the proposed budget. Mr. Trask agreed while pointing out that the Committee will come back and ask us which lines. Chairman Weider stated that he would ask that question and advised be prepared for them to come back and ask which lines. Mr. Heuer expressed some confidence that Superintendent Lockwood had already leaned us out. Ms. Owens agreed that 1.85% is pretty lean and that she had a hard time finding anything significant. Mr. D'Angelo advised that last year we asked them to come up with \$50-80,000 and expressed that he also feels they did a good job, while the budget has little to any increase to the taxpayers, the good system is the very thing that supports your housing prices in this town. Mr. Weider added that when those 300-400 homes come in, a significant amount of revenues will help the Town.

Chairman Weider shared with the rest of the committee the email response from Superintendent Lockwood answering a question posed at the last meeting by Vice-Chair Lamphere concerning the collection of School Impact Fees. Superintendent Lockwood contacted the Town hall and was reassured that the proceed is indeed being implemented, officially adopted 9/7/2016.

"Any applications for new subdivisions approved after that adoption date will be responsible to pay School Impact Fees at the completion of the approval process and the pulling of building permits. The fees will be assessed on a unit by unit basis."

Ms. Owens inquired as to why we have a Superintendent for one school? Mr. Trask explained how in the past the Town shared an SAU with other towns and costs associated with it and got little to nothing out of it so they changed to their own SAU and Superintendent. Ms. Owens also wondered if the Superintendent couldn't also be our principal, we have a principal retiring this year and Mr. Trask explained that he could not but there may be some changing salaries to reflect upon.

Mr. D'Angelo pointed out that if the School gets grants throughout the year, it can significantly lower some of these expenses and that the School has done well in the past, with turning reductions back in, to reduce the tax-rate, of benefit to the taxpayers. Mr. Trask agreed that it does give some comfort to have seen that happen, the Town turned back in just a little bit less but our budget is 4 million and theirs is 12 million.

Mr. Heuer had gone back, in the past, and tracked a number of years, with averaging increases every year near a half million dollars, with \$383,000 over a two-year period, he expressed concerns that you are incrementing the best part of a million dollars being surpassed in a short period of time. Even with 300 homes, he stated, a single home does not generally pay for the demand on a school, unless a significant number has enrollment, then you're upside down. Mr. D'Angelo responded that Chester makes a lot of kids and we educate them very well. Mr. Trask advised them to take a look at the direction of the educational system with the change in the state house, the voucher systems, the shifting from the state and

federal downsizing into the towns burden to pay for the programs they have previously mandated. Pensions are the tip of the iceberg, that the state should have foreseen. Chairman Weider pointed out that they do an analysis based on high school and elementary, Pinkerton with Chester is one of the cheapest in the area and Chester is below average cost. Mr. D'Angelo wondered what the cost of the donor funding was to the Town and how that got split up. Chairman Weider used Alabama as an example of a state that is not short-funded. While it is one of the poorest states, 100% funded because they are allowed with administrative rules to invest in real estate, they built convention centers and received benefits back, you can't do that in NH, he said.

Chairman Weider charged the members to come up with reductions, if you think there is a number you want to work with.

Chairman Weider prioritized the Bus Contract, the Video Studio, looking for more clarity on Maintenance, and Ballfields Maintenance.

Maintenance

Acct. #265432

Mr. Trask is concerned about the cost percentage increase of 153% associated with grounds keeping, specifically for sealing cracks and painting lines in the parking lot. \$14,000 to seal cracks, \$25,000 to paint lines? Window cleaning is also in that figure, \$507.00 inside and out and field maintenance.

Mr. Heuer, referencing Acct. #1026005431, pgs. 14-15, would like to see the school have a fund that puts \$25,000 in every year as opposed to this number ballooning over time, something they could draw from for day to day repairs without red tape holding up repairs until they worsen. Chairman Weider will ask if they want to build that account.

Ballfield Maintenance

Acct. #2600-54-3111

Chairman Weider reported that a lot was done in the past by volunteers, which does not show a line item. Mr. Trask felt that \$7,000.00 was a lot of money for fertilizer applications. The Town, the Rec Board and the School Budget were all carrying line items for field maintenance and should coordinate who is actually doing what so that it is not being duplicated. Chairman Weider will look into who is coordinating these.

Buses

Mr. D'Angelo wondered whether there was anything we could do about the wasteful bus space for older students going to Pinkerton who just weren't using the buses. Chairman Weider explained that the State mandates that there be

enough space on those buses based on enrollment, whether or not they are being utilized. Mr. D'Angelo wondered if leasing the buses ourselves, with a maintenance contract, hiring the drivers, not for SPED, although perhaps the paras could be involved since they are required to ride them, was an option.

PACT

The Committee agreed that they would like to see more information on the Video Studio requests and what their plan is, where they're going with that. Mr. Trask felt that it was a lot of money to ask for to cover one meeting per month. Chairman Weider pointed out that there were educational broadcasts as well and that the quality was even worse than what the town has, that they were asked to put together a budget and submit it. Mr. Heuer asked why their studio and the Towns were not more patched in together. Mr. Trask felt that \$5,000.00, \$2,200 for live, \$2,500 for annual stored data was reasonable.

Kinder' After Care, Line 10-1100-51-13-10, Page 1 of 4 in section 1100. Mr. Heuer wondered if that would be the total effect of the cost on the budget, \$28,060.00, two employees five hours a day for 184 days, are these part-time salaries not showing full-time retirement benefits, etc., paras, might be costing more than \$29,000.00.

\$25,000 Education for Disabled Children. Mr. Heuer would still recommend a change to the name of the fund.

c. Budget Review Process

d. BC Calendar

January 23, 2017 – Review
January 30, 2017 – Review
February 6, 2017 - Public

XII. Other Business

XIII. Member Comments

Ms. Owens still needs to be sworn in by the Clerk, who now has the paperwork she requested.

XIV. **Next Business Meeting Date – February 23, 2017 @ 7:00 PM**

XV. **Adjournment**

Mr. Trask motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Shankey seconded his motion, all in favor, the meeting of the Chester Budget Committee was adjourned at 9:15 on Monday, January 16, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy J. Hoijer, Recording Secretary