

**Town of Chester  
Budget Committee Meeting  
Monday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
Municipal Complex  
Approved Minutes**

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**I Meeting to Order**

Chairman Weider called this meeting of the Town of Chester Budget Committee to order at 7:00pm.

**II Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Weider led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III Attendance**

Budget Committee members present:  
Mike Weider, Chairman  
Rhonda Lamphere, Vice-Chair  
Steve D’Angelo  
Chuck Heuer  
Royal Richardson on behalf of Mike Romick, School Board Liaison  
Brian Shankey  
Dick Trask, BOS Liaison

Budget Committee members absent:  
Cass Buckley  
Mike Romick, School Board Liaison

Members of the Public Present:  
Becky Owens

**IV Announcements by the Chair - Welcome**

Chairman Weider introduced member of the public Becky Owens, who is interested in joining the Budget Committee.

**V Public Comment**

There was no Public Comment.

**VI Appointments**

There were no appointments tonight.

**VII Board of Selectmen Update - Richard Trask**

Mr. Trask provided the following information on activities of the Board of Selectmen over the summer:

- [ A new employee raise program, linked to CPI, was developed. A copy can be requested from the Finance Department.
- [ A 457 Plan has been added, which costs the Town nothing.

- 54 [ A new Group Life Insurance program has been added, which costs the town ~\$2,500.
- [ The Town cancelled its existing Health Insurance policy and switched to a new one, which is
- 56 [ less expensive and includes an HSA. No employees have signed up for the HSA as of yet. Contribution rates have not changed.
- 58 [ Coverage for Domestic Partners has been added to the Health Insurance plan.
- [ Police Department arrests are up. Last year there were ~200; this year ~300 are expected.
- 60 [ Police Department hourly pay was increased \$2 for Full Time Officers and \$4 for Part Time Officers.
- 62 [ Firefighter participation rate is up appreciably, so stipends are up as well.
- [ The Fire Department overtime line will be up, as when the budget was drawn up there was only
- 64 [ one full time firefighter; now there are two.
- [ The new Recreation Director is working out well.
- 66 [ New LED lights have been ordered for the Police Department and Town Clerk's office so far. The Board is using \$10k in encumbered funds to pay for them; this will be offset by a grant. Additional grants will be applied for in 2017, and this project should show significant savings going forward.
- 68 [ The Exmark was out of service three times this summer, once for over a week. It is 10 years old and parts are hard to find. There is no plan to replace it at this point.
- 70 [ Spring Hill Farm rent is now going to the Town, with 55% being gifted back to the Trust. The Trustees have been instructed to provide a business plan. The Budget Committee does not approve in general of this fund transfer, stating that the Town maintains the buildings and that should be sufficient. Mr. Heuer stated that the Trustees should develop and submit a budget for any spending they might need to do.
- 72 [ The IT Committee will be looking into a VOIP phone system, a new website with an intranet, an electronic document storage system, and a new computer contract (as the current one expires early in 2018).
- 74 [ The large television in the corner can be utilized to project documents during meetings with a cable or with Chromecast.
- 76 [
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### **VIII School Board Update - Mike Romick**

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Mr. Richardson appeared in place of Mr. Romick, who was unavailable. He provided the following information on activities of the School Board over the summer:

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- 88 [ The audit was completed on time and went well; a report should be available for the next meeting.
- 90 [ A transfer to the unreserved fund balance was done.
- [ Some confusion with the Pinkerton tuition was resolved; it appeared that there were eight extra
- 92 [ students, but this has been resolved.
- [ The Food Service has made a minor increase to the price of meals. Increases will continue to
- 94 [ happen in order to keep in line with Federal guidelines and remain eligible for funding.
- [ The Food Service Restricted Fund now contains \$34k. The auditors would like this fund
- 96 [ watched; a kitchen-specific CIP is being developed, as some equipment needs repair or replacement.
- 98 [ The Snowplow contract went out to bid and only received one response.
- [ The Propane contract went out to bid, and the bid was awarded to Santa Buckley Energy.
- 100 [ The Bus contract expires in June 2017, so an RFP is being drafted. School Finance Director Sheryl Rich is working with the bus company on transporting nurses/aids on the Special Needs bus.
- 102 [ Chromebooks were procured on a three-year lease, set up, and dispersed to students in grades

104 5 through 8. They are taken from class to class, and docked in the homerooms at the end of  
106 the day. In the future, allowing older students to take theirs home will be considered. In that  
108 case, they will be configured to prevent inappropriate usage. Teachers are receptive; moving to  
a paperless classroom is a future goal.

110 There was some discussion about the opportunity of utilizing resources from other teachers,  
both internal and external, to provide programs to students, much like TED Talks.

112 **IX Other Committee Updates**

114 There were no Other Committee Updates tonight.

116 **X Minutes**

118 a. **May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

120 **A motion was made to accept these minutes as drafted; Mr. Trask seconded the motion.**  
122 **The vote was six in favor with Mr. Richardson abstaining due to absence from the meeting**  
**in question; motion carried.**

124 **XI Old Business**

126 A motion had been made at the May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016 meeting to delay reconfiguration of the Budget  
128 Committee until the October meeting. The current members are Chairman Weider, Vice-Chairman  
Lamphere, Mr. Heuer, Mr. D'Angelo, and Mr. Shankey. Mr. Dobbins has resigned; liaisons Mr. Trask and  
Mr. Romick are ex-officio.

130 Vice-Chairman Lamphere noted that Mr. Trask and Mr. Romick are full voting members of the Budget  
132 Committee, and as such should commit to participate during the entire year.

134 **Mr. D'Angelo moved to leave the Budget Committee as is; Mr. Trask seconded the motion.**  
**The vote was six in favor with Mr. Richardson abstaining; motion carried.**

136 **XII New Business**

138 a. **Financials**

142 New School and Town financials were sent out. The Fire Department seems to be high; Mr.  
Trask reminded the Budget Committee of the increase in attendance and the increase from one  
full time firefighter to two, as he had mentioned during the Board of Selectmen's Update.

144 Mr. Trask stated that he would like to see both the Town and School budgets be either level  
146 funded, or decreased; Chairman Weider pointed out that the School Board has less control over  
its budget due to the union contracts in place.

148 Mr. D'Angelo noted parenthetically that he had found the new Fire and Police Chiefs to be  
150 extremely approachable and open to discussion. Chairman Weider agreed, stating that they  
were both willing to work with the Budget Committee and the Board of Selectmen.

152 b. **CIP**

**Meetings**

Chairman Weider would like to have CIP Review meetings scheduled back to back; the Planning

156 Board on a Wednesday night, and the Board of Selectmen on the Thursday. The Budget  
158 Committee would be represented at these meetings as well, so all three boards would be  
working together. These meetings are expected to take place in early November.

160 Mr. Heuer stated that last year a substantial amount of money was raised and appropriated for  
162 the CIP; he wants it to continue, but warns against letting the amount creep up – one should be  
sure to spend within one’s means.

164 Mr. D’Angelo would like to meet with the Police and Fire Chiefs to determine what they are  
expecting to place into the CIP.

c. **NHMA Budget & Finance Workshop**

168 Mr. Heuer, Vice-Chairman Lamphere, Mr. Shankey, Mr. Trask, and Chairman Weider had all  
170 attended this workshop. Mr. Heuer reported on the need to focus on the “shrinking dollar from  
172 the State”, and the fact that the cost of retirement is up 10%, which is substantial. Mr. Trask  
174 noted that in 2008, due to the Governor and Legislature taking Retirement funds and allocating  
176 them to other areas, Retirement was funded at 45% of what was necessary to fulfil the  
government’s obligations. In 2016, it is funded at 70%. There is still a shortfall, and funding  
needs to be increased.

d. **School District Budget Calendar**

178 Chairman Weider went over the important dates for the School Board insofar as the Budget  
180 Committee is concerned. These include:

- 182 January 6, 2017: Budget due from SB to Budget Committee
- 184 January 9, 2017: Budget Committee reviews budget

186 Mr. Richardson believes that the School budget should be presented at the first meeting after its  
delivery; Chairman Weider agreed.

- 188 January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017: Holiday
- 190 January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017: Budget Committee reviews budget
- January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017: SB meets with Budget Committee.

- 192 February 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017: Available dates if further meetings are necessary
- 194 February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017: First date to hold a public hearing
- February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017: School District meeting

196 Mr. Richardson asked Chairman Weider if he’d consulted with the SAU about the February 13<sup>th</sup>,  
198 2017 school district meeting date; he had not, but instead used last year’s calendar to estimate  
the date.

- 200 February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017: Last date to hold a public hearing
- 202 March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017: School Vacation

204 Mr. Richardson was queried about the para and bus contracts. Apparently the para contract is  
under negotiation right now and progress is being made.

206 Mr. D’Angelo asked if the School had any major capital improvements planned. Mr. Richardson  
208 stated that the roof work was being delayed, that the kitchen work was being funded through  
the Food Service Retention Program, that the sprinklers were mostly complete, especially in the

210 'problem areas', and that is still being worked on. The HVAC work is complete; some small air  
211 handlers need repair or replacement. (The large roof air handlers were replaced three years  
212 ago; these have an expected lifespan of 20 years.)

213 There was some discussion about enrollment projections. Chester Academy currently houses  
214 625 students, with room for 912 per State guidelines; however, the School is unwilling to judge  
215 its student capacity strictly based on their square footage. Be that as it may, there is still plenty  
216 of room for expansion. Enrollment is difficult to project, and it is important not to cut staffing  
217 too soon, as new teachers often take 2-3 years to reach their desired potential. Mr. Richardson  
218 noted that although Chester Academy is graduating 80 students this year, only 50 are going into  
219 Kindergarten.

220 Mr. D'Angelo noted that school quality drives property values.

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222 e. **B u d g e t** **C o m m i t t e e** **C a l e n d a r**

223 f. **O p e n P o s i t i o n s**

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225 Dr. Becky Owens was in attendance tonight; she is interested in joining the Budget Committee.  
226 She holds a Masters and a PhD in Education, and is a former Financial Aid Director from a  
227 college in Colorado. She will be added to the Budget Committee distribution list.

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229 **XIII Other Business**

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231 There was a brief discussion about Impact Fees, which are estimated now at \$4,300 - \$4,400 for a  
232 single family home. These have gone down, as items were pulled out of the CIP. Tables are due to be  
233 updated in November; GGB has yet to be built in. Planning Coordinator Hadik is working with  
234 Maintenance Supervisor Amato on GGB items.

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236 **XIV Member Comments**

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238 There were no Member Comments tonight.

239 **XV Public Comments**

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241 There was no Public Comment.

242 **XVI Next Meeting Date**

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244 The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Budget Committee will be on Monday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016  
245 at 7:00pm.

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247 **XVII Adjourn**

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249 **A motion was made to adjourn the Budget Committee meeting; this motion was seconded.**  
250 **The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.**

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252 The meeting was adjourned at 8:34pm.

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255 Respectfully Submitted,

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Debra H. Doda

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Recording Secretary