

**Town of Chester
Budget Committee
December 12, 2016
Approved Minutes**

I. Meeting to Order

Chairman Weider called the meeting to order at 7:09 PM on December 12, 2016.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Weider led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Attendance

Present were:

Stephen D'Angelo
Chuck Heuer
Rhonda Lamphere, Vice Chair
Brian Shankey
Michael Weider, Chairman
Richard Trask, ex-officio BOS

Absent were:

Mike Romick, ex-officio, School Board

IV. Announcements by the Chair – Welcome

V. Public Comment - none

VI. Appointments – none

VII. BOS Update – Richard Trask

Mr. Trask summarized for the Committee the earlier BOS meeting as it pertained to the appointment of a Public Works Director and the Municipal Resources contract for that position. Mr. Trask discussed the benefits to the Town to create one department that would consist of: the Highway Department, Maintenance, Grounds and the Transfer Station. One person in charge, in both a working and supervisory position, could combine and share personnel, equipment, a variety of things.

Mr. Trask discussed the 4A highway exit project with the committee and the impact of traffic coming off Tsienetto Road. With 8,000 cars per day, projected to be double in **8-10 years**, Mr. Trask wants to know where they are going and if the town can get some money infused

for road repairs and maintenance. The BOS sent a letter to the Federal Highway Commission impact study asking to participate.

VIII. **School Board Update – Mike Romick, absent – Tabled.**

IX. **Other Committee Updates**

X. **Minutes**

Acceptance of the Minutes dated October 17, 2016 – Tabled.

XI. **Old Business**

XII. **New Business**

a. **Fire Department – Invite**

Chairman Weider would like to reply to the invitation of the Fire Dept. for the Budget Committee to come out and review their operational needs. The Committee agreed that they would like to do a similar review with the Police Dept. The School Budget takes focus and has priority. Chairman Weider will email the chiefs and set up some time in February, or sooner.

b. **Review November Financial Reports**

Mr. Heuer felt that some expenses were a little off. The Building Inspector salary is low, at 43%. Recreation at 46%, but as it is seasonal, comes from first part of fiscal year. Conservation is \$750.00.

c. **CIP**

Copies were forwarded and Planning met with all departments and went through requests, scoring, and tallies. They will be presenting that to the BOS as well.

Mr. Heuer expressed concerns that contributions be year over year so that a vacuum is not created away from other priorities. For example, if we need high priced items, such as a new firetruck. Mr. Trask explained that after the first few years, gradually it would become a put it in and leave it in scenario, with each additional year yielding more putting in and less taking out.

Road Study

Mr. Heuer strongly suggested that \$500,000 should be put away for road repairs annually. Mr. Heuer disagreed with spending on the cost of a study, \$70,000.00, as it was not only an excessive amount to tell us what we can see driving around, but would take funds away from repairing roads, where it is most needed.

Chairman Weider and Mr. Trask explained their position in support of the study. First, their responsibility to the legislative body and additionally that professional engineering, to gauge specific road conditions, will help assess and plan the cost of needs for future planning. The Highway Block Grant amount goes up every year. Mr. Heuer opined that even \$200,000 doesn't cover the annual road maintenance costs.

d. Budget Review Process

School District review will start at the next meeting.

Chairman Weider asked Mr. Trask to be the conduit with the BOS warrant articles. From March until town meeting in May, to set ground rules, submit budget and backup, sit in at meetings with Fire, Police and Highway, Transfer Station. Good data is needed when we start analysis. Budget Committee has asked for all data by January 1st. Road work can be funded if needed before the analysis is done.

e. BC Calendar

January 6th – Receive Books
January 9th – Review
January 16th – Holiday
January 23rd – Review
January 30th – Review
February 6th - Public

f. BC Annual Budget Request \$903.00 (increased from \$605.00)

| | |
|------------------------|----------|
| Dues and Subscriptions | \$150.00 |
| Office Supplies | \$200.00 |
| Postage | \$ 1.00 |
| Legal Fees | \$ 1.00 |
| Periodicals | \$ 1.00 |
| Seminars | \$400.00 |
| Adv/Misc. | \$150.00 |

a. Other

Exceedance of 10% of budgets should have backups in the form of written explanations stating the reason for the increase. If every department has an increase it would add up to a big number.

Additional employees.

Mr. Heuer wondered if when a new employee is hired, since it's a big commitment, not just salary but potential benefits, if it should go before the legislature. Mr. D'Angelo wondered whether it has been researched or not, if there is a process to eliminating an elected position such as with the Road Agent, an elected position becoming a DPW Director which is a hired position. Mr. Trask explained that timing is an important factor as it is done during on off-year when the road agent position is not up for election.

Mrs. Lamphere felt that there could be some savings with the DPW Director position just with three departments not having to have separate budgets.

Building Permits

Tracking the number of homes being built, after much deliberation, seemed to be the best tool available to forecast population growth's effect on the school budget. It was agreed that Chairman Weider would ask the Building Inspector to provide quarterly number of building permits.

XIII. Other Business –

Two positions are open. Chairman Weider has asked write-ins and former members. Mr. Shankey will put together a couple of names. Mr. Shankey forwarded information to the last guest, she has an interest but tonight she could not attend.

XIV. Member Comments –

Mr. Shankey asked if the school got another grant and Chairman Weider responded that they had not. There was some damage to the school this weekend, sprinkler went in the Kindergarten/First Grade wing, trying to get it ready for tomorrow. There is significant damage to one classroom, going out to insurance carrier. Mr. Heuer questioned whether there was a general issue with the sprinklers. Chairman Weider replied that he did not know yet.

XV. **Public Comments – none.**

XVI. **Next Meeting Date – January 9th, 2017 @ 7:00 PM**

XVII. **Adjourn –**

Mr. D'Angelo motioned to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Trask seconded the motion, all in favor; so moved. The meeting of the Budget Committee was adjourned at 8:50 PM on December 12, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy J. Hoijer,
Recording Secretary