

**Town of Chester
Budget Committee
Draft Minutes
March 19, 2018**

I. Meeting to Order

Chair Michael Weider called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM on Monday, March 19, 2018.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Chair Lamphere led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Attendance

Budget Committee Members:

Chair Michael Weider

Vice Chair Lamphere

Brian Shankey

Chuck Heuer

Becky Owens

Christina Gelinas

Liaisons:

Selectman Stephen D'Angelo

Absent:

Brennan Holmes

Mike Romick School Board

IV. Announcements by the Chair –

V. Member Comments-

VI. Public Comment –

VII. BOS Update – Selectman Stephen D'Angelo

VIII. School Board Update

IX. Other Committee Updates –

X. Minutes –

XI. Old Business –

XII. New Business –

a. Town Budget & Warrant review (continued)

44
45 **117 voted for the school contract, 93 voted against**
46

47 Mr. Heuer – Hindsight being 20/20, we weren't as prepared as we could have been going into the
48 meeting, which could have contributed to the close vote. We should analyze what we could have
49 done better.
50

51 Vice Chair Lamphere – Feels like the snow storm played a big part, perhaps some people
52 didn't see the rescheduled time? We didn't get the word out to enough non-school people. Every
53 resident of this town is a tax payer, everyone should receive an annual school district report and
54 then if they choose to recycle it, that's on them.
55

56 Dr. Owens shared that she only received her orange paper with the information from the
57 school district today.
58

59 Chair Weider – There were 217 people, haven't seen a school district meeting with that many
60 in at least 10 years. We had our two meetings covering what was being proposed, we brought up
61 good questions, and we were able to show that the towns we were being compared to were not
62 accurate representations.
63

64 Selectman D'Angelo – at least 6 people that were in support of the contract were turned away
65 because they were not registered voters. I'm not sure how many others on either side were turned
66 away because of not being registered.
67

68 Vice Chair Lamphere – There was a lot of really good information about school in general in
69 the newspaper with another article the following day. She'll bring it in for information for the
70 future.
71

72 Mr. Heuer – Herding the troops to get a certain population there. It's not coming from the
73 perspective that we did anything wrong, but it's a post mortem. It's about balancing the scale for
74 the future.
75

76 Selectman D'Angelo – we've been going over it for the past 2 months, everyone knew, this
77 seems to be a tolerance for the tax escalation. It was in the Tri-Town, last fall we gave a \$0.50
78 /thousand tax break so maybe people are thinking that they won't see much of an increase.
79

80 Vice Chair Lamphere – Maybe it's time for the Selectmen to let them see an increase so
81 people will start to realize the impact.
82

83 Mr. Shankey – the 93 that voted against it, does not only show people within the older age
84 bracket, it seemed to be an us vs. them. It can be seen that if we're not supporting the contract
85 that we aren't supporting the teachers.
86

87 Dr. Owens – It is difficult to stand up to voice opinions against the contract when teachers
88 are making it seem like the BC is against them, the paper ballot went well.
89

Vice Chair Lamphere – That's why paper ballot is important, so no one can see how you voted and considering how many there were to count, it did not take too long.

Chair Weider – The change in date because of the weather was on WMUR, their website, school board's sign, school made an announcement to tell their parents, how much more can we communicate?

Selectman D'Angelo – Why wasn't it broadcast?

Vice Chair Lamphere – There is no capability of broadcasting from that room, if PACT wanted it broadcast, they would have had to come over and set it up. If they're not capable of televising over there, maybe there should be a discussion to have it back to NPR.

Chair Weider – They like having it over there because of so much parking being available.

Selectman D'Angelo – They broadcast it last year from the cafetorium.

B. Town meeting with selectman (Thursday, March 22nd)

Mr. Heuer – The salary is currently hard to track, if you base their salary on this year's performance, then you should know what will be earned, and put that in the budget. Asking the Selectman to change their process and get rid of the salary pool to eliminate the confusion. Employees have had a certain performance, so right now to date, the BOS or department heads should have a pretty good idea if they had a certain amount of money to draw from, how they want to disperse it.

Chair Weider – Years ago the BC asked the BOS to create the salary pool to have the ability to provide increases when needed.

Selectman D'Angelo – There was a review for every department member. This year's budget is a reflection of what employees got. It's impossible to know in advance what will be given out for merit pay. I thought the evaluation could have been done in a bit of a simpler way for merit increase. COLA increase we have no idea until December. We stayed in the allocated amount for merit and COLA. It could have been much easier to format.

Vice Chair Lamphere – \$53,218 hired a FT employee without the funding and had to balance it out from somewhere. Then when it came time for raises, you were short.

Chair Weider – For clarification, it's been used in the past to hire a new police officer, a new firefighter. When the Selectman make a decision to increase department budget, the intent of the pool was based on the number of employees now by a multiplier, build that \$73,000 to be dispersed to FT and PT employees at a certain rate.

Vice Chair Lamphere – 2% merit, 2% CPI (4% total) are the numbers here, in \$73,000 there are also 3.5% numbers available if that is needed.

Chair Weider – Can't build it backwards but that information could be sent out if necessary.

Vice Chair Lamphere – 7 FT officers, how many are on per shift? The BC has the authority to talk with anyone to help make a decision; there are so many questions on this one department. Maybe it would make sense to meet with the Chief to see if he can answer some of the questions we have on this. Why do we have so many of the vehicles, and purchasing a new one each year, is that now the expectation?

Selectman D'Angelo – Haven't heard of any CIP meetings, haven't been invited to any, who is making these decisions? The planning board?

Chair Weider - The BOS says what they want to fund, and then the planning board reviews the CIP and says if it's authorized to go in the CIP. The planning board does the initial vetting, then they have a public meeting. Then the BOS says what they think should be pushed off for certain years or if it must be funded and drawn down immediately.

Vice Chair Lamphere – The printout has what the planning board sent to the BOS.

Selectman D'Angelo presented a map with the documentation about a drain at the old salt shed.

Chair Weider – There is a change to the site, we're adding a garage and hot water heaters, the map doesn't show a leech field.

Mr. Heuer is still concerned about seeing special projects in building when one or more of them could be in CIP. MP415 4194-415 Line 740 – went up but not saying why it went up. So many different maintenance lines, it makes it easy for the budget to inflate, there are a lot of different buildings, but it's hard to understand what is changing and why.

Listen to Rhonda – In the minutes it says: Line 415 has increased to \$39,000 for the lead abatement, and the contractor, and the painting, although using the county workers instead could create a reduction. Maybe that's what they've done, is used the workers to cause a decrease.

Chair Weider – why spend \$50,000 on a new vehicle when there is a truck coming to an end of life as a highway. Projects, truck, second truck, fuel, it's such a great cost. Maybe the highway truck could be moved to the needs.

Mrs. Gelinas – In the treasurer section, on here it says there's a \$10,000 increase, BOS has the backup doesn't match the adjustment.

Vice Chair Lamphere – The adjustments the selectmen were making were added to the front of the book every week. The selectman adjusted it down by \$5,000. Due to being tasked with things that are not statutorily responsible for the treasurer and most of it hits upon the impact fees.

Selectman D'Angelo - 3 voted for it with 1 absent with 1 abstention to move forward with the warrant article.

182 Mrs. Gelinas – T4150-56 bank services \$400 are we locked into using TD Bank if their bank fees
183 are going up?

184
185 Vice Chair Lamphere – I'll speak to Joanne because that doesn't really need to be in there. If
186 someone did bounce a check, they get a \$25 fee that they have to pay in cash. Oh wait that is for
187 card services, if we don't make our minimum, then there is a \$50 fee per month.

188
189 Mr. Heuer – Are the new prices for the ambulances in this budget? (Not yet.)

190 Spring Hill? (That meeting is currently taking place, we'll know more later.) In the last
191 BOS minutes, there were 2 job descriptions, one for the town administrator and one for the
192 DPW. the maintenance individual.

193
194 Mr. Heuer – there may be money now, but what about the projected budget?

195
196
197 Selectman D'Angelo – what we need is a clerk that works; someone that will be overseeing light
198 electrical and plumbing for some of the transfer station maintenance. There is enough money in
199 the budget right now that if we wanted to hire a more sophisticated DPW, we could probably do
200 that now. Transfer station has a couple, and do we need a maintenance person, we haven't sorted
201 through it enough at this time, we may have further discussions on it in the future. There is
202 money there, it is available. There's money there, and projected that it will be there without
203 impacting projected amounts. Or do we just interview people to see the kind of quality if we
204 need to pay a little more for a maintenance supervisor, but will this save us more in the long run
205 because they are capable of doing more? Most important part right now is to have a town
206 administrator to help us sort through the various needs. Do we replace the people that have left
207 with comparable type people or do something else?

208
209 Chair Weider – Read the warrant article, Mike Olson ran for road agent he said at town meeting,
210 you as a town need to make a decision as a town as what direction we're moving from an elected
211 person to an appointed position. We as a town, a BC, and a BOS need to recognize and if we
212 have two boards in agreement, there's hopefully a good chance it will be approved.

213
214 Selectman D'Angelo – Dick Trask has done a lot, taken on a lot as himself to help with
215 lightbulbs and saving money and finding the trustees. There are a lot of different things going on
216 in this town that require overseeing. We need someone here in the financial department to help
217 department heads manage their budgets. This is a town administrator type job. How they reach
218 out to the planning board, how they understand how to do things like that. It's become apparent
219 to me, more so than ever, even just having a town administrator available to answer questions for
220 some at this time for budgets.

221
222 Mr. Heuer – the seniors have had the same budget. SR4586-1 They do quite a bit, maybe more
223 would be helpful?

224
225 Vice Chair Lamphere – highway, blue tab. 2 years ago salary at \$83,780, last year it passed at
226 \$97,150 how did it get to \$101,684?

228
229 **Warrant Articles-**

230
231 Article #g – Chair Weider – We continue to buy and create a new maintenance cost. We got the
232 four wheel drive vehicle that was supposed to be able to go in the woods, now we'll have that
233 pulling a trailer with the off road vehicle on it.

234
235 Vice Chair Lamphere -Crazy that they need a new one, they could buy a good used one.

236
237 Selectman D'Angelo – For the ranger, and to break up the parties in the woods

238
239 Mr. Shankey – If they want to catch the people in these wood parties, then won't the off road
240 utility vehicle make them flee because they hear and see it coming?

241
242 #i – Vice Chair Lamphere – they have new software and a portion of the information won't
243 transfer over also PACT – Want to use part of that money as a salary for a PT person.

244
245 #m – Mr. Shankey – Vice Chair, a new position, isn't this something that you say should be in
246 the budget? It's a much stronger argument to fully bake it into the budget and we support it.

247
248 Vice Chair Lamphere – From my understanding, we're both in support of it this year and I'm
249 hoping it'll pass.

250
251 Mr. Heuer – People should be able to have a say if it's a large amount position such as this.

252
253 Chair Weider – If the position were in the budget, the money could be used in any way that the
254 BOS decides, but if it's approved as a special warrant then the money can only be used in that
255 one way.

256
257 Selectman D'Angelo – It has been shared that some of the BOS may not want to support the
258 administrator position with 5 selectmen or they may want to reduce it to 3 selectmen instead.
259 There was uneasiness about putting it into the budget vs a special warrant article.

260
261 Mr. Shankey thinks that since it's all tax payer dollars, just like it was on the school side. It was
262 needed absolutely so, that it was put into their budget. If we are going to have a protocol in place,
263 then we should follow it for any position being created.

264
265 Vice Chair Lamphere – I'd be concerned with it being in the budget instead of a warrant article
266 as it the position could be shifted if it's in the budget. This position is absolutely needed, it's not
267 a want. A lot of the chores that are currently being split between a number of people here on staff
268 should be taken from all of them and put into one position.

269
270 Mr. Heuer – There isn't really a difference between the school and the town. There is a delta. I'm
271 concerned about wanting to get around the vote by putting it into the budget instead of having it
272 as a warrant article for the legislative body to vote as they see fit.

273 **XIII. Member Comments**

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275 **XIV. Public Comments**

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277 **XV. Next Meeting Date – March 26, 2018**

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279 **XVI. Adjourn -**

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281 Vice Chair Lamphere made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Heuer seconded the motion. All in favor,
282 the Budget Committee meeting of March 19, 2018 adjourned at 9:28pm.

283

284 Respectfully Submitted,

285

286 Sarah DeLisle, Recording Secretary

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