

**Town of Chester
Budget Committee
Approved Minutes
March 12, 2018**

I. Meeting to Order

Chair Mike Weider called the meeting to order at 7:26 PM on Monday, March 12, 2018.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Weider led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Attendance

Budget Committee Members:

Chair Michael Weider
Vice Chair Lamphere
Brennan Holmes
Chuck Heuer

Liaisons:
Selectman Stephen D'Angelo

Absent:
Brian Shankey
Becky Owens
Mike Romick School Board Liaison

IV. Announcements by the Chair –

V. Member Comments-

VI. Public Comment –

VII. BOS Update – Selectman Stephen D'Angelo

Putting a town administrator position into the warrant article.

Selectman D'Angelo made a motion to appoint Mrs. Gelinas to the Budget Committee. Vice Chair Lamphere seconded the motion. All in favor, Mrs. Gelinas was welcomed to the BC.

VIII. School Board Update

IX. Other Committee Updates –

There are 3 positions that are up in a few months, Vice Chair Lamphere, Mr. Shankey, and Mr. Heuer, however there is no one in conflict with these positions.

X. Minutes –

Vice Chair Lamphere made a motion to accept the minutes of March 5, 2018 as written. Mr. Heuer seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion carried.

XI. Old Business –

XII. New Business –

School Board Budget/Contract

Chair Weider – Does the BC have anything formal they'd like to submit as a presentation?

Selectman D'Angelo – A rebuttal of 4 or 5 questions that can be asked about the document that was mailed out, it may be stronger to ask questions against it than to do a presentation. One of the questions could be why wasn't it sanbornized?

Mr. Heuer – The number we had had previously was the \$700,000 and I thought they had done the accumulation already. If it wasn't for the Vice Chair following up on that, I'm not sure if anyone else had that feeling as it had not been compounded. Why not do that from the get go? The \$700,000 is the total cost of the increases but it can be misleading.

Vice Chair Lamphere – The report came out after that meeting, and in the report, it does explain the increase being \$669,604 and the years being added. On the orange paper, it doesn't say what people will have to pay with that contract.

Chair Weider – Okay then, no formal presentation only rebuttal. I've read some documents, but I haven't received the flyer to my house yet.

Vice Chair Lamphere -The school will amend the budget down by 2 Pinkerton kids, one math enrichment student and cut the cistern cost down by about half.

Selectman D'Angelo – Some of the wording was difficult because it was persuading and inflammatory at times.

Mr. Heuer – What are our top three comments we want to share after their presentation? If no one has anything to share

Vice Chair Lamphere – At that meeting, when I shared that all together it would be over 1 million, people seemed like they were listening and not shutting down. Hopefully people will be

more open to hearing about it and understanding that this is where the budget will take off from this point forward. We need to wait to hear what the school board says to be able to reply and answer what is raised.

Chair Weider – The percentage increase is going to have a huge impact because it's going to drive and drive and drive. For the budget it's going to begin at this point from now on, and the para contract will be an additional push forward. Also, it's supplementing the retirement as well. It's 180 days, no company has college graduates making \$50,000 right out of the gate for 180 days, with the opportunity to earn much through the incentive.

The BC mused about where the contract must have begun to arrive at this point as an agreement. It was negotiated and went to mediation, then it was agreed upon by the school board, but they don't know what came from the teachers and what came from the legal input. No answer is expected in this, however it lead to a further discussion of parity, and comparing to towns that are not comparable to Chester.

Chair Weider – The salary cycle is what is making it so expensive because education is expensive. The increases here are having the biggest impact and will continue to do so as they will become the base. Breaking out the payments of the teachers across the state, we're closer to being in the middle of the range in the state than at the bottom.

Vice Chair Lamphere - of the 45 or 47 teachers, 27 of them are receiving an increase of over 20% by the end of the four years. It's too much at the same time.

Mr. Holmes – Looking at the staffing concept, this new position doesn't make sense to me. They don't know what their staff is going to be in two years, a unique role should not be created based upon specialized skills that someone has, it should be if anything, hiring a curriculum coordinator and keeping the positions of assistant principal and principal there in place.

Town Budget Review

Vice Chair Lamphere – PD vehicles are a concern to me. How many cruisers are there? With the replacement for the totaled '16 do they need a new cruiser too? How many people do they have? Are there ever the same number of officers in the number of cruisers? How many cruisers go home with officers? Are they compensated to take them home? Budget is only up by 4.43% and the overall increase isn't anything I'm balking at, but I'm bothered by all of these cruisers and repairs, and the maintenance lines.

Selectman D'Angelo – We keep bringing officers in, I don't think we've had a full complement of police officers this year. The selectmen have authorized a certain number of officers, but I don't know what that is.

Chair Weider – I recall it being decided that it's 7 by 24, but if can't find the officers, we are we paying overtime and keeping it at 7 by 24?

Selectman D'Angelo – From the PD chief, we stop 5,000 people a year in town vs. only 2,000 a year in Derry.

Chair Weider – The PD budget has gone up \$171,000 in the last three years for a department that has not grown very much.

Vice Chair Lamphere – How many full time officers are there?

Chair Weider – Salary is up, but not enough to cover the increases.

Selectman D'Angelo – We've secured a 10 year contract for the ambulance services. The calls we get in this town, parents calling the fire department about a bleeding finger, they were called out to Auburn on mutual aid for the horse. It's good we have our own service available, we've saved lives with the good training and that rescue truck ambulance. Also, the mutual aid insurance is a huge help and savings.

Mr. Holmes – What is the emergency jet pack?

Vice Chair Lamphere – It's the \$40/month that we pay for the hotspot, they've never seen a bill so it may be under IT instead.

Mr. Heuer – Is something happening with the lights being changed to LED? Maybe there will be a savings? Looking at buildings, GGB, some of these look like they're increasing quite a bit and there are no explanations. Selectman D'Angelo should ask about lines 640, 741, and 850.

Vice Chair Lamphere – That little garage? We're going to put \$39,000 into that old little building? Maintenance garage: lead abatement \$7500, and \$550 for paint. The highway garage \$14,000 for lead abatement and \$12,000 for paint? Are we really needing all of this to happen or are we better off starting fresh?

Chair Weider – The salt shed, we enclosed the bay, adding the water, what big trucks can go in there? In three years, our retirement benefits have increased by \$73,000 for PD, FD, and highway. I understand it's because of the state, but we're picking this bill up.

Vice Chair Lamphere - Seasonal maintenance, they're adding a new person for \$20,000 for summer help.

Mr. Heuer – Is this double dipping with items that are in the budget that could be covered by the CIP?

Selectman D'Angelo – As for the trustees, it's Rockingham County and there are only so many available to help and once word gets out, other towns may want them. We need to follow through quickly to ensure that we have them available. Also, some women have shared that they weren't feeling comfortable so we need to make sure there is guarding taking place to keep everyone feeling safe.

Mr. Heuer – Maybe we need to take something out of the CIP to ensure funding for this as it is so important.

Chair Weider – It would be nice to have a list of major projects for 2 years out, 5 years out so we could see what is going to be coming along.

XIII. Member Comments

XIV. Public Comments

XV. Next Meeting Date – March 19, 2018

XVI. Adjourn -

Selectman D'Angelo made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Heuer seconded the motion. All in favor, the Budget Committee meeting of March 12, 2018 adjourned at 9:04pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sarah DeLisle, Recording Secretary