

**Town of Chester
Budget Committee
Approved Minutes
April 2, 2018**

I. Meeting to Order

Chair Michael Weider called the meeting to order at 7:26 PM on Monday, April 2, 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

Chuck Heuer

Becky Owens

Christina Gelinas

Brian Shankey

Liaisons:

Kim Peterson School Board

Absent:

Selectman Stephen D'Angelo

Brennan Holmes

Mike Romick School Board

IV. Announcements by the Chair – Welcome

V. Public Comment –

VI. BOS Update – Selectman Stephen D'Angelo

VII. School Board Update- Kimberly Peterson

Qualitative Update:

Culture of Empowerment

Suggestion boxes in the school for the students, they're looking for more outdoor gym time, and less homework.

Parent forums take place every two months approximately and the topics vary based upon what the parents would like a voice on and what the school needs to share.

Meet and Greet with staff: topic discussed ahead of time, then an optional feedback for what the staff likes or would like to see improved. There are verbal and written options. There is a healthy culture because of soliciting input.

Another initiative, “a discovery room” will contain STEM activities: Legos, gliders, plant experiments.

Sports- boys’ basketball made it to the semi-finals and the girls made it to the quarter finals. Staff/student basketball game was energized and built good rapport in a non-classroom setting. Spring tryouts for sports: baseball was in the gym because of the snow, and track was outside because the maintenance staff had the parking lot and sidewalks cleared.

VIII. Other Committee Updates –

IX. Minutes –

1. March 12, 2018

Mr. Shankey made a motion to accept as written. Dr. Owens seconded the motion.

47 – Take it off

75 – Add inspection

84- Hopefully people will be more open to hearing about it that THIS contract is the foundation to the next contract

90 – And I expect that the para

Chair Weider made a motion to accept with amendments. Mr. Shankey seconded the motion. 5 in favor, 0 opposed 2 abstentions.

2. March 19, 2018

3. March 26, 2018

X. Old Business –

XI. New Business –

1. Town Budget & Warrant Review (continued)

Budget:

Chair Weider - \$600 for the '14 cruiser, some disagreement with Police Chief. If we don't support the new cruiser, then the chief wants \$3,000 put into the PD budget.

Vice Chair Lamphere – '14 \$3,000 repair line, \$3,500 for the '15, '16 was totaled, '17 (1) has 13,000 miles on it, with a \$3,000 maintenance line '17 2 has \$3,500 for warranty and repair and the F250 has 600 miles on it, \$14,500 in operating budget for maintenance, and all of the vehicles have warranties and extended warranties. Is all of this necessary? Selectman Trask – Each vehicle has 2 sets of tires. Also, the cars run idle a lot so the oil is changed more often than a personal vehicle.

Chair Weider – Read a great article about some states that are changing their vehicle plan so they shut down instead of idling but use the multiple batteries to keep the devices running, and then it comes back on instantly to not have any difficulties with chase, etc. FD has \$17,000 in maintenance and has much more expensive vehicles without the warranties.

Selectman Trask – If the difference between last year and this coming budget, is there a build up?

'17 (1) is believed to be the new cruiser, so this is a new line that does not compare.

F250 – budget last year was \$2500, spent \$250 so far. Vehicle has 6700 miles on it.

'16 totaled, and spent \$1600 on it.

The whole PD budget is up 4.4% Last year it was a budget of \$656,680 this year it is being requested to \$685,785.

Mr. Heuer – Back to salaries: in the business world, either you get your bonus or you don't. Why can't we do reviews now and put the exact number on the line item? The salary pool could fall victim to manipulation.

Chair Weider – Year after year, it's used for increasing salaries and making adjustments. Last year this committee agreed to increases for FD but in years past we have had other increases to different departments that we were not in agreement with.

Mr. Heuer – When do raises actually get implemented? (They got deployed in October) Were they retroactive to July 1st? (Some were, some weren't.) That could create some more money. It seems much more straightforward to do the reviews before the end of the fiscal year, do the reviews now, so the money is in the budget line instead of the pool.

Selectman Trask – You have to do the raises before the budget starts being planned which happens in January. We can't make that time change work.

Vice Chair Lamphere – I'd love to adjust all of these lines in the PD budget, but we need to look at the big picture to determine what we want to do here; we want to decide what our plan is for town meeting.

Chair Weider – We agreed with the BOS on the \$600 line. We can move forward with agreement for the budget, but then we can argue some of areas. We can tell them our number is taking down the PD '14 utility maintenance from \$3,000 down to \$600. Why would we put new tires etc. on something that is going away? The public safety total budget of \$1,246,660 would be taken down \$2,400 to \$1,244,260.

Vice Chair Lamphere – Page 17, before debt, \$4,416,738, which is a 4.66% increase, last page after debt is \$4,531,790 which is 4.28% increase so something isn't correct. We've been working with the BOS to get their reviews done, so by the time we have a budget, the amount has been distributed from the salary pool. If they are being asked to do them again or at least internally again to get to the specific number, you'd need to follow a selectman around. They are all volunteers with full time jobs, doing reviews in March during budget season could be very challenging.

Mr. Heuer – I'd rather see for the employees that their money is there and I'm trying to take it to the next level.

Chair Weider – When you look at the salary line, you can't tell what the raise is if there is a change in insurance. When it's disbursed out with FICA and people's plans, you have no idea what the raise was. Most departments are one person departments. You don't know what is being drawn out of it so right now you can't find out exactly how much each person is receiving as a raise.

Mr. Heuer – The money would be given out with an exact calculation based on the review, the reality is the pool is created by an estimate of each employee getting the same percent, but that's not how the money is dispersed.

Vice Chair Lamphere – Another mistake on benefits page: tab EX, 4130-1 second page, salary pool number is \$73,308, looking on less effective, the numbers being backed out, on the backup for the salary pool, \$16,500, that's not the treasurer's salary. Not sure if any of the others are right or wrong.

Mr. Shankey - Why isn't the police chief backed out of the salary pool?

Selectman Trask - He's got a five year contract, he's not part of the salary pool. He was hired 2 years ago.

Vice Chair Lamphere – What is a cemetery sexton? And how is it paid out?

Selectman Trask – It has to do with the caretaking. They're paid a couple of different ways, so I don't know exactly who they are.

Chair Weider – Are we fine with \$4,529,390 being proposed to the BOS? Are there any significant places we want to change? Official vote is next Monday after the public hearing closes. If we had to do a straw poll tonight, would we support it? 6 in favor, 1 abstention.

Warrant Articles – the following articles include STRAW POLL votes, not official BC voting.

Article #9:

Total compensation package, benefits and everything, could be less if it's single or two person plan. No more than \$129,000 for everything.

Mr. Heuer – Is there a job description?

Selectman Trask – I've created two so far, the BOS is looking at it; we'll have it planned out and hopefully approved by town meeting. I'm re-running and would push for a search committee vs. an appointment. One selectman, and a BC member, and different department heads. Can't speak for the incoming board because he hasn't been re-elected yet. 6 in favor, 1 abstention.

Article #10:

Selectman Trask – When talking about funding the CIP, keep in mind, there are \$29.5 million worth of projects that are in the CIP over the next 7 years and we're funding \$800,000.

Chair Weider - Current funding \$800,000 total, \$600,000 from taxation and \$200,000 from the unassigned fund balance. All in favor.

Article #11 – CIP Projects

Vice Chair Lamphere – Okay with everything but the cruiser. There are three out there right now, we can wait a year for another new one.

2 abstentions, most accept the projects overall, but not a couple of the line items.

Chair Weider – you can open and amend by taking specific things out or not supporting it at all. If the legislative body says no, they live with what they have and it can come back next year.

Selectman Trask – Motorola is offering a discount on their radios and it's only this year which is approximately 40% off the cost of the radios.

Article #12 – No financial impact so no need to vote, but straw poll – all in favor.

Article #13 – Block Grant

Chair Weider – administered to the town based upon number of highway miles we have and population of the town. All in favor.

Article #14 – Draw down of \$285,000, roads were marked by an outside agency and the money has been set aside to do this work. Physical roads that were in it, Andrew has that information. All in favor.

Article #15 - \$105,000 won't be the number, it will be lower. It will be around \$25,000 we think, maximum is \$105,000. All in favor.

Article #16 – Radios for \$30,000 from revolving account.

Mr. Shankey – How often do they replace the radios?

Selectman Trask – Our dispatching organization switched channels and different technology, and we need to be able to update it in order to stay in communication. These are for side radios as well as some in the cruisers aren't working. All in favor.

Article #17 – All in favor.

Article #18 – PACT

Chair Weider - We all still have questions on this one. We still don't have the understanding we may need.

Vice Chair Lamphere – Asked PACT if BOS had approved funding for the committee, he said no, they want to get the funding first, and then ask the BOS to support it.

Selectman Trask – He has not brought us a proposal for a part time position yet. We support funding that TV station and the primary goal is to have PT employee to coordinate the volunteers and if that doesn't happen, it's to purchase the automation pieces that will allow for channel times to run without a person there. I do not know about what the specific equipment would be, but it would then need to be approved by the BOS.

Vice Chair Lamphere – Video equipment purchases of analog, does that really make sense? Analog is almost obsolete, shouldn't we be going to digital rather than buying another \$20,000 analog?

Chair Weider – Buying a game controller which you can do through software, but we're buying hardware. Not digital hardware, but analog hardware. \$1200 audio controller, replacing 8 high capacity amplifiers \$3600 analog signal not digital, buying multiplexer taking video signal, not digital and taking 4 signals onto the screen for 4 different displays.

Mr. Heuer – I don't know, but it's possible that the sources of the incoming information are analog so there may not be a choice. But the direction has been to go digital where we can.

Chair Weider- For two years, the school has requested what they feel they need for equipment and it has been denied.

Mrs. Peterson - School requested \$5,137 for HD ready equipment for broadcasts that are audible and visible for presentations and a student news group to produce video for cable TV and the internet. Analog is becoming obsolete and it will make it easier for people at home to understand what is being shared because the quality currently is poor. We'd like this included in the warrant.

Mr. Heuer – One of the ways this went awry was that the plan was made by the school without input from the chair of PACT until after the plan was made and that was part of the problem. We need to be in sync and we need to talk with PACT.

Mrs. Peterson – A number of attempts have been made to share the plan and get input on the plan and discussions have not happened, we've tried to attend their meetings and it hasn't worked out, that's why we invited them to the school board meeting. We're looking for 1 portable camera, a couple of stationary ones that are HD ready and a mixer that feeds in digital. This would benefit parents, students, and residents of Chester to have a good viewing experience.

Selectman Trask – I know having two daughters in the schools, if students would like to make videos on Chromebooks they would be happy to work with

Chair Weider –Everything comes over on the slow band, comes into the studio here and is distorted, and then all of the quality is lost.

Mr. Heuer – Does anything duplicate what's here? From a budget perspective, we don't want to have multiple pieces that will do the same thing. If the school's going to set up their own studio I'm not sure the town would want that.

Mrs. Peterson – We're not setting up a studio, we just want high quality viewing to be available and we need the tools to do so.

Chair Weider - \$40,250 would be the total of the warrant cost if this were added from the school board.

No vote taken.

Article #19 – 300th anniversary all in favor.

Article #20 – KENO

Chair Weider – There is no revenue unless the school supports full day kindergarten, the state wants to get out of funding kindergarten. We would lose the \$2300 for each student and it would be replaced with \$1100 for each student, there is no additional money, it's replacement money instead of new money coming in.

Selectman Trask – The goal is to draw another business in town. That could be a positive impact with taxes; Only 250 licenses are being given in the whole state of NH. There's a limit on the number of Keno licenses, has to sell liquor. 1 approved in Raymond, it would be hard to get more than one in a town as small as Chester.

Chair Weider – This is starting the first stages of real gambling, we'll eventually find if the state will support casinos and other venues of gambling for revenue. There's got to be a draw in the room, selling of liquor, playing the game, buying a drink, playing the game, people will be loitering, it will not be a family establishment, Foxwoods does not require local law enforcement to police it. I'm watching what is happening in the paper, when something happens. Is it worth the \$1100 per student?

Mr. Heuer – You're giving a negative connotation to gambling.

Selectman Trask – The \$1100 isn't worth it, but having a microbrewery, or a coffee shop that sometimes sells a beer, a business of some sort. Chester is a bedroom community, drawing the business in, could allow more people to be spending the money in town which could be economic development. I believe it's up to the people and we should put things in front of the people.

Chair Weider – Personal opinion, there's no vote for this.

Article #21 – all in favor

The BC does not have the revenue budget.

XII. Member Comments

XIII. Public Comments

XIV. Next Meeting Date – April 9, 2018 at 7:00pm – Public Hearing

Handouts that we want to give out: maybe an overview

XVI. Adjourn -

Dr. Owens made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Heuer seconded the motion. All in favor, the Budget Committee meeting of April 2, 2018 adjourned at 9:33pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Sarah DeLisle, Recording Secretary