

**Town of Chester  
Budget Committee Meeting  
Monday, January 27, 2020  
Municipal Complex  
Approved Minutes**

**I. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Weider called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm and led with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. Attendance**

**Committee Members Present:**

Mike Weider, Chairperson  
Rhonda Lamphere, Vice-Chair  
Ephraim Dobbins  
Kathy Guilmette  
Brennan Holmes, School Board Liaison  
Stephen Landau, BOS Liaison

**Others Present:**

Greg Bolduc, Chester Fire Department Chief  
Debra Doda, Chester Town Administrator  
Stephen D'Angelo, Chester BOS  
Karen Lacroix, Chester Academy Principal  
Darrell Lockwood, SAU 82 Superintendent  
Corinna Reishus, Chester Recreation Director  
Sheryl Rich, SAU 82 Business Administrator  
Royal Richardson, School Board Chair  
Valerie Weider, Chester School Board

Other Members of the Public unknown to this Recording Secretary.

**III. Member Comments**

Selectman Landau explained that last week he had said that this was the last year with a payment on the Fire Department "quint" vehicle; he said that this coming year will be the last year. Selectman Landau said there is one more payment for the "quint" of \$50,000.

**IV. Welcome and Announcements by the Chair**

Chair Weider advised that the Committee was going to skip the BOS and School Board updates and move directly to the Public Hearing.

**V. Public Comment**

There was no Public Comment.

**VI. BOS Update – Liaison Steph Landau**

**VII. School Board Update – Liaison Brennan Holmes**

**VIII. Other Committee Updates – None**

**IX. Minutes –**

- a. December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- b. January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- c. January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**X. Old Business –**

None Discussed.

**XI. New Business**

**a. School District's Warrant and Public Hearing**

Chester School Board (CSB) members, Chair Richardson and Ms. Weider, joined the Committee at the meeting table.

Chair Weider stated that the Public Hearing was noticed in the Tri-Town Times on January 16, 2020 and posted in two locations at the Town Hall and one location at Chester Academy.

Chair Weider explained that the purpose of this Public Hearing is to have input and answer any questions related to the School District's Budget.

**Chair Weider made a motion to open the Public Hearing on the 2020-2021 proposed operating budget for the Chester School District with additional warrant articles that contain appropriations; Vice Chair Lamphere seconded the motion. A roll call vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion approved, 6-0-0.**

The Public Hearing was opened at 7:11 pm.

Chair Weider noted that the discussion would only be on financial or monetary articles. These include Article 03 - Operating Budget for School District, Article 04 – Collective Bargaining Agreement Educational Support Personnel, and Article 06 – Establish and Fund Boiler Replacement Fund.

Chair Weider read the Warrant Article 3.

### **Article 03 - Operating Budget for School District**

To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate the budget committee's recommended amount of \$12,792,364 for the support of schools, for the payment of salaries for the school district officials and agents, and for the payment for the statutory obligations of the district. This article does not include appropriations contained in special or individual articles addressed separately.

(Majority vote required.)

#### **Recommended by Chester School Budget Recommended by Chester Budget Committee**

Chester School Board (CSB) Chair Richardson read the "REPORT FROM THE CHESTER SCHOOL BOARD FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET HEARING." (This report was distributed to the Committee and the Public.)

CSB Richardson read the pages related to "Warrant Article 3: The 2020 – 2021 School District Budget" from the CSB report.

(This is not the complete Chester School Board report.)

*"The Chester School Board is presenting a proposed 2020 – 2021 School District Budget that has also been developed in conjunction with the Chester Budget Committee. The School Board recommends a budget of \$12,792,364. This article does not include appropriations voted in other warrant articles.*

*The proposed Budget of \$12,792,364 shows a budget-to-budget variance of \$264,176, for an increase in comparison with the FY 2019-2020 budget of 2.11%.*

*The projected Tax Impact associated with the appropriation of **\$12,792,364** to support the Proposed 2020-2021 Budget is \$0.24 per thousand dollars of assessment. For a home assessed at **\$450,000\*** dollars this would result in an impact of **\$108.00** per year, or **\$2.08** per week.*

*This article for the proposed 2020-2021 Budget was unanimously supported by the Chester School Board."*

Chair Weider asked if there were any questions from the Public.

There were no questions from the Public.

Chair Weider read Article 4.

### **Article 04 – Collective Bargaining Agreement Educational Support Personnel**

To see if the Chester School District will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Chester School Board and the Chester Educational Support Personnel Association which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

Fiscal Year	Estimated Increase
2020-2021	\$27,553.29
2021-2022	\$16,370.62
2022-2023	\$16,301.29

and further to raise and appropriate \$27,553.29 for the current fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels.

(Majority vote required.)

Recommended by Chester School Budget  
Recommended by Chester Budget Committee

CSB Richardson read the pages related to “*Warrant Article 4: This article represents a new Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Chester educational Support Association (CESPA)*” from the CSB report.

(This is not the complete Chester School Board report.)

*“The projected Tax impact associated with the appropriation of **\$27,553.29** in the first year of the agreement is **\$0.039** per thousand dollars of assessment. For a home assessed at \$450,000 dollars this would result in an impact of **\$17.55** per year, or **\$0.34** per week.*

**Note:** *If the new Collective Bargaining Agreement is approved, then the resulting combined total Budget for 2020-2021 (**Article #3 \$12,792,364**) + **Article #4 \$27,553.29**) would be **\$12,819,917** resulting in a budget-to-budget variance of **\$291,729.29**, for a combined increase over the FY 2019-2020 budget of **2.33%**.*

*The total combined projected Tax Impact of **Warrant Article 3** and **Warrant Article 4** (if both approved) in the first year is **\$0.28** per thousand dollars of assessment. For a home assessed at \$450,000 dollars this would result in an impact of **\$126.00** per year, or **\$2.42** per week.*

*This article for the proposed CESPA Collective Bargaining Agreement was unanimously supported by the Chester School Board.”*

Chair Weider asked if there were any questions from the Public.

There were no questions from the Public.

Chair Weider read Article 6.

**Article 06      Establish and Fund Boiler Replacement Fund**

**To see if the school district will vote to establish a Boiler Replacement Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for Boiler Replacement and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000 to be placed in this fund and further to name the School Board as agents to expend. This sum to come from June 30, 2020 fund balance available for transfer on July 1. No amount to be raised from taxation.**

**(Majority vote required.)**

**Recommended by School Board**

**Recommended by Budget Committee**

CSB Richardson read the pages related to **“Warrant Article 6: This article represents a request to establish a Boiler Replacement Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000 to be placed in this fund”** from the CSB report.

(This is not the complete Chester School Board report.)

*“It is the consensus opinion of the Chester School Board and the Chester Budget Committee that it is prudent for the CSB to create a Capital Reserve Fund specific for this purpose and to contribute a sum of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) to the fund each year in advance of the work being done. The twenty-thousand-dollar contribution each year would be raised and appropriated from each year’s Unreserved Fund Balance at the end of the fiscal year. As a result, through the use of dollars from the prior year’s Unreserved Fund Balance there would be no additional tax impact for fiscal year 2020-2021 associated with the funding of this Capital Reserve Fund.*

*By having the funds available to do the necessary work, the Board at that time will not have to raise and appropriate tax dollars or rely on available impact fees to complete the project.”*

Chair Weider asked if there were any questions from the Public.

There were no questions from the Public.

**Chair Weider made a motion to close the Public Hearing on the 2020-2021 proposed operating budget for the Chester School District with additional warrant articles and appropriations; Vice Chair Lamphere seconded the motion. A roll call vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion approved, 6-0-0.**

**The Public Hearing was closed at 7:50 pm.**

**The School Board members and the Public departed the meeting.**

**Vice Chair Lamphere made a motion to recommend the Warrant Article 3: 2020-2021 Operating Budget for School District in the amount of \$12,792,364; Mr. Holmes seconded the motion. Motion approved, 6-0-0.**

**Vice Chair Lamphere made a motion to recommend the Warrant Article 4: three-year CESPAs Collective Bargaining Agreement with the first-year cost \$27,553.29; Mr. Holmes seconded the motion. Chair Weider noted the cost of the life of the contract is \$131,702.40. Motion approved, 5-0-1, Selectman Landau abstained.**

**Vice Chair Lamphere made a motion to recommend Warrant Article 6: Establish and Fund Boiler Replacement Fund under RSA 35:1 for Boiler Replacement and to raise and transfer the sum of \$20,000 on June 30, 2020; Mr. Holmes seconded the motion. Motion approved, 6-0-0.**

The Budget Committee members signed the MS-27.

The Budget Committee worked on their report.

Fire Chief Bolduc joined the Committee at the meeting table at 8:27 pm.

Chief Bolduc reviewed with the Budget Committee an overview of the Fire Department call responses, number of people who respond to the calls, and why he wants to hire additional full-time staff.

Chief Bolduc explained what he has been doing to increase the number of responders to a department call. He said that regardless of what he has implemented, pay increases and bonus programs, there are still not enough responders.

Chief Bolduc said that he needs to add two full-time Fire Department employees.

Chief Bolduc and the Committee discussed the need for these positions, the impact to the budget, and whether it should be added to the budget or put into a warrant article.

The Committee discussed the issue.

Selectman Landau noted that Chief Bolduc had come to the BOS with a warrant article to add two new Fire Department members; the BOS voted 4 – 1 to not have a warrant article, but to have it put directly into the Budget because the BOS believe this is necessary to have for the Town.

Town Administrator joined the Committee and explained that if there was a warrant article put before the Town, the cost for adding the two positions including salaries, uniforms, and benefits would equal \$192,491.

Chair Weider clarified that the cost associated included everything and that there would be no additional costs for education or otherwise.

Chief Bolduc assured Chair Weider that there would be no additional costs for education if he can attract the experienced people. He explained that no one within the department is interested.

Chair Weider said that the request for two new employees should be put before the Town taxpayer in a warrant article.

Vice Chair Lamphere said that she is always an advocate for new positions being put into a warrant article; she said that in this case, she agrees with the BOS and that the new positions are a necessity for Public safety and should be put directly into the Budget.

Ms. Guilmette and Mr. Dobbins requested that Chief Bolduc return with more specific statistics on the call responses and coverage, an analysis of over-time, the response times, and other challenging coverage issues.

Chair Weider pointed out that the responses should be separated out into groups by type of responders.

The Committee and the Chief discussed the issue.

Fire Chief Bolduc departed the meeting at 9:20 pm.

**XII. Member Comments -None**

**XIII. Public Comments - None**

**XIV. Next Meeting Date(s): Tuesday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

**XV. Adjourn**

**Ms. Guilmette made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Holmes seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

C. Molly Qualters,  
Recording Secretary