

**Town of Chester  
Budget Committee  
Monday, December 14, 2020  
Virtual Meeting  
Approved Minutes**

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

Chair Weider called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

**II. Attendance**

By Roll Call the following Board members were present: Chair Mike Weider, Vice-Chair, Ephraim Dobbins, Rhonda Lamphere, Kathy Guilmette, Jack Cannon, Chester School Board Liaison Dana Theokas, Paul Murphy, Michael D'Angelo and Selectman Liaison Stephen Landau.

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

Chair Weider announced that the budget books are now available. There is not a lot of detail so recommend looking at annual reports. The CIP, Warrant Articles and Revenues will also be finalized. The Committee can amend the budget but the legislative body decides which to go with.

**IV. BOS Update – Selectman Landau**

Selectman Landau reported the Board of Selectmen are working on proposed Warrant Articles. The pickup truck for the Police Department is being moved up in the CIP so their old one can be moved over to the Maintenance Department.

**V. School Board Update – Dana Theokas or Brennan Holmes**

Ms. Theokas reported the School Board is reviewing the budget on December 2, 2020 with the final budget to be presented in January. The School received additional funding from the State and there are some challenges to food services.

Mr. Weider noted there was \$157,000 in revenue from the CARES Act. Ms. Theokas noted Pinkerton Academy received \$59,000. There have been a lot of increases to Special Education but the bulk of increase to the budget was the NH Retirement System increase which was mandated. CIP impacts are also being reviewed.

Mr. Weider asked if there were any savings from Health or Property Insurance and Ms. Theokas noted a premium holiday will be coming back to the District.

Mr. Weider asked about reductions in busing costs and Ms. Theokas noted not for this year as it is contract services. Royal Richardson reported the Board has not reached a conclusion with First Student but field trip service rates are down this year. The contract is for two more years. Mr. Richardson noted a bid for electric is underway. The Special Education increase of 58% is for out of district placements at specialized schools within the State.

## **VI. Minutes**

### **a. November 9, 2020**

*Mr. Dobbins motioned to accept the November 9, 2020 minutes as written. Mr. Cannon seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Weider – aye, Dobbins – aye, Lamphere – aye, Guilmette – aye, Cannon – aye, Landau – aye, Theokas – aye, Murphy – aye and D’Angelo - aye. The motion passed 9-0-0.*

## **VII. New Business**

### **a. Town and School Financial reports**

Mr. Weider noted the Town Financials were sent.

### **b. Budget Process – 2021/2022**

Mr. Weider recommended looking at the School Budget after the holidays. The books will arrive January 1<sup>st</sup> for the January 4<sup>th</sup> and January 11<sup>th</sup> meetings per our schedule. The CIP tables will be finalized. There were two changes to Table 10, the pickup truck being moved up a year and a security system for the Highway Garage.

### **c. CIP**

Mrs. Theokas asked if the stipends for the Selectmen could be moved out. Selectman Landau noted the Board did not vote on it. Mr. Cannon noted he was supportive of a raise for the Selectmen.

### **d. Budget Calendar**

Mr. Richardson reviewed the workshop dates and asked if they were definite. Mr. Weider noted the first is with the School Board on January 18<sup>th</sup> and an additional one January 20<sup>th</sup>, if needed. The public hearing date can be set.

Mrs. Lamphere noted the School’s public hearing is February 8 and the Town is February 10. Mr. Weider noted each takes about half an hour or longer if there is a lot of public input. Mrs. Lamphere recommended scheduling both on the Monday night, February 8<sup>th</sup>. All were in favor.

Ms. Theokas recommended setting the date for the District Meeting at Pinkerton if there is a room at the MPR. Transportation would have to be offered. Mr. Richardson

recommended planning for 135-150 people. Mr. Richardson noted Zoom is probably not the best option. Mr. Weider opined that he did not see Pinkerton as an option outside of Chester for a meeting place. Mr. Murphy agreed. Ms. Guilmette asked the plan if over occupancy and Mr. Weider noted there could be a hybrid model with a Zoom alternative in Chester. Mr. Richardson sent out a letter discussion options. Mrs. Lamphere asked if the meeting could be televised at Pinkerton and Mr. Richardson noted things have been broadcast from their before.

Selectman Landau noted the Town can postpone their meeting but the School has to have theirs in March.

## **VIII. Member Comments**

Ms. Theokas commented on administrative salaries and police details. Selectman Landau explained the Pay Matrix and the detail funds going to purchase equipment for the Police Department.

Mr. Murphy recommended not giving raises to Department Heads and Selectmen until next year. Mr. Cannon noted he did not agree this Committee should be discussing salaries.

Mr. Dobbins suggested that rather than cutting staff salaries, if the committee was interested in lowering the budget, they could look at the CIP instead. Mr. Weider did not agree noting that they would need to catch up the next year and the legislative body should chose.

## **IX. Public Comments**

Mr. Richardson explained that salaries were contractual with the School District including benefits.

## **XI. Next Meeting Date: January 4, 2021**

## **XI. Adjourn**

***Mr. Cannon motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Lamphere seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Weider – aye, Dobbins – aye, Lamphere – aye, Guilmette – aye, Cannon – aye, Landau – aye, Theokas – aye, Murphy – aye and D’Angelo - aye. With all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Hoijer  
Recording Secretary  
via PACT