

**Town of Chester Budget Committee Public Hearing  
February 7, 2022  
Approved Minutes  
7:00 PM**

**Budget Committee members present:**

Chairman Mike Weider  
Vice-Chairman Ephraim Dobbins (joined at 7:03 PM)  
Jack Cannon  
Kathy Guilmette  
Michael D'Angelo  
Selectmen Liaison Steve Couture

**Budget Committee members absent:**

Dana Theokas, Chester School Board Liaison

**Guests present:**

Royal Richardson, Chairman, Chester School Board  
Dr. Sharon Locke, Superintendent, Chester School District  
Jonathan Eckerman, Vice Chairman, Chester School Board  
Sheryl Rich, Chester School District Business Administrator  
Mat Stover, Chairman, Public Ways Working Group  
Chuck Myette, Chairman, Board of Selectmen  
Steven O. Landau, Selectman  
Chris Hadik  
Chester PACT

**I. Meeting to Order**

Chairman Weider called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**II. Attendance**

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

**IV. Public Comment**

**V. Minutes**

**a. January 31, 2022**

*Ms. Guilmette moved to accept the minutes of January 31, 2022 as written. Selectman Couture seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The vote passed unanimously.*

**VI. Old Business**

**VII. New Business**

50 **a. Public Hearing – Proposed 2022-2023 School District Budget, CEA Negotiated Con-**  
52 **tract and other Warrant Articles containing appropriations**

54 *Chairman Weider moved to open the public meeting on the 2022-2023 proposed operat-*  
56 *ing budget for the Chester School District and additional warrant articles that contain ap-*  
*propriations. Mr. D'Angelo seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Richardson –*  
*aye, Weider – aye, D'Angelo – aye, Guilmette – aye, Cannon – aye. The vote passed 5-0-0.*

58 Mr. Richardson presented the three financial Warrant Articles (Articles 3, 4, and 6) with fi-  
60 nancial impact that will be voted on at the March 16, 2022 School District meeting.

62 **Article 3: Approve the proposed 2022-23 School District operating budget of**  
**\$15,858,164.**

64 There were no questions from the Budget Committee or the legislative body regarding this  
66 Article.

68 **Article 4: Approve the three-year Collective Bargaining Agreement reached between**  
70 **the Chester School Board and the Chester Educational Association for \$157,094 for**  
**the first year of the contract, \$165,510 for the second year, and \$195,006 for the third**  
**year of the contract.**

72 There were no questions from the Budget Committee or the legislative body regarding this  
74 Article.

76 **Article 6: To raise the sum of \$20,000 to replace in the Boiler Replacement Capital Re-**  
**serve Fund.**

78 Mr. Chris Hadik asked if the funds will be coming out of the surplus, since there is no tax  
80 impact associated with this Article and Mr. Richardson answered in the affirmative. Mr.  
Cannon asked if the \$260,000 in the building fund is sufficient to replace the roof if it fails  
and Mr. Richardson answered in the affirmative.

82 *Chairman Weider moved to close the public hearing for the 2022-2023 proposed operat-*  
84 *ing budget for the Chester School District and additional warrant articles that contain ap-*  
86 *propriations. Mr. Cannon seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Richardson –*  
*aye, Dobbins – aye, Weider – aye, D'Angelo – aye, Guilmette – aye, Cannon – aye. The*  
*vote passed 6-0-0.*

88 *Mr. Dobbins moved to bring Article 3 forward to the School District meeting. Mr. D'An-*  
90 *gelo seconded the motion. A vote was taken. All were in favor. The motion passed unani-*  
*mously.*

92 *Mr. Cannon moved to bring Article 4 forward to the School District meeting. Mr. Dob-*  
94 *bins seconded the motion. A vote was taken. All were in favor. The motion passed unani-*  
96 *mously.*

98 *Mr. Cannon moved to bring Article 6 forward to the School District meeting. Mr. Dob-*  
100 *bins seconded the motion. A vote was taken. All were in favor. The motion passed unani-*  
102 *mously.*

102 **b. Presentation by Public Ways Working Group**

104 Mr. Matthew Stover presented the findings of the Public Ways Working Group, which was  
106 established by the Board of Selectmen to discuss transitioning from an elected Road Agent  
108 to an appointed Supervisor of Roads. This group has been charged with exploring the bene-  
110 fits of such a move to the Town as well as factors that should be considered to successfully  
112 implement the change, and then make their recommendations to the Board of Selectmen.  
The group includes representatives from Town departments and committees. There is a pro-  
vision for this change in the RSA and would require a Warrant Article at the Town Meeting.  
The Board of Selectmen has decided to move ahead with this issue, although they have not  
yet voted on it.

114 Mr. Stover reviewed the benefits of making this change, including the fact that this position  
116 is responsible for ensuring public safety. The responsibilities of the position will remain the  
118 same. This position is responsible for the planning and engineering of road projects, so con-  
tinuity in the role ensures the professional fulfillment of capital projects.

120 Mr. Cannon explained the role is a full-time position, due to the numerous responsibilities it  
122 entails. Mr. Stover said all full-time professional positions in the Town are appointed posi-  
124 tions, so this will bring this position into line. The qualifications for the position were deter-  
mined by the group. A detailed operational plan to make the transition has been created. The  
financial impact on the 2022-23 budget would be just over \$55,000, which is \$0.08 per  
\$100,000 of valuation. The Board of Selectmen will manage the posting of the position.

126 Selectman Myette explained that ideally, there will be an overlap of a couple of months to  
128 transition from Road Agent to Supervisor of Roads. It is important for the Supervisor of  
Roads to participate in the budget cycle.

130 Chairman Weider asked how the benefits package and salary were decided and Selectman  
132 Myette replied they performed a survey of the surrounding towns. He said continuity and  
consistency in setting policy and direction is good for the community.

134 Selectman Couture thanked Mr. Stover and the PWWG for their work.

136 **c. Town Budget Review**

138 **i. Finalize Town Budget with BOS**

140 The Town budget is 7.28% over last year. Selectman Myette explained the Board of  
142 Selectman requested that all departments document any increase in their budget  
144 from the current year. Salaries and benefits represent nearly a 5% increase. The  
Committee suggested making reductions in a number of line items in Town depart-  
ments, including the salary pool, IT, Recreation, Police, and Highway. Selectman  
Myette pointed out the legislative body will be tasked with making the final deci-  
sion.

The Committee also reviewed the Warrant Articles and the need to simplify them in the future. They discussed the function of the articles in relation to the CIP.

The Committee and the Board of Selectmen will meet on Wednesday, February 9<sup>th</sup> at 5 PM in a working group to discuss the budget and come to an agreement on the final figure before the public hearing on Thursday, February 10<sup>th</sup>.

**ii. Public Hearing, Thursday, February 10, 2022, 7:00 pm**

**VIII. Next Meeting Date – February 10, 2022 – Public Hearing**

**IX. Adjourn**

*Ms. Guilmette moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 PM. Selectman Couture seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Hanggeli, Recording Secretary