

**Town of Chester Budget Committee Public Hearing
January 9, 2023
Approved Minutes
7:00 PM**

Budget Committee members present:

Michael Weider, Chairman
Ephraim Dobbins, Vice Chair
Kathy Guilmette
Jack Cannon
Charlotte Lister
Ron McKinnon
Sabrina Harris, Chester School Board Liaison

Budget Committee members absent:

Steve D'Angelo, Board of Selectmen Liaison

Guests present:

Royal Richardson, Chester School Board Chairman
Sharon Locke, Superintendent, Chester School District
Benjamin Kilar, SAU Finance Manager
Chester PACT

I. Meeting to Order

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

II. Attendance

III. Announcements by the Chair – Welcome

IV. Public Comment

There were no members of the public present.

V. BOS Update – Steve D'Angelo

Selectman D'Angelo was not present at the meeting.

VI. School Board Update – Sabrina Harris

Ms. Harris reported that she had updated numbers for the finance report. The estimated reserve will be \$144,000 for the current year.

VII. Minutes

a. November 14, 2022

Mr. Dobbins moved to accept the minutes of November 14, 2022 as written. Ms. Guilmette seconded the motion. A vote was taken. All were in favor except Mr. Cannon and Mr. McKinnon, who abstained. The vote passed 5-0-2.

VIII. New Business

a. Presentation – Chester School District 2023-24 Budget Overview

Dr. Sharon Locke introduced herself as the Superintendent of the Chester School District. She thanked the Budget Committee for inviting her to share a high-level picture of the 2023-24 budget.

She reported the proposed budget shows an 4.84% increase. Expenses have increased and revenues have decreased. The current tax impact is \$15.42 or a variance of \$1.13 over last year. This amount will come down once an anticipated reduction is applied. She noted that this amount takes into account worst-case scenarios in terms of expenditures and could be less.

She noted that Chester offers an outstanding education for a less-per-pupil cost than most of the surrounding towns. She also reviewed the proposed security measures being implemented regarding access to Chester Academy.

Mr. Dobbins noted that the revenue side shows a decline. He clarified that the Budget Committee asked the School to take out a substantial amount from their bottom line last year. So, this is not a reflection on the School's handling of their budget.

The School Board will meet with the Budget Committee again on January 23rd. Chair Weider noted that the Committee members will need to come up with questions for the Board before this meeting.

b. Financial Reports (School and Town)

Chair Weider said he sent financial reports, but did not review them.

c. Budget Calendar

Chair Weider will distribute copies of the calendar to all Committee members. He reviewed upcoming meeting dates.

IX. Next Meeting Date – January 23, 2023

X. Adjourn

Mr. Guilmette moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 p.m. Mr. Dobbins seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Hanggeli, Recording Secretary