

Town of Chester Budget Committee Public Hearing
April 10, 2023
Approved Minutes
7:00 PM

Budget Committee members present:

Ephraim Dobbins
Kathy Guilmette
Jack Cannon
Charlotte Lister
Ron McKinnon
Beth Swanson
Rob Varsalone
Sabrina Harris, Chester School Board Liaison

Guests present:

Chester PACT

I. Meeting to Order

Mr. Dobbins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Attendance

III. Announcements by the Chair – Welcome

Mr. Dobbins welcomed the new members of the Committee, Ms. Swanson and Mr. Varsalone. He congratulated Ms. Guilmette and Mr. Cannon on their reelection to the Committee.

IV. Public Comment

There were no members of the public wishing to comment.

V. BOS Update

The new Board of Selectmen liaison has not yet been appointed, so there was no update.

VI. School Board Update

Ms. Harris presented an update on where the School budget currently stands. She described the CIP items the School Board is considering covering with the projected excess funds. This is a normal process that occurs at this time every year.

Ms. Guilmette commented that she felt improved security measures should be made a priority over other projects and Ms. Harris assured her this was the case. The Committee concurred. Ms. Harris explained that some of the projects are being moved forward to provide relief in the 2023-24 budget.

Mr. Dobbins asked if any remaining funds, after completing these projects, would be returned to the Unassigned Balance Fund. Ms. Harris said if there are funds remaining, this will be determined at a later date.

VII. Other Committee Updates

Mr. Dobbins reported there is training available from the New Hampshire Municipal Association and any members who are interested should contact Town Administrator Doda.

VIII. Minutes

a. February 27, 2023

Mr. Cannon moved to approve the minutes from February 27, 2023 as written. Ms. Guilmette seconded the motion. A vote was taken. The motion passed 5-0-3.

IX. Old Business

a. Town Meeting

Mr. Cannon said he believed the Town Meeting went well. Ms. Guilmette noted that moving the Town Meeting back to May will help with creating the Town budget, as long as the Board of Selectmen keep the process moving forward. Ms. Harris noted the School's timelines will not change for their budget.

X. New Business

a. Reconfigure the Committee

Mr. Cannon said he believed the former Chair, Mr. Weider, intended to run for reelection but missed the window to sign up. Mr. Cannon and Mr. Dobbins have discussed the possibility of appointing Mr. Weider to the Committee. Mr. Cannon reviewed the minutes from the 2005 Town Meeting, during which the Committee was formed. The minutes stated the Committee would consist of seven at-large members, including representatives from the School Board and from the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Cannon reviewed the RSA, which states there can be up to 12 members on the Committee unless a number of members is specified, which was the case. Ms. Lister suggested Mr. Weider would be welcome to attend as a member of the public and might be consulted for his expertise.

Mr. Cannon moved to appoint Mr. Dobbins as Chair of the Budget Committee. Ms. Guilmette seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Mr. Dobbins, who abstained. The motion passed 7-0-1.

Mr. Dobbins expressed his concern that his work schedule precludes him from acting as the Chair, although he is willing to assume the role. Ms. Guilmette suggested appointing a Vice Chair who would fill in during Mr. Dobbins' absence and said she would be willing to fill this role.

Mr. Cannon moved to appoint Ms. Guilmette as Vice Chair of the Budget Committee. Mr. Dobbins seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor except Ms. Guilmette, who abstained. The motion passed 7-0-1.

Chair Dobbins will contact Town Administrator Doda to explore any possible options for changing the number of members on the Committee. Ms. Swanson suggested the possibility of including an emeritus role. Ms. Harris said the Committee members will support Mr. Dobbins and Ms. Guilmette in their new roles.

XI. Next Meeting Date

100 Chair Dobbins noted the next meeting will most likely occur in September. He will notify the
102 members two weeks beforehand. He described the cadence of meetings in the fall and winter for
the new members.

104 **XII. Adjourn**

106 *Ms. Guilmette moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 p.m. Mr. McKinnon seconded the*
108 *motion. A vote was taken, all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.*

Respectfully submitted,
110 Beth Hanggeli, Recording Secretary