

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOF MEETING
TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF FINANCE
REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, December 21, 2023
Chester Town Hall and via TEAMS

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman O'Hare called the meeting to order at 7:02. In attendance included: Chairman O'Hare, Andrew Gardner, Roger Labrecque, Deb Vilcheck, John Chillock, Justin Kronholm, and Steve Cline. Also in attendance was Selectman Radicchi.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion made and duly seconded, the minutes from the 11/16/23 BOF meeting were unanimously approved as amended.

Note: Steve Cline is spelled with a "C" not a "K" as reported in the minutes.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

John reported:

- He met with the First Selectwoman to discuss the Public Works Department. The Public Works department was over expended in the last budget and is predicted to be over spent in the current budget. There will be PW Capital and Operating budget requests in the upcoming budget season. Funds will be needed for tree work and equipment maintenance and replacement.
- The use of ARPA funds will be considered to fund necessary tree work.
- The status of the remaining ARPA funds was discussed.
 - Substantial funds remain in the Social Service ARPA account.
 - The WPCA has requested that remaining ARPA funds already allocated to WPCA be used for manhole replacement.
- BOF members were invited to join the Chairman when the monthly accounts are reviewed.
- A suggestion was made to appoint BOF members as a liaison to various departments in town; i.e. BOE, Public Works, Emergency Management.
- The relationship between Park & Rec maintenance items and the Public Works budget was discussed. Maintenance items are budgeted in the Public Works budget for facilities and properties throughout Town. The importance of budgeting for maintenance items in the appropriate department was discussed.
 - A spreadsheet has been developed for the Public Works department that will track maintenance funds and projects. This spreadsheet may be used in other departments as appropriate.
- The BOE is autonomous; however, the BOF may make suggestions and requests of the BOE.
- Chief Grzybowski will resign as Fire Chief. The election of a new Chief is in June/July.
- The protocol to be used during the upcoming budget season was discussed. A "target" mill rate will be determined prior to the beginning of the budget process.
- The substantial budget surplus realized this past fiscal year was discussed. The importance of not over-taxing residents was stressed.
- The necessary repairs to the town hall sprinkler system were discussed.

- The Annual Report will be dedicated to Rick Nygard.

SELECTMAN'S REPORT

Selectman Radicchi read a statement from First Selectwoman Lignar including:

- She meets regularly with the BOF Chairman.
- At their upcoming meeting, the BOS will approve the 2024 BOS regular meeting schedule and BOF/BOS budget workshop schedule.
- The BOS is reviewing offers for the sale of Winthrop Road; contingent upon P&Z and Town Meeting approval.
- The BOS will consider a request for ARPA funding for tree maintenance.
- Storm damage at the Great Brook at Water Street – The First Selectwoman is meeting with appropriate staff from Jacobson and DOT to repair the area. Extensive permitting will be necessary to facilitate this work.
- Selectwoman Bandzes is the BOS liaison to the EDC.
- The Brooks Factory on Liberty Street has been sold.
- The Chesterfields property is under contract.
- Cell Tower – proposed agreement with Vertical Bridge is under negotiations.

FINANCE – Financial documents, provided by Peter Evankow were included in the Board's packet and reviewed/discussed by the BOF. Items discussed:

- Retirement Board – accounts are well funded. Retirement Board is considering COLA adjustments.
- Sick time/vacation time – the town will reconsider how sick/vacation time is accrued and "paid out" when an employee resigns/retires.

The work of the Charter Commission was briefly discussed. In the current proposal, the BOF would be eliminated.

The Tax Collector's Report was included in the BOF packet and discussed, Building Permits are up and a \$5,000 balance remains in the Main Street project (the project is complete).

The Fund Balance shows a \$687,000 surplus and interest realized last month was \$10,000.00.

In last year's budget, the Contingency was set at \$80,000. The appropriate amount to be budgeted for Contingency will be reviewed and discussed during the upcoming budget season. In addition, the importance of budgeting appropriately for Capital items/projects was stressed.

The status of the Parker's Point boat launch was discussed. The goal is to repair the ramp, stop the erosion and re-open the ramp for small boats in time for the upcoming boating season. The Harbor Commission will meet with the Building Official to discuss the project further.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made and duly seconded, the meeting was unanimously adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk