

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOF MEETING  
TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT  
BOARD OF FINANCE  
REGULAR MEETING  
Thursday, January 18, 2024  
Chester Town Hall and via TEAMS

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman O'Hare called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. In attendance included: Chairman O'Hare, John Chillock, Andrew Gardner, Deb Vilcheck, Steve Cline (via TEAMS), Michael Jordan, Peter Evankow, First Selectwoman Lignar, Chief Grzybowski, Virginia Carmany, Dick Leighton, Building Official, Cam Evangelisti, Selectwoman Bandzes and several members of the audience.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

12/21/23 – tabled. Peter will forward the recording from this meeting to the board clerk.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS – Chairman, Vice Chairman and Clerk

John Chillock was nominated for Vice Chair.

Deb Vilcheck was nominated for Clerk.

John O'Hare was nominated as Chairman. There were no other nominations.

On a motion made and duly seconded, Deb Vilcheck was unanimously voted Clerk of the BOF.

On a motion made and duly seconded, John Chillock was unanimously voted Vice Chairman of the BOF.

On a motion made and duly seconded, John O'Hare was unanimously voted Chairman of the BOF.

HOSE COMPANY PROPOSAL

Chief Grzybowski provided an update on Ambulance Revenue and call volume. At this time, both revenue and call volume are similar to the previous year. The Chief anticipates higher revenue and call volume by the end of the fiscal year.

Currently the Ambulance staffing includes full-time, part-time and pay for call staff. Chief Grzybowski is requesting that the BOF consider providing additional funding in the amount of \$20,000 for staff to meet the needs of the department. Additional revenue will be realized if the staffing is increased, and the department is able to respond to more Ambulance calls.

The BOF reacted favorably to the Chief's proposal and will discuss further after BOS consideration of the request.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

John reported:

- A recent meeting with First Selectmen, BOF Chairmen, school staff and engineers to discuss the necessary mold remediation at John Winthrop Middle School was rescheduled to 2/6/24. Bonding may be an option to address the concerns at JW and other Capital items (apparatus replacement).
- Funding may be necessary to upgrade the town's accounting software.
- Revenue items:
  - Skyview property – the BOS accepted a bid in the amount of \$260,000 for the sale of the property. The sale will go through the appropriate Town Meeting process.

- Grant opportunities are being actively pursued by the First Selectwoman. She has met with state and federal representatives relative to same. Projects include dams, bridges, and other infrastructure.
- The leasing of the Snack Shack at Cedar Lake.
- The target mill rate for upcoming budget process is 22.35 based on the Grand List.

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT – Cindy reported:

- The BOS has approved a request for personnel (Administrative Asst.) in the Building Dept. and DPW.
- The agreement for a shared Animal Control Officer is being reviewed. Items suggested by the Resident State Trooper will be added to the agreement and there is a possibility that Westbrook may join.
- Cell tower – The contract with Vertical Tower relative to the installation of a cell tower at the town garage is in negotiations. If constructed, the “dead zones” throughout town (downtown, Rte. 154) will be addressed.
- The water line break at CES was immediately addressed. The cost for the repair was approximately \$6,000.00.
- Snack Shack – The agreement to lease the Snack Shack is under review and will be discussed at the next BOS meeting. In the past, the revenue received for the lease, \$500, did not cover maintenance and repairs at the snack shack. The new lease agreement increases the rental to \$2,500 per season. An RFP will be published. The BOS did vote to keep the property as a Snack Shack.
- The N. Main Street reconstruction project will be going out to bid. Funding is approved and in place for the project. A meeting will be scheduled with the neighboring property owners. Property owners will have an option to hook into the sewer system. The timing of the project is under discussion so as not to interfere with the Sunday Market and other events.
- Bonding – various infrastructure projects may be eligible for bonding.
- EV Charging – The Energy Team has funding from DEEP and Eversource for an EV Station. Location of same to be determined. Town funds in the amount of approximately \$18,000 may be required. The Board discussed the potential for revenue from the EV Station.
- 33 Liberty St. has been sold. The owners’ intent is to refurbish the facility into a shared art space. These individuals are also interested in the Chesterfields property. They have met with town officials regarding potential issues with this property. There are concerns with the condition of the property.
- The Park & Rec Boardwalk project will be discussed at the next BOS meeting.
- Funding to promote tourism will be included in the next EDC budget request.

John Chillock made a motion to add to the agenda a discussion on the request for additional staff in the Building/PW departments. Deb Vilcheck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dick Leighton and Cam Evangelisti provided an update on the administrative needs of the Building Dept. and DPW. They requested that the hours of the administrative assistant be increased to full-time (30 hours per week), with benefits. Cam and Dick outlined the duties of the administrative asst and were available to address questions/comments posed by BOF members. The BOS approved this request for increased staffing.

Peter reported that the part-time administrative assistant is currently paid from the PZ Regular Payroll line and would remain in that budget for the current fiscal year. If approved, the funding for this position would be transferred to the Building Dept. budget via the budget process.

On a motion made and duly seconded, the request for increased hours in the PZ Clerical budget was unanimously approved.

Cam Evangelisti requested the approval of additional hours for a Public Works staff member. Cam provided an overview of the increased workload in Public Works including dams, bridges, emergency planning, road work, drainage, etc. He is requesting that these part-time staff member's hours be increased to 25 hours per week (600 hours per year). Peter recommended that funding for this request be transferred from within the PW budget.

This request will be discussed further at a future BOF meeting. No action taken.

#### ARPA TRANSFER – Tree Removal

The BOF discussed the need for funding to address dangerous and dead trees throughout the Town.

John Chillock made a motion to consent and approve an appropriation using the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) in the amount of \$35,730.99 for Tree Removal, to be funded as follows (pending Town Meeting approval):

#### Transfer

From: 30-02-80-0000-803	ARPA – WPCA Sewer Infrastructure	\$25,497.71
From: 30-02-80-0000-809	ARPA – Road Assessment	\$3,000.00
From: 30-02-80-0000-817	ARPA – WPCA Manhole #20	\$11.76
From: 30-02-80-0000-818	ARPA – WPCA Reline Line	\$5,462.12
From: 30-03-80-0000-813	ARPA – Hose. Co. Radio Equipment	\$0.90
From: 30-05-80-0000-800	ARPA – Unassigned	\$1,758.50
To: (TBD)	ARPA – Tree Removal	\$35,730.99

Steve Cline seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### VETERAN'S FLAGS

The Veterans have requested funding in the amount of \$2,329.34 to replace 36 flags at the War Memorial.

Deb Vilcheck made a motion to approve the request for funding in the amount of \$2,329.34 for the purchase of flags as presented (to be funded at a later date). Steve Cline seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### VOTE ON BUDGET SCHEDULE

A copy of the proposed budget schedule was included in the BOF packet. Note that the 5/21 meeting has been changed to 5/28.

Deb Vilcheck made a motion to approve the budget schedule as updated. John Chillock seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The BOF will vote on their Regular Meeting Schedule at the next BOF meeting.

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

- Budget Status – Revenues in Building Permits and Ambulance have realized an increase.
- Police Private Duty will be over by \$60,000.
- WPCA Assessment – additional \$14,000.

Peter reported:

- It is difficult to anticipate the PZ legal line due to the potential for litigation costs.
- The appropriate amount to be budgeted for “reserves” was discussed. The GFOA recommends 16.66% but we may want to increase this due to the potential for storms.
- Grant reimbursements - the Town is due reimbursement from the NRCS Grant for the stream repairs and the 59 Winthrop Road grant.

#### OTHER

Parkers Point Boat Launch – Dick Leighton reported that work will be done “in-house” by Public Works. A portion of the area is under the jurisdiction of the Harbor Commission and another portion is the responsibility of Public Works.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None.

#### ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski  
Clerk