

TOWN OF CHESTER
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

January 8, 2018
Minutes

PRESENT: Arne Jonynas; Heather Chase; Ben Whalen; Lee Gustafson; David Pisha

VISITORS: Shawn Cunningham, Julie Hance; Derek Suursoo

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairman Jonynas.

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

1. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

Derek Suursoo questioned the status of the Budget Committee. The Selectboard explained that Jim Carroll will be at the meeting on February 7 to discuss this topic further.

2. GENERAL FUND BUDGET REVIEW:

The Board discussed that the 2017 surplus came in \$98,000 less than last year which creates an immediate increase to the 2018 budget. In addition, the public works surplus was down \$70,000 as well. Expenses are up \$150,000. David Pisha explained that the switch to accrual accounting may have had an impact on this as well because of the way that delinquent taxes are accounted for. It was discussed that 2018 could be the year where a fund balance policy is adopted and surplus money could be used to establish a reserve.

Currently, the amount to raise in taxes with the current budget is \$273,000. David Pisha provided the Board with a trend line on expense increase since 2009. On average, the budget has increased 2.75%. This year, the increase is 3.8% on expenses. The to-be-collected line has increased by 9%. Derek Suursoo suggested that there needs to be a comparison of actual to actual. David Pisha stated that the reports generated by NEMRC are actual expenses and revenues.

The Board discussed whether or not to present the budget as it stands or review it to see if there are cuts that can be made. The Board agreed to review the budget in detail. Ben Whalen noticed that the State Treasurer line is showing that it hasn't been paid. Discussion ensued regarding the Revitalization line. It was discussed and agreed that the historic facility line can be decreased by \$15,000. Julie Hance explained that \$25,000 will be sufficient to paint and repair the cornice at the Academy Building. In addition, the \$7,500 in Misc. Maintenance will cover the slate repairs. The Board discussed the zoning department and the increase of 11 hours per week. In addition, the SRDC line of \$10,000 is new to the budget, but not new to the tax rate.

Ben Whalen suggested that there be a budget review included in the Town Report that explains all of the changes. The Board agreed that this would be a good idea. David Pisha will prepare for the next meeting. Lee Gustafson questioned if there was an avenue for people to get information emailed to them. He suggested that there be an invitation put on the website and that the town maintain an email list serve.

Heather Chase questioned the increase in the equipment line for the police department. David Pisha will speak with Chief Cloud. Ben Whalen also suggested that the Court Fees Revenue be reviewed to see if they can be increased since the entire CORE budget is being expended. Arne Jonynas emphasized that he would like the cruisers to have different colors that are friendly and more approachable.

Lee Gustafson stated that he has been questioned about why there are 5 full time officers and if they are needed. The Board discussed the history of the officers and that a study was performed several years ago showing that the department was understaffed. In addition, the numbers support the positions.

Derek Suursoo questioned the increase in the fire department salary. Ben Whalen stated that he will explain the fire department budget but will not be voting on the salary line. Ben Whalen stated that the increase in salary line is primarily due to paying for the training time. Ben Whalen stated that the \$10,000 increase is based upon anticipated training hours that members have attended. Arne Jonynas stated that the equipment and equipment maintenance lines are up \$10,000 total as well. Ben Whalen stated that the gas meters have broken which need to be replaced. He further explained the needs of the Fire Department and that basic needs are expensive. Following discussion it was agreed to have David Pisha discuss with the Fire Chief the amount that can be cut from their budget. Lee Gustafson questioned why the utilities line is at \$750 when they expended much less. The same question with the fuel line as well.

Derek Suursoo questioned the transfer from fire to water in the amount of \$20,000. He also noted that this item has not been expended this year. Discussion ensued regarding the reasoning for this transfer. It was explained that this transfer is for there to be contribution by the general fund for fighting fires out of the water district. Derek Suursoo suggested that this number could be reduced. Arne Jonynas suggested that this item should be increased over time as expenses increase. Heather Chase argued the economic development associated with these items. Discussion ensued regarding how this can be measured. The Board agreed to look at this line item and see if it is still needed.

Ben Whalen questioned the administrative assistant position in the ambulance department and if it is still needed since ambulance billing has been moved to the main office. David Pisha explained that there has been a survey done. He will do some more research and review the historic hours of need. It was discussed that this position might be able to be reduced to part time. Heather Chase questioned the lack of increase from Andover for

the ambulance. It was agreed that this should be looked at for 2019. Lee Gustafson questioned the training line and if that could be reduced a little bit more.

Ben Whalen questioned the Calcium Chloride line which shows a budget of \$15,000 but we only expended \$3,000. David Pisha will speak with Graham about this line. In addition, the budget lines for equipment, tools, supplies and town garage maintenance are all underspent significantly.

The Board asked David Pisha to call Springfield and see if the increase can be done over 2 years.

The Board discussed the increases in the recreation department. David Pisha will speak with Matt McCarthy about some items that he can cut. The pool improvement line was not expended this past year and the Board questioned if this line could be cut.

The Board questioned the parks and cemeteries salary line which was significantly underspent. David Pisha will check with Cil Mathews on this. Supplies and equipment were also underspent.

It was noted that the fuel line in the library budget can be reduced to \$5,000 due to the change in furnaces.

Shawn Cunningham noted that the solar panels are covered in snow. David Pisha will call Green Lantern. Lee Gustafson noted that the Cyprus Minerals and Poor Fund are showing no revenue to date.

Discussion ensued regarding the sale of the land to Sunoco. David Pisha will determine if this can be budgeted as a revenue for 2018. The Board also discussed the potential of a reserve fund and how this gets established. It was agreed to discuss this with the auditor.

3. WATER & SEWER BUDGET REVIEW:

David Pisha stated water and sewer are up very little. He noted that the contracted services line comes back to the town through reimbursement.

It was noted that the water department does not show a revenue of \$20,000 coming in from the general fund. The Board again discussed if this transfer needed to be done this year.

4. CAPITAL & BOND PLAN REVIEW:

David Pisha stated that the only item added since the last review was the addition of a hazmat trailer in the amount of \$11,000.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

Heather Chase stated that she would request that the meeting on the 17th be only the budget and warning.

6. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to adjourn. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Julie Hance
Secretary of the Select Board

Ben Whalen
Clerk of the Select Board