

CHAPLIN BOARD OF FINANCE
Chaplin, Connecticut
Remote Regular Meeting Minutes
April 12, 2021

Chairperson Dick Weingart called the remote meeting to order at 7:06 PM and read the procedures. Present were Board members Link Diwan, Doug Dubitsky and Victor Boomer; Alternate Peter Haines. Unable to attend were Board members Jean Lambert and Linda Caron; Alternate Matt Foster and Alternate Bill Jenkins.

3. SEATING OF ALTERNATES: Alternate Peter Haines was seated for Board member Linda Caron.

4. FIRST AUDIENCE FOR CITIZENS: None

5. GUESTS: None

6. ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO AGENDA:

Add to agenda as Item #7a2) – Rescheduling of BOF Public Hearing on the Budget and Annual Town Meeting.

7. REPORTS:

a. Board Member Reports:

1) Selectmen’s monthly meeting:

Dick Weingart reported on the Selectmen’s meeting:

- The BOS voted to endorse the CIP Plan referred by the CIP Committee (done before Mr. Pinto addressed the BOF regarding CIP funding for a fire truck within the next two years).
- A list of grants with allocations for many towns was presented from legislation passed by Congress in March. Chaplin will receive \$221,000 with guidelines for use and how long the town has to use it is still in the works.

Doug Dubitsky reported he spoke to the First Selectman regarding funding for a Fire Truck in the CIP. A large amount was requested due to the \$25,000 per year being set aside found to be inadequate. He suggested a meeting with the Fire Department to discuss what is needed moving forward and draft a proper replacement schedule and proper CIP funding schedule. Dick Weingart reported that Fire Chief Joe Pinto addressed the reasons for the requested funding of \$200,000 towards the purchase of a fire truck at the last BOF budget workshop meeting. There is a report on the depreciation of fixed assets that should include all the equipment for the Fire Department. He suggested the CIP Committee become more active and work on getting the schedules started for the Fire Department, Public Works and elsewhere if needed. Peter Haines asked if it was possible to make adjustments to the CIP to cover the budget deficit from the RD11 Assessment to Chaplin.

2) Reschedule BOF Public Hearing and Annual Town Meeting:

The BOF Public Hearing and Annual Town Meeting will be postponed for 2 weeks (permitted by Executive order) to address the large increase in RD11 Assessment to Chaplin and how to cover the deficit. The Public Hearing will be delayed until May 10th, the Annual Town Budget Meeting will be held on May 24th and a Referendum on the budget will tentatively be held on June 1st. The BOF will need to meet the week of the Referendum to set the Mill Rate.

b. Staff Reports:

- 1) **Finance Department: Review and accept monthly Financial Statements (FY 20-21); identify questions for follow up:**
Motion to accept March Financial Statements, was made by Link Diwan, seconded by Victor Boomer and carried unanimously.
- 2) **BOE/CES:** March reports will be reviewed in May.
- 3) **Tax Collector: Review and accept monthly Tax Collections report (FY 20-21); identify questions for follow up:** No Report
- 4) **Assessor/Treasurer:** No report

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Special meeting - April 5, 2021:

Motion to approve special meeting minutes from April 5, 2021, was made by Peter Haines with the following corrections:

Pg. 1, Members present/not present add - Unable to attend was Board member Doug Dubitsky.

Pg. 1, Item #5a should read – old truck only seats 2 people. This would not support 2 paid firefighters at the station for every shift that might be expected in the future.

Pg. 2, Item #5a should read – Link Diwan asked whether the grant funds could be used for the SCBA Bottles. Dick Weingart suggested the CIP Committee do more work in planning with funding schedule and acquisition/replacement schedule.

Pg. 4, Item #10b under Volunteer Fire Department should read – Heating, Fuel & Propane based on linear projections.

The motion was seconded by Link Diwan and carried with one abstention by Doug Dubitsky.

Dick Weingart addressed some of the items for follow up: Non-Instructional Equipment has been in the CES budget every year and is in the school Library; Backup documentation for the budget is posted online; the Deputy Fire Marshall is Chris Bray.

9. CORRESPONDENCE: None

10. BUDGET WORKSHOP FOR FY 2021-22:

a. Review Board of Education/CES budget for FY 2021-22 and determine response to Board of Education:

Dick Weingart did an analysis on BOE expenditures tracking the original budget with actual spending for the past 5 years. The following budget categories appear to be overbudgeted based on actuals: Electricity, Building Grounds & Maintenance, Heating Oil/Propane and Diesel Fuel. Reducing \$5,000 from each category would be a total potential savings of \$20,000 (Link Diwan presented his analysis with a total potential savings of \$28,556 at the last meeting). Dick Weingart will attend the CES/BOE meeting and present the following: ask about Non-Instructional equipment in the Library and Building Grounds & Maintenance, reduction of \$25,00 to their total budget, and recommend keeping salary increases within a reasonable range and apply across the board with the town and BOE.

b. Review Town Agency Budget requests; identify individual budgets for examination/additional information/adjustment:

A similar analysis was also done on the Town Agency budgets. Dick Weingart suggested possible \$10,000 savings with the Ambulance Service in General Government. Link Diwan suggested possible savings with the Clerical Hourly in the BOS. The Board was asked to review the larger budgets including: General Government, Insurance, and the Board of Selectmen for any additional cost savings. The Board was presented with budget projections from the First Selectman for the following items related to energy:

Building Grounds & Maintenance – increase to Electricity due to using heating from new split system at town hall and future split system at Community Center (will be offset by fuel oil and propane usage), decrease to Heating Fuel/Propane due to using electric heat.

Public Works – decrease to Building Fuel due to increased use of waste oil to heat the building, Telephone decreased to 0 and Cable Internet increased due to internet cable installed in the DPW building and bundled in cable internet.

Police Protection – decrease to Electricity and Heating Propane due to projected usage.

Dick Weingart presented what the budget would look like without taking anything out. The financial impact to the Town would leave the Fund Balance with a reserve of less than 4.25%. The Town could not afford to transfer \$900,000 to the CIP. There is a significant problem when there is an increase to RD11 Assessment that is based on the number of students RD11 is responsible for, causing a projected deficit of \$400,000 in the course of two years. Link Diwan expressed concerns with the cost per pupil being higher for the elementary school than the high school (Doug Dubitsky reported the tuition at UCONN is much lower than both at \$14,406). Chaplin could benefit from RD11 devoting a portion of their General Fund to offset assessments for this coming year.

Dick Weingart presented what the budget would look like if changes discussed earlier were implemented. Doug Dubitsky asked about using the Undesignated Funds. Dick Weingart reported that commitments were made to the England Rd Bridge (\$500,000) and to a Fire Truck (\$200,000) before receiving budget information and RD11 Assessments that created a large deficit. The Undesignated Fund could be used to offset that deficit but it is only part of the solution. The loss of revenue from the Algonquin facility needs to be replaced and raising taxes may be the only solution (no increase in 6 years). Link Diwan and Doug Dubitsky expressed concerns with raising taxes in the middle of a pandemic with so many people out of work and would like to see the mill rate remain constant. Link Diwan and Doug Dubitsky are charged with finding solutions to address the deficit for this year and next year. Peter Haines suggested the following compromise with adjustments to the CIP: decrease funding to the Fire Truck to \$175,000 (add to current balance plus proposed \$100,000 USDA Grant would be enough to purchase new truck), decrease funding to the England Rd Bridge to \$300,000, put off \$25,000 for Senior Center/Library Parking Lot for 2-3 years for a total savings of \$250,000 to offset the deficit plus any additional savings that may be found from reviewing the individual agency budgets.

The remainder of the agenda except Item #11a will be discussed at the next budget workshop meeting.

c. Review Capital Projects Plan

1) FY 2022-2026 CIP Plan as proposed by CIP Committee

2) Review completed CIP projects for potential closure: #3300.13, #3305.22, #3320.1, 3320.12

- d. Consider and act on budget presentation for Public Hearing on April 26, 2021
- e. Consider and act on legal notice for Public Hearing on April 26, 2021
- f. Review BOF Budget Development Calendar for FY 2021-22
- g. Review FY 2021-22 online budget book materials and presentation
- h. Other budget issues for consideration

11. OLD/NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Consider and act on funds transfers and budget line additions/adjustments as requested:

Two special requests were received for the current year for additional expenditures - \$875 for Admin Assistant Salary (increase in hours - 38 to 40) and \$1,500 for Web Development (for better functionality).

- ***Motion to transfer \$875 from the FY 20-21 Contingency line item to #27103 Admin Assistant Salary, was made by Link Diwan, seconded by Peter Haines and carried unanimously.***
- ***Motion to transfer \$1,500 from the FY 20-21 Contingency line item to #28109.5 Web Development, was made by Link Diwan, seconded by Victor Boomer and carried unanimously.***

Another budget workshop meeting is scheduled for next Monday, April 19th at 7pm and the BOS will be invited to attend.

12. AGENDA SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT REGULAR/SPECIAL MEETING:

- a. Regular meeting: Standard meeting agenda
- b. Special meeting(s): FY 2021-22 Budget Workshops

13. TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT REGULAR/SPECIAL MEETING:

- a. Monday, April 19, 2021: Special Meeting Budget Workshop @ 7pm (In Person and Remote Audio/Video)
- b. Monday, May 10, 2021: Budget Public Hearing and Special Meeting @7pm (In Person & Remote Audio/Video)
- c. Monday, May 24, 2021: Annual Town Budget Meeting @7pm Budget for (Remote Audio/Video)
- d. Monday, June 14, 2021: Regular Meeting @7pm (In Person and Remote Audio/Video)

14. ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn (9:35 PM) was made by Link Diwan, seconded by Victor Boomer and carried unanimously.

***Respectfully submitted by Kathleen Scott
Recording Secretary***