

CHAPLIN BOARD OF FINANCE
Chaplin, Connecticut
Budget Public Hearing Minutes
April 24, 2023

Chairperson Dick Weingart called the Budget Public Hearing to order at 7:03 PM. Present were Board members Link Diwan, Linda Caron, Doug Dubitsky and Victor Boomer; Alternate Peter Haines. Others present were First Selectman Juan Roman, Selectman Joe Pinto, CES Board Chair Jaclyn Chancey, Superintendent Ken Henrici, CES Principal Kevin Chavez and Business Manager Jobina Miller. Unable to attend was Board member Bill Jenkins; Alternate Matt Foster and Alternate Izzy Alvarez.

3. READ PUBLIC HEARING LEGAL NOTICE:

Dick Weingart read the Public Hearing Legal Notice that is posted on the town website.

4. REVIEW GROUND RULES FOR PUBLIC HEARING:

Any questions should be directed to Board Chair Dick Weingart.

5. SUMMARY STATEMENT OF BUDGET PROCESS; REVIEW KEY BUDGET POLICIES AND ASSUMPTIONS:

Followed the same budget process as in the past by collecting Town Government Agency budgets in January and compiling into an Excel Workbook in March. The Boards of Education follow a similar process by reviewing a preliminary budget in February, approve a final budget in March, and present their budget to the Board of Finance (information for the RD11 budget is received from the Superintendent and Business Manager). The budget assumes state revenues will be as proposed by the Governor's budget. Projections will be different this year with the Revaluation. Tried to keep the mill rate to a bare minimum increase and the Fund Balance in the 10-14% range (could lose flexibility to react to unexpected events if too low causing the town to spend more money).

6. PRESENTATION OF BOARD OF EDUCATION AND TOWN BUDGETS; AUDIENCE QUESTIONS:

Highlights of the budget include:

- Recommendation for a mill rate increase of 1.85 mills to 36.35 mills (under discussion - need to approve the budget before setting the mill rate).
- Decrease in revenues (\$167,000) and increase in Chaplin assessment for additional students at Parish Hill.
- Total Town Budget increase of 1.50%.

Board of Education Budgets - CES Board Chair Jaclyn Chancey highlighted big changes in the budget that include: increase for Health Insurance, increase for Utilities (heating, cooling, electricity, fuel costs for buses), increase costs for Speech & Language (outsourced – not able to fill the position), change in cost sharing (CES and Parish Hill able to share services through the Central Office compact), higher percentage for the Maintenance Director (30-year-old building needs more attention with HVAC and other issues). Superintendent Henrici added that contractual obligations also play a part with transportation bids coming in higher and fuel costs. Business Manager Jobina Miller reviewed the line items impacted by the changes to the budget.

- Audience member asked about tuition for elementary school (cost per student is \$27,000 including Special Ed).
- Audience member asked about large increase to Central Office and if it was for IT person (IT Director is in Function 2220 with salary and insurance moved to Central Office).
- Link Diwan asked what the split is for the IT Director (shared 80/20 with Parish Hill who also has tech support person) and if any of Parish Hill staff is serving Hampton or Scotland schools (not at this time,

previously shared Hearing & Speech services with Hampton who decided services no longer needed – sharing services through the Central Office enables employing a person full-time).

- Jim Randall noted a tuition increase to \$5,600 for the Barrows Magnet School in yesterday's paper (Superintendent should be notified about any changes).
- Audience member asked if there is any cost savings by combining the IT people (lower salary for tech person - recent graduate who wrote a \$65,000 Security Grant) and asked about the number of staff for IT (IT Director who also serves Parish Hill plus 1 tech person).

Dick Weingart reviewed shared service allocations in the COC budget.

- Warren Church asked how they come up with the percentages and do they change (percentages can change – the Central Office Committee decided to leave the base allocations at 40/60 with changes made as staff is used differently).

Superintendent Henrici presented the RD11 budget with a 2.97% increase (Group Insurance, Utilities, over \$500,000 in Special Ed costs for 3 high need students that moved into the district). The Annual Budget Meeting is on May 1st followed by a Referendum on May 2nd.

Town Agency Budgets – BOF reductions were made to some budgets that were consistently budgeted for more than the actual costs based on historical data. Agencies are expected to manage their budgets and stay within the reduction. Public Works items (vacation, sick) were moved from Employee Costs & Benefits to Public Works. There is a Contingency Fund that the Board of Finance can consider using for unanticipated expenses (\$25,000 for General, \$7,500 for Salary). Total BOF reductions were \$34,500.

Total Town Expenditures (Government Operations, CIP & Debt Service, Education) increased 1.50% overall.

CIP Plan – Projects for FY 2023-24 include: Public Safety - Firefighter Gear; Public Works - design for the Bedlam Road Bridge (state funded 50/50), start-up costs for England Road Bridge (100% federally funded), Road Maintenance, Tree Removal, Equipment Replacement, Drainage Rehabilitation, Vehicle Replacement (new plow truck); BOE - funding to temporarily address Pump House issues.

- Irene Schein suggested moving a little closer to 10% for the Unassigned Fund Balance to bring a lower increase to the mill rate (will be further reductions in Algonquin and in the process of the Revaluation with higher real estate values).

7. ANNOUNCE TIME AND PLACE OF FUTURE MEETINGS:

- May 1, 2023: Budget posted for Chaplin Annual Town Budget Meeting
- May 1, 2023: RSD11 Annual Budget Meeting
- May 2, 2023: RSD11 Budget Referendum
- May 8, 2023: Chaplin Annual Town Budget Meeting
- May 16, 2023: Chaplin Town Budget Referendum
- May 23, 2023: BOF Special Meeting to Set Mill Rate

8. ADJOURN PUBLIC HEARING: The Public Hearing adjourned at 8:31 PM.

*Respectfully submitted by Kathleen Scott
Recording Clerk*