

CHAPLIN BOARD OF FINANCE
Chaplin Town Hall
Chaplin, Connecticut
Special Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2025

Chair Dick Weingart called the meeting to order at 6:07 PM. Board members present: Link Diwan, Linda Caron, Jeremiah Rufini, Victor Boomer, Alternate Peter Haines. Others present: First Selectman Juan Roman, Finance Manager Val Garrison, Town Clerk Shari Smith, Republican Registrar Gene Boomer, Democratic Registrar Chris Komuves, Ryan Perry, Blake Rufini. Absent: Bill Jenkins, Alternate Matt Foster, Alternate Izzy Alvarez.

3. SEATING OF ALTERNATES: Alternate Peter Haines seated for Bill Jenkins.

4. FIRST AUDIENCE FOR CITIZENS: None

5. GUESTS: Budget Presentations

a. Budgets from invited agencies

1) Mr. Gene Boomer, Registrar and Ms. Shari Smith, Town Clerk:

Registrars – Early voting approved by statewide vote last year with cost involved for extra time - received \$17,500 in grants (used all for early voting with no grant funding for this year). Increases (includes early voting) for Registrars, Election Hire, Conference/Dues, Election Expenses, Legal Notices (required to publish in English and Spanish), Training Certification (new Tabulators).

- Chris Komuves noted not being consulted on the budget prior to this meeting – most of the budget seems reasonable.
- Gene Boomer noted the Town sent emails regarding the budget with the deadline. Haven't seen Mr. Komuves since the election - moved forward with the budget in January to meet the deadline (didn't contact because not sworn in as Registrar).
- Link Diwan asked how many years of grant funding in the past (only this year for early voting), expressed the need to bring in more visibility with paperwork for grants (*Add to Action Items*), and asked about increase in time for early voting (process includes putting ballots in sealed envelope, logged with date and signature before putting in ballot box that is taken to the vault end of day - talking about new machines that will accept ballots).
- Juan Roman noted early voting mandated by the State with Town responsible for funding (legislation working on reducing number of days).
- Dick Weingart noted all grants recorded as they come in with information not asked for previously, and asked what's included in Election Expenses (food, programing memory cards, stickers).
- Chris Komuves commented on early voting that applies to elections, not referendums (Gene presented letter from the State that referendums held in same manner as elections).
- Peter Haines suggested thinking about resolved NECCOG assistance with grants and report for all current grants for budget time.

Town Clerk – increases for Salary (2.5%), Copier Supplies, Land Records (scanned and stored online), Legal Notices (required to publish in English and Spanish), Office Supplies, Postage. Shari would like to take additional courses for points towards Master Town Clerk certification (about \$300 – Dick suggested adding documentation and cost to the budget).

- Dick Weingart asked about significant increase in Assistant line (includes \$4,000 approved by the Board – add to current budget).

b. Mr. Juan Roman III with the Chaplin Board of Selectmen Budget Presentation:

1) Review and discussion of Board of Selectmen proposed budgets for FY 2025-26:

General Government (mostly contractual) – increases for Ambulance Assessment, NECCOG Animal Control, Eastern Highlands Health District, Liability Insurance, Municipal Agent for the Elderly (2.5% - BOS approved 2.5% increase across the board for all Town personnel), Town Administrator (waiting for contract), Paramedics, Probate Court; **Board of Selectmen** – increases for Salary (2.5%), Legal Notices (required to print in 2 languages – State trying to rectify with census classified incorrectly), Mileage; **Building, Grounds Maintenance** – Grounds Maintenance/Mowing (out to bid – bid openings next week); increases for Cemetery Stipend (2.5%) and Telephone; working on Cable/Internet (waiting on cost for Fiber Optic) and Electricity; **Building Official** – contractual increase (shared service with Town of Windham); **Burning Official** – increase for Salary (2.5%); **Community & Economic Development** – increase for Workshops, looking for Clerk to help move forward; **Employee Fringe Benefits & Costs** – increases for Annuity Match, Life Insurance (contractual for PW), DOT Physicals, Longevity Bonus; working on Social Security; **Fire Marshal** – increase for Salary (2.5%); **Public Works (mostly contractual)** – increases for Salary, Snow Removal, Engineering/Tech Assistance (shared service with NECCOG), Equipment Maintenance, Fuel, Infrastructure (culverts need repair); **Sanitation** – contractual increase (4% - looking into shared service); **Tax Collector** – contractual increase (Town of Windham Contract); **Town Memberships** – increases for Dial-a-Ride, United Social & Mental, NECCOG; **Transfer Station** – increase for Salary (2.5%) - Assistant covered by PW as needed; **Treasurer** – increase for Salary; **Tree Warden** – increase for Salary (2.5%), **Vital Statistics** – increase for Salary (2.5%).

- Link Diwan would like to see shared services with the school and bring IT Coordinator to the Town (IT Coordinator works for the region - would have to negotiate with the Superintendent) and asked if increase across the board applies to the Treasurer (applies to every position in Town).
- Juan Roman noted Reval in 2 places (Assessor's budget and CIP).
- Dick Weingart asked what Legal Notices come from BOS (Town Meetings, job postings, contracts to go out).

2) Review selected Board of Selectmen FY 2024-25 financial reports for March (any accounts over budget): None

c. Budgets from other invited agencies:

Rec Commission Chair and Senior Center Director invited to come in next week (will also invite Fire Dept.).

6. ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None

7. REPORTS

a. Board Member reports:

1) Selectmen's monthly meeting:

- Discussed upcoming CIP requests (how to deal with NECCOG contract for Reval).
- Health Insurance costs went down (expected to go up with Anthem increase).
- Change in the way motor vehicles valued resulted in significant decrease in Grand List. Legislation passed recently to give Towns option to change depreciation schedule (would increase Grand List about 5%).

2) FY 2023-24 Annual Report:

a) Consider and act on approval of FY 2023-24 Annual Report:

Peter Haines presented BOF report (add Jeremiah Rufini to list of members and reason for additional appropriation – federal audit) – waiting for Treasurer's report.

b. Staff reports:

1) Finance Dept.: Review and accept monthly Town Financial Statements (FY24-25); identify issues for followup:

Revenues on track. Expenses: Board of Selectmen – Mileage overbudget (tracking overall); Building Inspector – no charges posted (Town of Windham Contract); Employee Benefits & Cost - Life Insurance overbudget; Library - Assistant II overbudget (tracking overall); Public Works - Snow Removal and Safety Clothing overbudget (tracking overall); Registrars – overbudget; Senior Center - Assistant overbudget (tracking overall); Fire Department - New Equipment and Maintenance Contract overbudget; Zoning Board of Appeals - overbudget.

- Jeremiah Rufini asked if Town liable for Public Benefit with electricity (Public Health included).
- Dick Weingart suggested Other Income/Expense could be used to show and track grants.

Motion to accept February 2025 Town Financial Statements, made by Link Diwan, seconded by Victor Boomer and carried unanimously.

- 2) **BOE/CES: Review and accept monthly CES Financial Statements (FY24-25); identify questions for followup:** No Report
- 3) **Tax Collector: Review and accept monthly Tax Collections report (FY24-25); identify questions for followup:** Tax Collections at 97.1% through February 2025.
Motion to accept February 2025 Tax Collections Report, made by Link Diwan, seconded by Victor Boomer and carried unanimously.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **Regular/Special meeting(s) - March 3, 2025:** Tabled

9. CORRESPONDENCE: None

10. BUDGET WORKSHOP FOR FY 2025-26

- a. **Review updated FY 2025-26 budget calendar:** March 17th BOF Meeting at 6pm (Senior Center).
- b. **Continue review of PRELIMINARY FY 2026-30 CIP Plan and determine potential available funding:** Next CIP meeting March 13th. Reviewed projects – **General Government** – Bicentennial Celebration (complete - repurpose funds); **Public Safety** – SCBA Bottles and Vehicle Replacement (needs further review); **Public Works** – North Bear Hill Bridge (complete – repurpose funds), Library/Senior Center Roof (check status to repurpose funds), Pumpkin Hill Bridge and South Bear Hill Bridge (needs further review), Senior Center Parking Lot Paving (Grant funding – engineers developing plan); **BOE** – Pump House Repairs and Upgrades and Secondary Electrical Room Upgrades (check status to repurpose funds if approved by BOE), Roof Replacement (determine financing outside the CIP Plan).

- Juan Roman asked the Board to consider moving \$64,000 from North Bear Hill Bridge to Bedlam Road Bridge (50/50) - requires all funding up front before being reimbursed.

Total requests - \$610,998 with \$38,823 from LOCIP, \$84,627 from repurposed funds, \$35,000 from Reserved Account for BOE Heating Pump & Controls. Looked at funds available from Unassigned Fund Balance (to keep at 10%, \$325,000 could potentially be used for CIP – would need to reduce requests).

Tabled remainder of agenda.

- c. **Continue review of FY 2025-26 CES and RSD11 preliminary budgets and identify questions for BOE**
- d. **Review of updated DRAFT FY 2025-26 State and local revenue estimates**
- e. **Review of FY 2025-26 DRAFT Chaplin assessment percentage for RSD11 budget**
- f. **Review of FY 2025-26 General fund budgets, parameters, and schedule**
- g. **Discuss Potential BOF CIP meeting with Fire Department, Public Works, or Chaplin Elementary School**
- h. **Other Necessary budget business**

11. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

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

- b. Consider and act on the FY 2024-25 mill rate differential (0.25 mills) funds transfer to a Restricted General Fund account**
- c. Review action items from previous meetings – see minutes**
- d. Review and update BOF Annual Activity/Project Calendar – FY 2023-24 & 2024-25**

12. CONTINUING BUSINESS

- a. Review Board goals and policies for FY 2024-25:** All items moved to followup section of meeting minutes

13. SECOND AUDIENCE FOR CITIZENS

14. AGENDA SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT REGULAR/SPECIAL MEETING

- a. Special meeting(s): Budget workshop agenda**
 - 1) Board of Education budget presentation**
 - 2) Potential agency budget presentations**

15. TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT REGULAR/SPECIAL MEETINGS:

- a. Thursday, Mar. 13, 2025: CIP Committee Meeting @6:30pm (Senior Center)**
- b. Monday, March 17, 2025: Special Meeting @6pm (Senior Center) – Board of Education budget presentation**
- c. Monday, March 24, 2025: Special Meeting @6pm (Town Hall) – Budget review**
- d. Monday, March 31, 2025: Special Meeting @6pm (Town Hall) – Budget review**

Action Items:

- Review Board goals and policies for FY 2024-25:
- 1) Board policies and Board Member handbook.
 - a) Revise BOE Non-Lapsing Carryover Account: Revise to reflect change of Bank, G/F accounts, format.
 - b) Revise Board of Finance organizational documents and Bylaws.
 - c) General Fund: Policy on Unreserved & Unassigned percentage of budget and other factors.
 - d) CIP Fund: Policy on budget amount and new projects (when can be added and cost documentation).
 - e) Policy for dissemination of Personal Information of Board Members.
- Draft Memo Template for Agencies that are near budget.
- Funding for CES Roof Replacement.
- Put funds collected in excess in restricted account for sole purpose to offset next year's budget to lower the mill rate.
- Check general item for Grant Funding that could be used to offset General Fund expenditures.
- Contact Treasurer about presentation by a Berkshire Bank representative.
- Chaplin Elementary Food Service Account.
- Fixed Assets – Public Works only.
- Highlight grant funding in the Budget and Annual Report.
- Bring in more visibility with paperwork for grants.

16. ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn (9:09 PM) made by Link Diwan, seconded by Victor Boomer and carried unanimously.

***Respectfully submitted by,
Recording Clerk Kathleen Scott***