

CHAPLIN BOARD OF FINANCE
Chaplin, Connecticut
Public Hearing Minutes
April 13, 2015

Chairperson Dick Weingart opened the Public Hearing at 7:10 PM. Present were Board members, Bruce Raymond, Jean Lambert and Doug Dubitsky. Unable to attend was Board members Diana Fiasconaro and Marc Johnson.

3. READ PUBLIC HEARING LEGAL NOTICE:

Dick Weingart read the Public Hearing Legal Notice that was published April 4th to present the Town Government and Board of Education Budget for FY 2015-2016.

4. GROUND RULES FOR PUBLIC HEARING:

The meeting is informal and any questions are to be directed to Board Chair Dick Weingart or Board Vice-Chair Bruce Raymond.

5. SUMMARY STATEMENT OF BUDGET PROCESS:

• REVIEW KEY BUDGET POLICIES AND ASSUMPTIONS:

Budget requests were received with no decisions made. Documentation was requested for new initiatives and programs. The budget requests were reviewed in March with each agency and the Chaplin Board of Education. The mill rate is projected to stay the same at 35.05.

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

Superintendent Henrici presented the Chaplin Board of Education budget with a 3.9% increase that is fiscally responsible. The budget was reviewed for actual expenditures to maximize efficiency. Fixed costs are contractual salaries and health insurance. Magnet school tuition is hard to project and includes a surcharge of \$7,000 for special education. Oil was locked in at \$2.25/gal. Enrollment has remained stable.

- Chris Komuves asked for magnet school breakdown. Superintendent Henrici reported there are 12 students (includes 2 special education) predicted with the addition of 4th grade for next year.
- Jim Randall asked if heating oil savings and paper goods are shared with Parish Hill. Superintendent Henrici reported that oil is locked in for Parish Hill and paper goods and custodial supplies are shared through the EASTCONN consortium.
- Amy Ouimette asked if the education budget will go to a town vote. Dick Weingart reported that the education budget usually goes to a referendum but is not segregated from the town budget.
- Bev Young asked how much propane is used. Dick Weingart reported that propane is used by the cafeteria with no significant impact to the budget.
- Doug Dubitsky asked for clarification on special education that is most of the budget increase. Superintendent Henrici reported that the increase includes funds for an outplaced student who just moved out of the district. Funds were kept in the budget due to the potential for the student to return or if another student moves to the district. The annual cost is approximately \$170,000 with reimbursement from the state (approximately \$26,000 this year).
- Heather Zevetchin suggested funds from a retiring teacher be used to cover staffing cuts and asked when special education cost for outplaced student (that moved out of the district) would be allocated. Superintendent Henrici reported that the budget reflected the retiring teacher. The 1.2 reduction was 1.0 FTE (staff position reflected through shifting staff) and .2 reduction in speech services. The budget will be reviewed at the end of the school year for any necessary adjustments. Dick Weingart reported that the Board of Finance can change the BOE budget but once the budget is approved at referendum, it is solely managed by the Board of Education.
- Jim Randall asked for clarification on the nursing services. Superintendent Henrici reported that nursing services are not contracted out and every school is required by law to have a health advisor.

- Superintendent Henrici reported summary of the RD11 budget that has an increase of 0.96%. Significant costs include health insurance, magnet school tuition and outplaced students. Enrollment is decreasing with an increase in revenues that includes: tuition from 9 Windham students (\$7,500 per student) and 2 special education students. There is no additional staff. Two retirements and two teachers leaving have been replaced with staff at a lower rate. Technology is shared with Chaplin Elementary .6 for Parish Hill/.4 for Chaplin Elementary.
- Jim Randall asked how many 7th grade students are from Chaplin. Superintendent Henrici reported that there are 17 students.

Superintendent Henrici presented assessment cost comparison by town. The RD11 BOE approved \$200,000 from the fund balance to offset assessments.

Dick Weingart presented the town budget. \$125,000 was added to the CIP for road maintenance due to a rough winter and approximately \$26,000 was added to Public Works for a new truck. The projected fund balance is 12% and expected to be 11.5% for 2015-16. First Selectman Bill Rose suggested maintaining the fund balance between 8-10% and use the funds to reduce the mill rate or put towards infrastructure. The following agencies have remained level funded: Accountant, Animal Control Services, Assessor, Building Inspector, Burning Official, Conservation Commission, Fire Marshall, Historic District Commission, Inland/Wetlands, Chaplin Library, Registrars Elections & Primaries, Tree Warden, Vital Statistics, Volunteer Fire Department, Zoning Board of Appeals.

General Government – decrease

Board of Assessment Appeals – increase for supplies

Board of Finance – decrease for the audit

Board of Selectmen – includes budget request for merit increase to the Administrative Assistant's salary

Building, Grounds & Maintenance – increase

Emergency Preparedness – increase for equipment

Employee Benefits & Costs – decrease for change in health insurance options

Planning & Zoning – includes increase request to Zoning Officer compensation

Police Protection – budgeted at 100% pending approval of the Governor's budget

Public Works – increase for fuel

Recreation – increase for events and programs and new recreation director

Sanitation – increase for fees

Senior Center – increase for new assistant cook, maintenance supplies; salary increase

Tax Collection Services – decrease

Town Clerk – includes request for merit increase

Town Memberships – increase for programs that service the needy and WINCOG

Transfer Station – increase for haulage

Town Treasurer – decrease due to reduction in the number of hours required for the position

Town Contingency Account – to cover potential salary increase

- Chris Komuves asked about the average interest for the fund balance as Treasury Bonds are over 2% and internet service for the State Trooper. Treasurer Andrew Daniels reported that it is an average of .15%. First Selectman Bill Rose reported that internet service is required for the position. He also suggested budgeting 70% for the trooper program. Doug Dubitsky reported that many towns may drop the program if approved at 100% due to increased costs. Gene Boomer expressed concern with police protection if the program is cut. He also suggested looking at ways to spend unallocated funds.
- Jim Randall asked for clarification on funding for bridge repair and overtime for the State Trooper. First Selectman Bill Rose reported that authorization was received to move STEAP grants and additional

- grants will be applied for. The overtime for the trooper program is for school events and charged to the respective school.

7. ANNOUNCE TIME AND PLACE OF FUTURE MEETINGS:

- May 11th is the Annual Town Meeting at 7pm with a potential referendum to follow on Monday, May 18th.
- RD11 will hold a Public Hearing on May 4th followed by a referendum on May 5th from 12-8pm at each town's respective polling place.

8. ADJOURN PUBLIC HEARING:

The Public Hearing adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Minutes will be approved at the next regular meeting.

*Respectfully submitted by Kathleen Scott
Recording Secretary*