

TOWN OF CHAPLIN, MINUTES OF APRIL 27, 2026 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Approximately 30 electors and those authorized to vote at Town Meeting assembled at the Annual Town Budget Meeting on April 27, 2026, at 7:00 P.M. at the Chaplin Senior Center, 132 Chaplin Street, Chaplin, Connecticut. Also present were Selectman James Harrington and Selectwoman Leslie Ricklin, Board of Finance members, Chairman Richard Weingart, member Michael O'Neil and Jeremiah Rufini, Town Administrator Mary Calorio, Regional District 11 Superintendent Andrew Skarzynski, Chairwoman Stacy Foster and business manager Jobina Miller, Chaplin Elementary School Chairwoman Jaclyn Chancey and members William Hooper, Eugene V. Boomer, Jr. and Victor Boomer, Library Director Sandra Horning-Kane. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the following business was transacted:

1) The Town Clerk called the meeting to order at 7:04 P.M., read the call and opened the floor for nominations to elect a Moderator. Eugene V. Boomer, Jr. /Ellen Gillon moved/seconded to nominate Irene Schein. Hearing no further nomination, Irene Schein was declared Moderator and read each item on the call as it arose.

2) To nominate and elect to the Regional Board of Education of Regional District 11 one member for a full term of three years to commence July 1, 2026; Chairwoman Foster/Juan Sanchez moved/seconded to nominate Ellen Gillon. Hearing no other nominations, Ellen was elected to the Regional District 11 Board of Education for the term commencing July 1, 2026.

3) Whereas the Town is applying for Local Capital Improvement Grant Funds: therefore, to resolve to approve the CIP plan for FY 2027-2031 (on file with the Town Clerk). Robert Dubos/Juan Sanchez moved/seconded to approve the CIP plan. Chairman Weingart reviewed the proposed Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) totaling \$814,350. He noted that in previous years, CIP projects have been funded with money from the general fund, however the general fund is currently operating without a surplus and cannot continue this practice. The Board of Finance intends to transfer \$150,000 from general tax revenue into the CIP as a down payment to be used for project as needs arise.

Selectman Harrington explained that DPW will roll over certain funds from the prior fiscal year to support ongoing projects. The Lynch Road reclamation project is expected to be funded through a federally funded Transportation Rural Improvement Program (TRIP) grant. Selectman Harrington also noted that Chaplin will enter a new interlocal agreement with the Town of Mansfield for tax collection and assessor services, replacing the current arrangement with Windham. Some of the cost for this will be funded through Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPIP) grants. Chaplin will also terminate the Windham IT arrangement and pursue a new IT services contract with NOVIS to provide a more secure infrastructure for municipal computer systems. The Town will use \$35,000 from the museum relocation fund to cover related DPW expenses.

The Moderator called for a vote to approve the CIP plan for FY 2027-2031. 27 yes, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions. The vote to approve the CIP plan passed.

4) To receive and approve the Annual Town Budget for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2026-June 30, 2027 in the amount of \$10,465,496 as submitted by the Board of Finance and to appropriate the funds required; (contingent on asterisk *). *At their meeting held on April 14, 2026, the Board of Selectmen voted, pursuant to CGS § 7-7, that item # 4 of the Call of the Annual Town Meeting be submitted to a referendum vote to be held on Tuesday, May 5 2026 at the Chaplin Firehouse, 106 Phoenixville Road (Rte. 198) in said Chaplin from 12:00 Noon to 8:00 P.M. The question on the ballot label at said referendum shall read as follows: "Shall the Town of Chaplin appropriate the sum of \$10,465,496 for the General Government, Chaplin Elementary School, and the Town's proportionate share of Regional School District 11 for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 as recommended by the Board of Finance?" Voters approving said question will vote "Yes" and those opposing said question will vote "No".

Town Administrator Mary Calorio gave a historical overview of Chaplin's grand list, noting that in years where a revaluation happens, property values increase which changes the mill rate.

Another factor to consider is the recent change in the way the State values motor vehicles (from market value to a depreciation method based on Manufactures Suggested Retail Price-MSRP), and a State mill rate cap on motor vehicle tax of 32.46. Once the legislative mill rate cap is reached, the rest of the motor vehicle tax burden is borne by real estate and personal property tax. Administrator Calorio also noted that there will be no proposed use this year from the General Unassigned Fund Balance for Capital Improvement Projects, because the fund is currently at 10% which is the lowest it should go. Capital Projects will have an appropriation of 150,000 from our property tax revenue. The overall net increase to General Government is 4.14%, Chaplin Elementary School Education budget is proposing a 3.20% net increase. Chaplin's portion of the RD 11 budget has declined slightly due to a decrease in student enrollment. There will be a mill rate increase for Real Estate & Personal Property 1.807% to a mill rate of 33.182, and an increase of 1.085% to a rate cap of 32.46 for motor vehicle tax. The largest portion of revenue, 79%, will come from property taxes. For Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grants, the State's base number for student reimbursement is at 11k and this base formula has not changed since 2013. There is a push for the State to at least keep up with inflation. The State has not done that, but every year has shifted the cost being borne onto property taxes. Rural districts have a different cost value – an intrinsic additional/stronger costs value than cities do. It is required to have the same certain positions in a small school as those of larger schools. We as rural districts tend to get penalized because we have a smaller enrollment. For overall expenditures, the Elementary School is 41% of expenditures, RD 11 is 35% and Town Government Operations is 22%. Most of the 22% is spent on Town Operations followed by Public Works, Employee Benefits and Public Safety. There are increases to the Registrar of Voters budget due to new State requirements relating to early voting. There are also increases in Ambulance Service, Animal Control, Town Administrator, Interlocal Agreement for Assessor/Tax Collector and Volunteer Fire Department contracts. To avoid making cuts to direct programming, the Board of Selectmen opted to decrease their salaries. Several other departments also made cuts to their budgets. The Town Clerk and Treasurer both had a \$1,000 increase in their salaries.

Resident Patricia Pogmore asked, regarding the cost of healthcare insurance for Board of Education and municipal employees, if there has been use of State Partnership Plan - insurance pooling programs. Chaplin's employees who are in unions have shifted over to these plans. Super Intendent Skarzynski mentioned that the school's plans are already cheaper than the State's plan, so they did not join.

Republican Registrar of Voters Eugene V. Boomer, Jr. wanted to make clear that the Board of Finance decreased to the ROV proposed budget by \$7,725. He feels this may result in the budget going over at the end of the year. The ROV budget was over by about \$10,000 last year. Chairman Weingart replied that for the past few years our town budget referenda have failed multiple times and feels that budgeting high is preparing for the worst-case scenario. He is hoping that we will not have multiple budget referenda this year.

Chairman Weingart mentioned that Administrator Calorio is the president of Connecticut Council of Small Towns and sits on Governor Lamont's Blue-Ribbon Panel on Child Care. He thanked the former and current Board of Selectmen for entering our Town into the Regional Administrator program and stated that Administrators Calorio and Lumpkins are representing Chaplin and the Town's needs very well.

The Moderator called for a motion to adjourn. Chairwoman Chancey/ BOE member Hooper moved/seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 P.M..

Respectfully submitted,

Shari Smith, Chaplin Town Clerk