

TOWN OF CHAPLIN
MINUTES OF ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
Monday, May 12, 2025

Approximately 35 electors and those authorized to vote at Town Meeting assembled at the Annual Town Budget Meeting on May 12, 2025, at 7:00 P.M. at the Chaplin Senior Center, 132 Chaplin Street, Chaplin, Connecticut. Also present were Selectman Juan Roman, III, Board of Finance members, Chairman Richard Weingart, Linda Caron, Peter Haines, Attorney Susan Johnson (standing in for Town Attorney Dennis O'Brien), Regional District 11 Superintendent Andrew Skarzynski, Chairwoman Stacy Foster and business manager Jobina Miller, Chaplin Elementary School Principal Kevin Sanchez, Chairwoman Jaclyn Chancey and member Eugene V. Boomer, Jr., Public Works Supervisor David Stone. The following business was transacted:

1) The Town Clerk called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M., read the call and opened the floor for nominations to elect a Moderator. Selectman Roman/BOF Chairman Weingart 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) Update on the Connectivity sidewalk project. Selectman Roman gave an overview of the project to run a new sidewalk from the Library / Senior Center Complex to the Town Hall. He noted that we have received \$754,000 in funding from the State and have engaged with a design team, the Library Board of Directors, Senior Center Director, Historic District Commission and DPW Supervisor Stone for their input. He noted that Supervisor Stone has done a lot of work meeting with Frontier Communications, Eversource and contractors regarding moving poles to be able to get the project done. He noted that the project plans will be posted to the website once completed and encouraged residents ask questions and give their input.

3) Update on the Arboretum extension at the 198 side of Town Hall. Selectman Roman explained that the area between Route 198 and the Town Hall had diseased trees which were identified by the Town Arborist David Stone. The State Department of Public Works was already scheduled to remove many of the trees due to a repaving project. The Town took advantage of that opportunity and cleaned up the rest of the area. The area is now in the hands of the Town's Arboretum Commission. They are making it into a second phase of the existing arboretum in Garrison Park. He is very encouraged by their plans and feels it will be a nice addition to our Town.

4) Update on the opening of the England Road Bridge. Selectman Roman said the bridge will open at the end of May or beginning of June. The contractor worked through the winter months, the bridge looks great, and he is very excited to have the bridge open again.

5) Public Hearing and possible action on further amending **"An Ordinance Amending the Date of the Annual Budget Meeting"** enacted by Town Meeting on April 28, 1997, to change the date of the Annual Town Budget Meeting from the second Monday of May to the last Monday of April.

Reasons:

1. To permit scheduling just one simultaneously held budget referendum for the Town, Chaplin Elementary School, and the RSD11/Parish Hill Middle/High School budgets.

2. To save costs of a second referendum every year and to facilitate voter turnout.

The Town Clerk read aloud the proposed ordinance, and the Moderator called for a motion to adopt the ordinance. Selectman Roman/Robert Dubos moved/seconded. Superintendent Scarzynski explained that the date of the RD 11 budget referendum is set by statute. Chairman Weingart explained that we are not moving the date of the RD 11 referendum, we are moving the date of the Town referendum so that they will be on the same day. Selectman Roman explained that there will be two questions on the ballot, one for the RD 11 budget and one for the Town and Chaplin Elementary School budget. It has not yet been decided if the Town and Elementary School budget will be broken out into two questions.

The Moderator called for a vote to approve the Ordinance Amending the Date of the Annual Budget Meeting. 33 yes, 0 opposed, 2 abstentions. The vote to approve the ordinance passed.

6) 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, 2025; Chairwoman Foster/Chairwoman Chancey moved/seconded to nominate Hayley Tiller-Albersen. Hearing no other nominations, Hayley was elected to the Regional District 11 Board of Education for the term commencing July 1, 2025.

Hayley explained that she has been on the CES BOE and the RD 11 BOE since last October. She is a licensed clinical social worker and has much experience, both personal and professional, working with kids concerning special education and mental health. Chairwoman Foster commented that Hayley has been a very actively involved and an excellent addition to the RD 11 Board of Education.

7) Whereas the Town is applying for Local Capital Improvement Grant Funds: therefore, to resolve to approve the CIP plan for FY **2026-2030** (on file with the Town Clerk). Selectman Roman / Chairwoman Foster moved/seconded. Chairman Weingart gave an overview of the CIP plan, noting that there is money set aside under General Government to pay for the revaluation, under Public Safety for new SCBA bottles (self-contained breathing apparatus), firefighter gear replacement, upfit 2022 Ford Truck-Forestry, Trident Air Prime System and UTV water tank & pump. Under Public Works there is money set aside for road maintenance, tree removal, equipment and vehicle replacement and for DPW facility & vehicle communications and under the Chaplin Board of Education there is money set aside for the heating pump and controls. Chairman Weingart explained that to pay for these expenses, he expects to receive funds from LoCIP, from transfers from existing CIP accounts, from General Fund reserved accounts, and from the General Fund Unassigned Fund balance. Chairman Weingart explained that the money to pay for last years and this year's CIP plan is funded from reserve accounts, and no money is coming out of the current budget, but we will not be able to do this again next year. Former Selectman William H. Rose asked how we will fund CIP next year if we do not tap into the General Fund? Will it be an increase in the Grand List or other income, a reduction in the budget or an increase in taxes? Chairman Weingart answered that it may be a combination of these things but there is not a definite plan in place at this moment. Selectman Roman added that we are currently pursuing grants through the Urban Act that will help with some of the road repairs and that could relieve the burden on CIP.

The Moderator called for a vote to approve the CIP plan for FY **2026-2030**. 34 yes, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions. The vote to approve the CIP plan passed.

8) To receive and approve the Annual Town Budget for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026 in the amount of **\$10,275,578** as submitted by the Board of Finance and to appropriate the funds required; (contingent on asterisk *).

*At their meeting held on May 1, 2025, the Board of Selectmen voted, pursuant to CGS § 7-7, that item #8 of the Call of the Annual Town Meeting be submitted to a referendum vote to be held on Tuesday, May 20, 2025 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 \$10,275,578 for the General Government and local Education Expenditures for Fiscal Year July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026 as recommended by the Board of Finance?”

Voters approving said question will vote “Yes” and those opposing said question will vote “No”.

Absentee ballots for the May 20, 2025 referendum shall be available as provided by law to persons applying to the office of the Town Clerk. Copies of the proposed Annual Town Budget are available for inspection in the Office of the Town Clerk and online at chaplintown.org.

Chairman Weingart talked about the budget pointing out that there is a 4.36% increase from last year in the amount of \$428,995. The tax increase this year is higher than the actual budget increase because we must make up for lost tax revenue due to two factors. The Town has lost tax revenue because the Connecticut Legislature has changed the way motor vehicles are valued and taxed. Motor vehicles used to be taxed based on the NADA or Blue Book value and now motor vehicles are valued on the manufacturer’s suggested retail price. Our Grand List has dropped by about 2 million dollars because of this. Also, because the Algonquin pipeline is in the final year of its ten-year depreciation schedule, which also lowers the Grand List. Total revenues are projected to be \$10,150,472 and expenditures of \$10,275,578 which leaves a deficit of \$125,106, half of which will offset from a Reserve Account transfer of \$62,739 which is from an excess tax collection of .25 mills from last year.

Chairman Weingart explained that the first RD 11 referendum failed and that a vote to approve a budget now, knowing that there will be a second RD 11 referendum with a reduced budget figure, is authorization to spend a certain amount of the appropriated funds, but not a requirement to spend the total amount of appropriated and approved funds. If the funds are not spent, they will go back into the General Fund. The Board of Finance can wait to set the mill rate and set it for only what needs to be collected to cover any reduced assessments.

Warren Church asks how the town handles investing funds? Chairman Weingard explained that the treasurer invests the Town’s funds. The State provides guidelines and has an investment “vehicle” plan that most of our money is invested in.

Ann Chuck asked if we would consider adding an advisory question to our ballot referring to if the budget figure is too high or too low. The town clerks explained that it is too late for this referendum because ballots have already been issued.

9) To appropriate and transfer for fiscal year **2025-26** an amount not to exceed **\$352,078** from the General Fund Unassigned Fund Balance to the CIP Fund for the following project(s):

a) Project # 3305.4 – Road Maintenance **(\$268,675).**

b) Other projects per approved CIP Plan **(\$84,030).**

Selectman Roman/Peter Haines moved/seconded.

It was discovered that the amount of \$352,078 to transfer is incorrect and should be the amount of \$268,675 + \$84,030 which is \$352,705.

Selectman Roman / Peter Kegler moved/seconded to amend the motion from \$352,078 to \$352,705.

The Moderator called for a vote to approve the amendment. 36 yes, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions. The vote to approve the appropriation and transfer passed.

Selectman Roman/Chairwoman Foster moved/seconded to approve the transfer in the new amount of \$352,705.

The Moderator called for a vote to appropriate and transfer the funds in the amount of \$352,705. 34 yes, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions. The vote to approve the appropriation and transfer passed.

10) To appropriate and transfer for fiscal year 2025-2026 an amount not to exceed **\$35,000** from the General Fund Restricted Account #10701.10 BOE Non-Lapsing Unexpended Education Funds Account to the CIP Fund for the following project(s):

New project – CES Heating Pump Controls Upgrade.

Selectman Roman/Chairwoman Chancey moved/seconded.

Chairwoman Chancey noted that the Chaplin Elementary Board of Education will be voting on the CES Heating Pump Controls Upgrade within a few days at the next BOE meeting but does not expect there will be an issue.

The Moderator called for a vote appropriate and transfer the funds. 30 yes, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions. The vote to approve the appropriation and transfer passed.

11) To appropriate an amount of **\$62,739** from the General Fund Restricted Account # 10701.29 Reduction of Mill Rate for FY 2024-25 Account for the following purpose(s):

To offset a portion of the anticipated budget deficit in FY 2025-26 Budget.

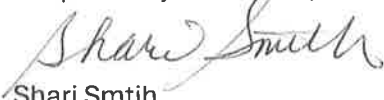
Selectman Roman/Linda Caron moved/seconded.

The Moderator called for a vote appropriate the amount of \$62,739. 35 yes, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions. The vote to approve the appropriation and transfer passed.

12) To adjourn the meeting after completion of the foregoing business.

Chairwoman Chancey/Hayley Tiller-Albertson moved/seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 P.M.

Respectively submitted,



Shari Smtih
Chaplin Town Clerk