

CHAPLIN BOARD OF FINANCE
Chaplin, Connecticut
Special Meeting Minutes
April 15, 2024

Chairperson Dick Weingart called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM. Present were Board members Jeremiah Rufini, Bill Jenkins; Alternate Peter Haines, Alternate Matt Foster. Others present were First Selectman Juan Roman, Town Clerk Shari Smith, Registrar of Voters Gene Boomer, Finance Manager Val Garrison and Emergency Preparedness Director Jim Randall. Absent were Board members Link Diwan, Linda Caron and Victor Boomer; Alternate Izzy Alvarez.

3. SEATING OF ALTERNATES:

Alternate Peter Haines seated for Linda Caron; Alternate Matt Foster seated for Link Diwan.

4. FIRST AUDIENCE FOR CITIZENS: None

5. GUESTS (potential): Town Clerk and Registrar of Voters

Gene Boomer and Shari Smith presented process for early voting. Received a one-time grant of \$10,500 to facilitate initial early voting. CVRS (CT Voter Registration System) capability is needed to register people and needs to be added to the Ferrara Room (process has been initiated with the state). The Town Hall has dedicated line for CVRS but there is not enough room, doesn't meet 75ft minimum requirement and would need to close for 14 days for early voting. The cost to move the CVRS is expensive and time consuming (early voting plan approved by the state). Chaplin was identified as a Spanish speaking community that requires Legal Notices to be published in English and Spanish doubling the Legal Notice budget (state is looking into). Staff is needed for 4 days prior to primaries (April, August) and 14 days prior to November election. The authority to move the CVRS is with the BOS if population is less than 20,000 (population of 20,000 or more goes through legislative body). Juan Roman noted early voting expenses are being tracked to determine the cost to the Town moving forward. Registrars are responsible for more than elections (required to take classes for state certification and attend conferences). The Secretary of State has provided great collaboration on early voting (lots of changes with more requirements).

- Peter Haines asked where the Ferrara Room is located (Senior Center).
- Jeremiah asked for clarification on the 2 items in the CIP for improvements at the Senior Center (IT related to early voting – Acoustics not related).
- Dick Weingart asked if they checked with other towns on the cost to add a CVRS (depends on setup – Chaplin needs a dedicated line).
- Bill Jenkins asked to clarify the 75ft rule within the entrance and exit (people asked to move along, ordinance includes no loitering).

6. ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None

7. REPORTS:

a. Board Member Reports

1) CIP Committee meeting:

Some members of the CIP Committee met and reviewed letter from the Board of Selectmen that addressed proposed changes to the CIP Plan (no formal action taken).

b. Staff Reports

1) BOE/CES: Review and accept monthly CES Financial Statements (FY 23-24); identify questions for followup:

70% of the budget spent to date. The Business Manager expects to need some additional funds this year to provide additional services (Special Ed and Transportation). The budget is estimated to be over by about \$155,000 with some potential savings of \$86,000 (will need up to \$70,000 from the Education Non-Lapsing Account – need to ask for an appropriation at the Town Meeting).

Motion to accept the March 2024 CES Financial Statements, made by Matt Foster, seconded by Peter Haines and carried unanimously.

2) Tax Collector: Review and accept quarterly Tax Collections report (FY 23-24); identify questions for followup:

Received Summary of Quarterly Tax Collections (invite Tax Collector to future meeting to review).

Juan Roman asked about amount collected from tax sale (all but 1 person came in to satisfy arrears and taxes prior to the tax sale).

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Regular/Special meeting(s) – April 8, 2024: Defer to later on the agenda.

9. CORRESPONDENCE: None

10. BUDGET WORKSHOP FOR FY 2024-25

a. Consider and act on Board of Education/CES budget for FY 2024-25 and identify questions/comments for Board of Education:

Received revised budget request from the CES/BOE with a 4.45% increase (about \$60,000 lower – able to hire a Speech & Hearing person). Budget will be reduced further with a BOF reduction of \$30,000.

- Received new assessment for the 3 towns for RD11 – number of Chaplin students increased by 3 (about \$61,000 – included in the budget).

b. Consider and act on Town agency budget requests for FY 2024-25; identify budgets for examination, additional information, and/or adjustments:

Each line of every budget was reviewed for potential savings (looked at actual costs and items not used with total savings of about \$58,000). **BOS Recommended Salary Adjustment for Town Officials and Staff (BOS, Administrative Assistant, Finance Manager, Town Clerk, Treasurer, Librarian, Senior Center Director)** – reduced to 3% cost of living increase; **Board of Finance** – increase for new auditor (locked in); **Building, Grounds Maintenance** – significant savings; **Employee Benefits** – one employee joined Town Health Insurance plan (not previously calculated); **Police Protection** – cost confirmed; **Public Works** – significant savings; **Sanitation** – overall savings from Casella (status quo for services); **Transfer Station** – savings from Casella; **Fire Department** – significant savings including items not used; **Contingency** – pared down.

c. Consider and act on Capital Projects Plan

1) FY 2025-29 CIP Plan as proposed by CIP Committee and consider alternate funding proposal:

Juan Roman asked about using funds from the North Bear Hill Road Bridge (about \$70,000 with project closed by the state). Reviewed proposed changes – **General Government** - Community Room Rehabilitation (deferred for 1 year); **Public Safety** - (Joe Pinto ok with moving requests for the Fire Department to outer years); **Public Works** – Road Maintenance (add \$10,000 back in), Nutmeg Lane Paving (move to outer years and increase to \$55,000), Sander Roof Rack (move to outer years), Generator (move to outer years) - split cost with Facility Communication (\$15,000 for portable radios – save for permanent) and Senior Center Parking Lot (\$15,000). The total CIP budget is \$430,668 with \$112,000 in Net CIP Funding from the General Fund.

2) Review completed CIP projects for potential closure: None

d. Consider and act on preliminary mill rate for FY 2024-25: Reviewed increase to the mill rate.

e. Consider and act on preliminary FY 2024-25 anticipated revenues:

No change in revenue from last week. Reviewed deficit's impact to the Fund Balance (dependent on the mill rate) and Median Assessment Value's increase to taxes due to the reval. Matt Foster asked about what to expect from Algonquin (large drop in the Grand List due to depreciation).

f. Discussion of General Fund and CIP Fund budget parameters for FY 2024-25: Covered already
Bill Jenkins left the meeting at 8:35 PM.

g. Consider and act on legal notice for Budget Public Hearing:

The Budget Public Hearing will be held on April 29th at 7pm at the Senior Center.

Motion to approve legal notice for Budget Public Hearing, made by Jeremiah Rufini, seconded by Peter Haines and carried unanimously.

h. Review BOF Budget Schedule and dates for Budget Public Hearing and Annual Town Budget Meeting:

The Annual Town Budget Meeting will be held on May 13th at 7pm at the Senior Center.

i. Other budget issues for consideration: None

Approval of Minutes: Special Meeting – April 8, 2024:

Motion to approve the April 8, 2024 special meeting minutes, made by Peter Haines with the following correction:

Item #10d1) should read – **General Government** - Community Investment – Town Center Vision.

The motion was seconded by Jeremiah Rufini and carried unanimously.

Motion to table the remainder of the agenda, made by Jeremiah Rufini, seconded by Peter Haines and carried unanimously.

11. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

- a. Consider and act on funds transfers and budget line additions/adjustments as requested
- b. Review action items from previous meetings – see minutes
- c. Review and update BOF Annual Activity/Project Calendar – FY 2023-24
- d. Review BOF Bylaws
- e. Continue review of policies under revision
 - 1) BOE Unexpended Education Funds
 - 2) General Fund Unallocated Fund Balance

12. SECOND AUDIENCE FOR CITIZENS

13. AGENDA SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT REGULAR/SPECIAL MEETING:

- a. Continue review of FY 2024-25 General Fund and FY 2025-29 CIP Plan budgets, parameters and schedule
- b. Continue review of FY 2024-25 agency, Board of Education, and CIP budget requests

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

- a. Thursday, April 18, 2024: (TBD) Special Meeting & Budget Workshop @ 7pm (Town Hall)
- b. Monday, April 22, 2024: (TBD) Special Meeting & Budget Workshop @ 7pm (Town Hall)
- c. Monday, April 29, 2024: Budget Public Hearing & Special Meeting/Budget Workshop @ 7pm (Senior Ctr)
- d. Monday, May 13, 2024: Annual Town Budget Meeting @ 7pm (Senior Center)

15. ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn (9:27 PM) made by Peter Haines, seconded by Jeremiah Rufini and carried unanimously.

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