

CHAPLIN BOARD OF FINANCE

Chaplin Town Hall

Chaplin, Connecticut

Special Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2026

Chair Dick Weingart called meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Board members present: Jeremiah Rufini, Victor Boomer, Mike O'Neill. Others present: 1st Selectman James Harrington, Town Administrator Mary Calorio, Finance Manager Val Garrison, BOE (Chair Jaclyn Chancey, Superintendent Andy Skarzynski, Principal Kevin Chavez, Business Manager Jobina Miller). Absent: Link Diwan, Bill Jenkins, Alternate Matt Foster, Alternate Izzy Alvarez.

3. SEATING OF ALTERNATES: None

4. FIRST AUDIENCE FOR CITIZENS: None

5. GUESTS: Budget Presentations

a. Chaplin Board of Education/CES, COC & RSD11 FY 2026-27 Budget Presentations.

1) Review and discussion of Board of Education/CES, Central Office proposed budgets for FY 2026-27:

Superintendent Skarzynski spoke about schools being life force of the Town with connection and conduit to families and students for any range of educational, academic, and social emotional needs. Presented update on current budget, enrollment and proposed budget (tried to be conservative and frugal as possible).

Current budget – In soft holding pattern (spending monitored weekly with transfers made as needed), strange year with unexpected costs for Special Ed, higher costs for snow removal (storms hit weekends into early part of school week), Staff vacancies challenging (provide critical and legally mandated services), higher tuition with revenue for another out-of-district student, received \$8,000 in SEED funds (Special Ed enhancement) and \$36,000 in Drip Grant funding (District Repair and Improvement). High point is steady enrollment (currently at 153 with increase in high needs population and Special Ed).

Proposed budget - \$204,037 increase (4.98%) driven by dramatic growth in Special Ed (O/T, P/T, Speech & Language services contracted out), Bus Contract extended with EASTCONN (13% renewal rate – lesser rate by extending contract), contractual Salaries, (key retirements by Linda Caron and Lark Peck), out-of-district costs (outplacements), Health Insurance (6.9% increase – reduced with election changes), Purchased Professional Services (IEP needs for Special Ed), Other Purchased Services (out-of-district), Supplies, Equipment/Equipment Maintenance.

- Jeremiah Rufini asked how conservative budget ended up with surplus (unfilled positions), and asked what happens with the money going forward (tighter budget this year, using current Non-Lapsing for Facilities Audit – need new roof).
- Mike O'Neill asked about replacement hires for 2 retiring teachers (positions posted for P.E. and Music).

Dick Weingart asked how availability of Unexpended Education Fund factors into overall plan (cushion as emergency fund), asked if intending to take 2% the current year if surplus available (surplus years due to teachers retiring after budget went through and unfilled positions - Mary noted utilizing Non-Lapsing doesn't affect MBR), and asked if any additional appropriation needed for current budget (not anticipating – additional income for tuition from out-of-district student will offset outplacement).

2) Review Board of Education (BOE/CES FY 2025-26 budget reports for February: None

3) Review and discussion of Central Office and RSD11 proposed budgets for FY 2026-27:

Central Office and RSD11 haven't met or approved anything – hoping to schedule COC meeting next week and RSD11 special meeting Wednesday if they can reach a quorum (initially at 3.19%).

4) Review of FY 2026-27 DRAFT Chaplin assessment percentage for RSD11 budget:

Percentage of RSD11 budget allocated to towns based on student census as of October 1st in previous year (went down to 50.5 for Chaplin – about \$160,000).

6. ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None permitted

7. REPORTS

- a. **Board Member reports:** None
- b. **Staff reports: Finance Dept., BOE/CES, Tax Collector, Assessor/Treasurer:** None

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Regular/Special meeting(s) – March 9, 2026:

Victor Boomer motioned to approve March 9, 2026 special meeting minutes with the following correction:

Item #4a1) should read “(need capital investment for IT Infrastructure about \$68,000).

Item #8a should have been approval for March 2, 2026 minutes (February 9th minutes approved already) – add approval for March 2nd minutes to next agenda.

Motion seconded by Jeremiah Rufini and carried unanimously.

9. CORRESPONDENCE: None

10. BUDGET WORKSHOP

a. Continue review of FY 2026-27 CES proposed budget(s) and identify questions for BOE:

Board asked what they need for productive deliberations (Jeremiah waiting for taxpayer impact with percentage and how much property taxes are going up). Comparison chart updated with information presented tonight and estimates for RD11 (current mill rate at 31.375, Real Estate and Personal Property would have 33.66 mill rate (2.29 increase), MV (1.09 increase - capped at 32.46), 7% projected increase to property taxes. Reflects no utilization of Fund Balance (Mary noted \$40,000 incorporated for capital projects – CIP Committee requested about \$350,000 for projects at their 1st meeting with not enough Fund Balance to allocate to). Updated budget document will be provided to Board next week including: next tax impact for grants, information for schools, mill rate calculations, and updated message (Board should create their own message to present to the public).

- Jeremiah Rufini asked if funding for proposed ECS change would come in as revenue to BOE (funds would come to the Town - not expected in time for end of this legislative session).

b. Discuss BOF process for review and final decisions on Town Government and Board of Education budgets:

Board asked for ideas on more efficient budget process than done in the past (Jeremiah noted not coming in with double digit increase is good - already identified General Government items that need more information with big increase for Ambulance services (should have final numbers next week).

- Mike O’Neill asked about possible relief from the state for Ambulance services (advocated to the State to increase reimbursement for Medicare and State Insurance – State continues to bypass addressing the issue).
- Dick Weingart suggested reviewing accounts with substantial increases to determine if deductions could be made (Mike noted budgets already identified – Registrars, Fire Department, Treasurer asked to come to March 23rd meeting; Jeremiah suggested waiting for rationale from each presentation discussing one by one and vote to grant request or reduce – nothing to cut in most of other departments; Victor asked for backup information for individual budgets) – Dick noted next week’s

BOF meeting set for 6pm. There is a Special Town Meeting same night at 6pm to approve Selectman going forward with Interlocal Agreement for Assessor and Tax Collection Services - BOF changed their meeting to 7pm.

c. Review of PRELIMINARY FY 2027-31 CIP Plan and consideration of funding:

Dick Weingart asked about taking proposals to the State (need to identify potential revenue sources and potential grant opportunities), asked about separate referendum question asking for appropriation for capital projects (not recommended), and asked the Board about putting more funds in CIP with roads top priority (Board not in favor, Mary recommends moving Town Aid Roads out of General Government Revenue into Capital Projects Revenue – never look at bonding or borrowing for roads).

1) Potential CIP appropriation to be voted on separately by Town Meeting and Referendum: None

2) Develop specific instructions for CIP Committee to reduce and prioritize projects for FY 2026-27:

Committee needs to meet again to determine true ask with potential revenue sources (or lack of).

d. Review of updated DRAFT FY 2026-27 State and local revenue estimates: Nothing new

e. Review of FY 2026-27 General Fund budgets, parameters, and schedule: None

f. Review updated FY 2026-27 budget calendar: No change

g. Other necessary budget business: None

11. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

a. Consider and act on funds transfers and budget line additions/adjustments as requested: None

12. AGENDA SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT REGULAR/SPECIAL MEETING:

a. Special meeting(s): Budget workshop agenda

1) Agency budget presentations (finalizing as much as possible)

2) Budget workshop

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

a. Monday, March 23, 2026: Special Meeting @7pm (Town Hall – Town Agency budget presentations)

b. March 30, 2026: Special Meeting @6pm (Town Hall)

c. April 2026 TBD: Special Meeting(s) @6pm (Location TBD)

d. Monday, April 13, 2026: Budget Public Hearing @7pm (Senior Center)

e. Monday, April 27, 2026: Annual Town Budget Meeting @7pm (Senior Center)

14. ADJOURN:

Victor Boomer motioned to adjourn (8:02 PM), seconded by Jeremiah Rufini and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by,

Recording Clerk Kathleen Scott