

CHAPLIN BOARD OF FINANCE

Chaplin Town Hall

Chaplin, Connecticut

Special Meeting Minutes

March 23, 2026

Chair Dick Weingart called meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Board members present: Link Diwan, Jeremiah Rufini, Victor Boomer, Mike O'Neill. Others present: Selectman Leslie Ricklin, Town Administrator Mary Calorio, Finance Manager Val Garrison, Registrar Gene Boomer, Registrar Gavin Horning-Kane, Treasurer Diana Alvarez, FD Chief Joe Pinto. Absent: Bill Jenkins, Alternate Matt Foster, Alternate Izzy Alvarez.

3. SEATING OF ALTERNATES: None

4. FIRST AUDIENCE FOR CITIZENS: None

5. GUESTS: Town Agency Budget Presentations

a. Registrars and Elections:

Gene Boomer spoke about Secretary of State having them do more and more every year and presented proposed budget increases for **Registrars** (Salaries for both Registrars – higher salary previous year covering most Tuesday nights without counterpart, alternating Tuesday nights with Gavin to save the Town money); **Election Hire** (3 weeks early voting cost about \$6,000, last year had 5 referendums/7 days of early voting/general election – trying to combine ballot questions for cost savings); **Conference/Dues** (5 days of Conferences - \$220 each); **Election Expenses** (state hired different contractor for Tabulators – more expensive including hardware maintenance under Tabulator Maintenance, need 6 different machines per new regulations – one for each type of ballot plus backup, costs to program memory sticks); **Legal Notices** (requires 1 in English, 1 in Spanish); **Tabulator Maintenance** (licensing, Tabulators will be updated with new Total Vote software with GIS component and training). Remaining items stayed the same. Received \$5,000 from State last year for early voting (no funding expected this year). Budget is half of 1% of total budget. No primary this year (about \$6,100 with \$4,000 for 1 week of early voting) and about \$2,250 for referendum.

Discussion: New CVRS being in place for November election (expected in December), requirements that take away Registrars ability to run elections independently (follow decisions that come from the State), proposed bill sponsored by Senator Gordon to make municipalities whole for early voting (didn't make it out of Committee), FY 25-26 Estimated column in budgets (anticipates total spend for the year after applying grants).

b. Treasurer:

Diana Alvarez presented list of duties and Salary spreadsheet (projects what salary would be if not reduced in 2014 including mileage - current hours up to 10 hours per week) to justify increase. Duties include: FMHS filing - takes longer with no access to QuickBooks, comes in to sign checks, makes bank deposits and transfers, in process of setting up new account with bank (account compromised – must clear checks every morning through Positive Pay).

Discussion: Average hours worked a week (about 7 hours), first time asking for Salary increase (submitted 1st request in 2022 and again in 2024 – Dick noted policy in place prior to 2021 for BOS to set salaries for the Town), Longevity Bonus not available for elected officials (applies only to Town employees eligible for benefits), BOS determines overall general wage increase (would be helpful to hear their thoughts), how elected official salaries originally set (resolution approved early 1930s at Town Meeting for BOF), rationale from previous Treasurer to reduce hours (said work is 2-3 hours week, some duties didn't exist back then - primary input person for new FMHS system designated by 1st Selectman and extensive online banking).

c. Chaplin Volunteer Fire Department:

Joe Pinto presented proposed budget increases for **Equipment New** (items in the building – tools, ladder, gear rack, replacing broken equipment); **Building & Grounds** (new line item); **Maintenance Contracts**

(based on actuals); **Equipment Fuel; Repairs** (trucks getting older); **Grants** (DEEP Matching Grant); **Utilities** (Electricity, Heating Fuel/Propane, error for Telephone - should be \$300). Remaining items stayed the same. Food for thought - estimate next truck between \$700,000 and \$800,000 (son priced a truck for Torrington at \$950,000 (10-year lease at \$121,000 year at 4.79% - no money up front).

Discussion: Current expenses for Equipment New (radio equipment and IT equipment to outfit new truck, 75 inch TV – maps calls with location and who’s responding, CAD licensing – tracks calls for Fire Marshal), new Building & Grounds line (no line for building maintenance - 20 year old building needs work including ceiling tiles and exit lights), Maintenance Contracts (Fire Alarm System, Overhead Door, Janitorial Services, Inspection Fees for boiler/hot water heater), Rental Expenses (building cleaned after use – comes out of Maintenance Contracts), do solar panels help with electricity (bill has never gone down).

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 2 and March 16, 2026:**
 - *Jeremiah Rufini motioned to approve March 2, 2026 special meeting minutes, seconded by Victor Boomer and carried with abstention by Link Diwan.*
 - *Victor Boomer motioned to approve March 16, 2026 special meeting minutes, seconded by Jeremiah Rufini and carried with abstention by Link Diwan.*

9. CORRESPONDENCE: None

10. BUDGET WORKSHOP FOR FY 2026-27

- a. **Consider BOF process for review and final decisions on Town Government and BOE budgets**
 - 1) **Consider potential budget increases and reductions in both General Government and BOE budgets:**
 - Revenues - Investment Interest may be under \$10,000. Regional Performance Incentive Program Grant will be applied for if moving forward with transition of services to Mansfield (Mary noted if awarded, 1st year would offset expenses of about \$91,000 for 2 programs (Tax Collection could be viewed as existing) – suggests being conservative by just recognizing \$52,375 for Assessor component) - would add line in State/Federal funding and reflect in Assessor’s budget (Board in favor of moving forward to recognize).
 - Expenditures – Dick Weingart proposed increasing CIP contribution from \$40,000 to \$125,000, reduce BOE by \$50,000, reduce General Government by \$15,000, increase mill rate by .105 (mill rate would be 33.765 with 7.76% increase in taxes). No CIP funding except LOCIP (CIP Committee discussed not assigning CIP Fund Balance to any projects and let it grow).
 - Link Diwan asked about education budgets (added RD11 budget and CES budget - \$204,000 increase (4.98%) driven largely by Special Ed costs, Salary with 2 top step teacher retirements, Transportation Contracts, Paraprofessional costs) - assessment for Parish Hill going down 2.25% with increase in assessment about \$14,000), and asked about CES coming in underbudget this year for positions not filled (2 teacher vacancies likely to be filled at lower salaries, came in underbudget about \$160,000 – moved 2% of surplus to Non-Lapsing Fund).
 - Victor Boomer expressed concerns about Tree Removal being in 2 places - CIP and Public Works budget (Infrastructure and Road Maintenance removed from Public Works budget), and asked if

there should be something in CIP with school being evaluated (should consult with Office of School Construction about reimbursement).

- Mike O'Neill asked about \$50,000 reduction in education and where to take it from (can't pick items but can send comments with final decision to reduce bottom line - in proportion to reduction for General Government).
- Link Diwan asked about Unallocated Fund Balance (corrected to 11.2% after reexamining audit) – suggests developing preferred practice between 12-15% (Mary suggests recouping Fund Balance by creating policy, stop utilizing for capital projects and operational offset to the budget) – Dick noted goal for capital funding is to direct all of Town Aid Road funding into CIP (can't do all at once) - may be possible increase in ECS funding.

Mary Calorio asked for direction on what is needed from proposals presented this evening – Registrar (budget reduction from last year on target - look at expense detail and cost to run a referendum), Fire Department (consider reducing Building & Grounds to \$3,000 changing to Building Maintenance as separate line, take out \$2,500 for Matching Grant, take out \$2,700 difference for Telephone), Treasurer (phase in salary increase with \$1,000 for this year) and any other areas to look at. Can reduce Inland/Wetlands Clerical Hire to \$400 - not as many meetings held, can talk to Public Works about any other modifications that can be made and talk to Library about phasing in \$2,000 with \$1,000 this year (Ambulance meeting tomorrow).

- b. **Review of FY 2026-27 CES proposed budget:** None
- c. **Review of FY 2026-27 Town Agency budgets:** None
- d. **Review of PRELIMINARY FY 2027-31 CIP Plan and consideration of funding:** None
- e. **Review of updated DRAFT FY 2026-27 State and local revenue estimates:** None
- f. **Review updated FY 2026-27 budget calendar:** None
- g. **Review content, format and production process for budget documents to be presented to public:** None
- h. **Review content and format for BOF budget message:** None
- i. **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) Budget workshop

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

- a. March 30, 2026: Special Meeting @6pm (Town Hall)
- b. April 2026 TBD: Special Meeting(s) @6pm (Location TBD)
- c. Monday, April 13, 2026: Budget Public Hearing @7pm (Senior Center) and BOF Special Meeting
- d. Monday, April 27, 2026: Annual Town Budget Meeting @7pm (Senior Center)

14. ADJOURN:

***Victor Boomer motioned to adjourn (10:02 PM), seconded by Link Diwan and carried unanimously.
Respectfully submitted by,
Recording Clerk Kathleen Scott***