

Chester Finance Committee Meeting

2/13/25 via Zoom

In attendance: Andy Myers, Sr. Judith Dalesandro, Florence Bolduc, Brian Forgue, Don Humason, Craig Gauthier and Mary Ann Pease

Absent: Bob Daley and Joe Ryan

#1) As this meeting was held via zoom and I found it difficult to hear everything being said these are my minutes to the best of my ability.

#2) Brian reviewed the Gateway budget which as of this date looks to be an increase of 1.57% over last year. Chester's enrollment will be up for FY 26, however final #'s are not yet available.

#3) No update on vocational student enrollment, Andy suggested Brian call Westfield Voc and Smith Voc to see what the numbers are looking like. With seniors' graduating and freshmen coming in it may be a wash.

#4) Flo spoke with Fire, Police and Highway.

Flo stated that Bob Broga has been doing a lot of the building repairs etc and this is a huge savings to the FD. Station 3 has been cleaned out and is able to hold old engine 2. There is no heat or electric in the building so this is something they are looking to do in the future. They may need a bump in expenses due to rising fuel cost.

Flo stated that Chipper is looking for a new highway truck, labor cost overage is ongoing due to highway doing work for other departments, water and cemetery. These need to be looked at going forward for FY 26. Don mentioned the BOS had reviewed the cemetery charges a while back and felt the charges were adequate. Any work the highway department does on behalf of another department should be billed to that department.

Police department seems for self sufficient at this time, will be reviewed. They just got a new cruiser.

5) Brian mentioned using Deb Coon at Gateway for a possible human resource connection. Don explained about various options looked into for the town, Pioneer Valley Planning and Sonia who presently does this on behalf of the town. Further discussion is needed.

6) Mary Ann did not speak on her discussions with Tax Collector or Assessors.

7) Brian will update spread sheet with all last-minute budget request and forward to the members.

8) It was suggested before jumping right in to departmental reviews the FC meet an additional time to go over everything.

Next Meeting to be held 2/20/25 @ 5:30 in COA

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ann Pease

Secretary

Approved on 2/20/25

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian", followed by a large, stylized circular flourish and a long horizontal stroke.