

TOWN OF CHESTER
SELECT BOARD
April 7, 2021
Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: Arne Jonynas; Lee Gustafson; Heather Chase; Leigh Dakin; Jeff Holden; Julie Hance; Amie O'Brien

VISITORS: SAPATV; Shawntae Webb; Sharon Huntley; Shawn Cunningham; Michael Normyle; Cynthia Prairie; William Lindsey; Garrison Smith; Jessica Frasca; Scott Blair; Corey Quenneville; Dick Jewett; Frank Amato; Ginger Roper; Mike Donoghue; Cheryl Joy Lipton; Steven Pappas; Tim Roper; Susan Bourne; Beverly (Unknown); Katherine Henry; Linda Diak; Amy (Unknown); Ken Slater; Rose (Unknown); Robert Gibbons; Susan Bailey; Suellen Slater; Amanda George; Dan Patenaude; Amy Mosher; Hugh Quinn; Robert Nied; (802) 779-4617; Daisey Gamez; Brian Mosher; Claudio Veliz; Arielle Goddard; Scott MacDonald; Sue Pollard; Thomas Simmons; Guido (Unknown)

Meeting was held via Zoom.

SELECTBOARD PUBLIC FORUM RE: PAPER OF RECORD

April 7, 2021

6:00 p.m.

At a recent meeting, the Chester Select Board appointed the Chester Telegraph, an online news source, as its Paper of Record. The purpose of the "Paper of Record" is for the recording of legal notices such as zoning hearings and tax sales. The Chester Select Board held this Public Forum for the purpose of gathering comments from Chester residents regarding this recent decision.

Sharon Huntley from the Vermont Journal spoke about the Select Board's decision to make the Chester Telegraph the Paper of Record for the town. She stated the Vermont Journal is distributed town wide to all residents of the area and feels it is a better way to get information to the community. People will not realize that they have missed out on town business if they do not have internet to see it posted in the Chester Telegraph. Shawntae Webb spoke on behalf of the Vermont Journal and stated the Select Board's decision to choose the Chester Telegraph as the Paper of Record went against the town attorney's advice and Vermont State Statute. She read the statute to the board and said the term "printed" means a printed newspaper, not an online news source.

Linda Diak feels the Vermont Journal overstepped with their reading of the statute. She is in support of the Chester Telegraph being the Paper of Record for the town because they cover local news unlike the Vermont Journal. Ginger Roper prefers the Vermont Journal because it is more accessible and would like the town to use both sources. Cheryl Joy Lipton pointed out some people do not have access to a computer or the internet and prefers the printed paper.

She feels money should not be the issue because the difference is minimal compared to other expenditures.

Steven Pappas, editor of the Rutland Herald, worked with a town that lost their local printed newspaper. The town decided to move to an online source for their paper of record. They ended up reaching out to him because the online source lacked a broader audience. He feels the Vermont Journal is a better option for Chester in reaching community members. He stated the Vermont Journal losing the town's revenue will have a negative impact on the business. He believes the board has created a legal issue in going with the Chester Telegraph violating state statute. Arne Jonynas asked him how the Rutland Herald is linked to the Vermont Journal. He stated they do not currently have a financial interest, but they work together.

Arne Jonynas pointed out the Select Board's unanimous decision was not based solely on saving money. He feels the board should be allowed to make this decision and that there is a gray area in the legislation. Important notices are mailed in serious matters and the town will be sure people are notified of what is going on. Jeff Holden said he would have liked community input at the time of the decision.

Claudio Veliz pointed out people in Chester travel all over and the Chester Telegraph reaches these people whereas a printed paper would not. He proposed the possibility of using both the Vermont Journal and Chester Telegraph. Mike Donohue from the Vermont Press Association stated the law is clear about what a newspaper is. He pointed out the Select Board went against the town attorney's advice. The Vermont Press Association is unaware of other towns that have gone digital for their Paper of Record.

Katherine Henry pointed out the Chester Telegraph covers local news in ways the Vermont Journal does not. She feels the town resistance will pass over time. Ken Slater stated he is not happy with hearing legal advice from a non-attorney. The statute is confusing stating "publication", not "newspaper". Scott MacDonald asked a question for Mike Donohue. Arne Jonynas would not allow him to answer as he does not have a legal background. Julie Hance will send Scott Macdonald Jim Carroll's advice that was previously given to the Select Board.

Leigh Dakin spoke with someone without internet that would prefer things still be printed in the Vermont Journal. Julie Hance heard from a couple people as well that would prefer the printed version. Heather Chase stated the Select Board did not do anything wrong in making this decision. This will be added to a future agenda for further discussion.

SPECIAL SELECTBOARD MEETING AGENDA

April 7, 2021

Following the Public Forum

Meeting started at 6:55

1. **APPROVE MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 17, 2021 SELECTBOARD MEETING; APPROVE MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 30 SPECIAL SELECTBOARD MEETING**

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the Minutes of the March 17, 2021 Select Board meeting as amended. Seconded by Jeff Holden. The motion passed.

Heather Chase was having technical issues during the March 17, 2021 meeting when the Executive Session ended. She was only able to vote on the last appointment. Arne Jonynas will get a response from each person going forward.

A motion was made by Heather Chase to approve the Minutes of the March 30, 2021 Special Select Board meeting as written. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

2. **CITIZEN COMMENTS/ANSWERS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

Dan Patenaude inquired about the town having a way to keep properties from gathering junk because of all the junk at properties located on Route 10 and a property located on Amsden Hill Road. Julie Hance explained the town adopted an ordinance 2 years ago, but it is difficult to enforce. The town is between Zoning Administrators and this will be made a priority when one is hired.

Ginger Roper would like the speeding on Andover Road to be addressed. She pointed out there are speed limit signs around town that she feels would be helpful if placed on Andover Road as well. Julie Hance stated the data collection done previously was not sufficient. She will inquire about placing the speed strips from Regional Planning on Andover Road again when the temperature overnight warms up. She will also check with Chief Rick Cloud about patrolling the area. Jeff Holden pointed out that part of the road is a state road, and it would be up to the state to lower the speed limit. Arne Jonynas would like to collect more data and talk with Andover about their part of the road. Hugh Quinn stated he would like to have Route 10 added to the list of roads to be monitored. He has noticed people speeding and would like better enforcement. Jessica Frasca owns the Country Girl Diner where there is a speed limit sign across the street from the diner. She does not feel the signs deter people from speeding. This will be added to a future agenda.

3. OLD BUSINESS

Public Safety Building: The sheet rock has gone in and the walls and ceilings are being painted. The bay doors are being installed. Julie Hance will have a site visit Friday, April 9, 2021. The cost for winter heating was more than expected bringing the contingency down to \$40,000.

Emerald Ash Borer: An inventory of ash trees is needed along the towns right of way for the 110 miles of roadway in Chester. A committee has been formed and is currently looking for more people to get involved. Julie Hance is going to reach out to the High School and Tech to see if students would be willing to help. Kirby Putnam is running the committee and the Public Works Department will be involved.

Pinnacle Improvement: A sign has been added to the new parking area and screening is being added to block the abutters properties. The police have not seen a lot of issues at the park recently. Julie Hance is still waiting to hear back from Justin Diak on his proposal for the skate park. Matt McCarthy will paint and fix the areas he can.

Gravel Pit: The Act 250 permit for the gravel pit has been received. There are a few things that could be contested. An appeal can be done on the things needed while the pit is operational. The town is free to begin clearing the land on April 15, 2021 but extraction will not begin until next spring.

Old Jiffy Mart: Tony Cairns would like to offer the town the old Jiffy Mart building as part donation, part purchase. Julie Hance indicated that this will be an Executive Session item at the next meeting.

4. PICNIC TABLES ON THE GREEN; SCOTT BLAIR

Scott Blair requested to place the picnic tables on the Green as was done last year. He will be adding 2 tables for a total of 7 until around the end of October. The 2 new tables will be placed in front of the Fullerton Inn on the other side of the gazebo. He spoke with the Fullerton Inn and they support the idea. Julie Hance will speak with the Public Works crew about emptying the receptacles more often. Signs have been added to the containers to deter people from dumping trash from vehicles and household trash.

Heather Chase asked if the picnic tables are allowed per the DRB bylaws. Lee Gustafson asked if the Select Board must be involved in this decision. Julie Hance pointed out the use of the Green is a Select Board decision. She will review the bylaws and look into creating a policy for what and when decisions should be brought to the board.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to allow 7 picnic tables to be put on the Green. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed.

5. MOUNTAIN VALLEY CLIMATE ACTION; USE OF THE GREEN

The Mountain Valley Climate Action would like to use the Green to set up a table and banner on April 22, 2021 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. to recruit new members.

A motion was made by Heather Chase to allow Mountain Valley Climate Action to use the Green on April 22, 2021 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed.

6. ROUTE 103 BRIDGE PROJECT – PALMER, JEWETT AND THOMPSON BRIDGES

Arne Jonynas stated the decision made over a year ago is still the route the board will proceed with the project. Cheryl Joy Lipton spoke about reducing the number of bridges down to one. She stated reducing the number would be better for environmental purposes. Tim Roper asked how much the town would save if reduced to one bridge. There would be some savings, but it is hard to know how much. Amy Mosher stated she would like the board to let VTrans know they can proceed with the project decided on a year ago. She said Palmer Bridge would be good for 15-20 years and would cost \$250,000 to repair in the future. Heather Chase stated this is a difficult time to revisit this with the pandemic happening and some new owners moving into that area. The Select Board will keep their original decision.

7. ANNUAL FINANCIAL PLAN APPROVAL

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the Annual Financial Plan. Seconded by Jeff Holden. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the Town Road and Bridge Standards. Seconded by Jeff Holden. The motion passed.

8. LIQUOR LICENSES

The Select Board signed the Liquor Licenses as follows:

<u>First Class:</u>	<u>Second Class:</u>	<u>Third Class:</u>	<u>Outside Consumption:</u>
Pizza Stone	Dollar General	Stone Hearth	Pizza Stone
Stone Hearth	Meditrina		Stone Hearth
	Smitty's Market		

9. ENTERTAINMENT PERMITS

The Select Board signed the Entertainment Permits as follows:

- Pizza Stone
- Country Girl Diner
- Stone Hearth Inn

10. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA

- The Paper of Record will be discussed.
- The logging company that bought the 1800-acre Tomasso property have one or two more years of logging. Arne Jonynas would like to discuss the possibility of purchasing the property when they finish. He would like to contact the company to see what their plans are and find out what the state would do to help.
- The old Jiffy Mart building.
- Speeding/speed limit signs on Andover Road.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION: DRB INTERVIEW

A motion was made by Leigh Dakin to enter Executive Session for the purpose of interviewing candidates for the Development Review Board. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The Select Board entered Executive Session at 8:02 p.m. Scott MacDonald was allowed in.

A motion was made by Heather Chase to exit Executive Session. Seconded by Jeff Holden. The Select Board exited Executive Session at 8:29 p.m.

12. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD APPOINTMENT

No appointments were made as there may be more interviews.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION: TOWN MANAGER REVIEW

A motion was made by Heather Chase to enter Executive Session for the purpose of the Town Manager review. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The Select Board entered Executive Session at 8:30 p.m.

A motion was made by Leigh Dakin to exit Executive Session. Seconded by Heather Chase. The Select Board exited Executive Session at 9:00 p.m.

No action taken.

14. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Leigh Dakin to adjourn. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.