

TOWN OF CHESTER
SELECT BOARD
June 17, 2020
Select Board Meeting Minutes

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

VISITORS: SAPA TV; Sharon Huntley; Shawn Cunningham; Nikki Geannelis; Karen Ericson; Barry Pinske

Meeting was held via Zoom.

1. APPROVE MINUTES

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2020 Select Board meeting as written. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed.

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS/ANSWERS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

No citizens comment.

3. OLD BUSINESS/LAST MEETING

Public Safety Building: Bids are being reviewed. The next Building Committee meeting will be June 18, 2020 and June 24, 2020. Julie Hance is hoping to have a final bid total for the Select Board at the July 1, 2020 meeting.

Gravel Project: The requested information has been submitted to ACT 250 waiting to hear from them.

Pinnacle: Parking spaces have been installed at the Pinnacle. The gate has been ordered. Topsoil and grass seed will be laid within the next couple of weeks once mulch hay is readily available. The signage that will be installed is being worked on by Amie O'Brien, Matt McCarthy, and Julie Hance. Some things that will possibly be included on the sign are a closing time of 9:30, no smoking, and other restrictions. The Select Board will create a policy or ordinance governing these restrictions making it easier for the Police Department to enforce. Julie Hance will check to see if creating a policy or an ordinance would make more sense. Heather Chase would like whichever one is put in place to control all areas owned by the town including the Pinnacle and Rainbow Rock. Jeff Holden thought no smoking was covered by State Law, but Rick Cloud said only in areas relating to a school. Julie Hance will look into it.

Jeff Holden has been asking for Select Board meetings to go back to in-person meetings at Town Hall. Julie Hance has obtained the equipment needed. She will be testing it to make sure it works well to accommodate in-person and Zoom. Arne Jonynas suggested beginning in-person meetings for those who wish to participate at the July 1, 2020

meeting. Sapa TV is considering ways to set up at the Town Hall as well. Lee Gustafson asked if devices will be needed for everyone that attends the meeting in person. Julie Hance explained the meetings will be projected on a screen with speakers for sound, so devices will not be needed for everyone.

4. COVID-19 UPDATE

The biggest change for Chester is the opening of the Pinnacle for more organized sports. Julie Hance has given the Select Board a copy of the guidance and waiver form that has been created which will be provided to all parents/kids when they sign up for a camp or enter the pool area. Jim Carroll has reviewed the forms to ensure everything is covered and has added some minor changes. While the town will be doing its best to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all kids participating, there is always risk of exposure.

The pool is anticipated to open on June 22, 2020 from 12-8 p.m. Adult swim will be every 15 minutes before the hour and from 5-6 p.m. nightly. A maximum of 25 people will be allowed in the fenced pool area/pool house at any one time. This will include 3 lifeguards and Matt McCarthy. Matt McCarthy is meeting with the other recreation directors in the area. They are collectively working on the best/safest way to keep the pools open while following guidance. This will likely include a sign up for 2-hour swim times so that the pool can be used equitably. The pool house will be disinfected every two hours between the changeover of swimmers. The chairs and swim toys will be removed from the pool deck. This year families will need to bring their own chairs. Parents are going to be asked to stay outside the fence to allow for more children to swim. Unless the child is young or must be accompanied by an adult. Currently, swim lessons are still being considered and worked out.

Usage will be controlled by allowing Chester and Andover property owners and residents only. This will keep people from surrounding towns that are not opening their town pools from taking time slots. This process will develop as the summer proceeds. There will likely be some things that work and some that may need to be modified. The town is asking for the patience of all parents/families as we work through this. Matt McCarthy is working very hard to ensure that there is a pool this summer for the kids.

Lee Gustafson asked if anyone knew when last case of COVID-19 was diagnosed in Windsor County. Julie Hance said she will look into this and let him know. Sharon Huntley explained the information can be found at [health.gov](https://www.health.gov) and Shawn Cunningham emailed the link to Lee Gustafson.

5. DISCUSSION RELATIVE TO CURRENT EVENTS AND CHESTER POLICE PRACTICES; POLICE CHIEF

Police Chief Rick Cloud explained to the Select Board all policies for the Police Department, such as Use of Force, No Pursuit, and Fair Policing come from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. The Police Departments in Vermont used to write their own but not anymore. The policies can be modified to fit a small town when needed, however the changes are minimal. All training is done through the Academy including proper use

of a taser and much more. Use of Deadly force has been a major discussion in Vermont recently due to the death of George Floyd. The Attorney General and the Vermont Chief of Police are working on a new plan for Vermont Police Departments focusing on de-escalation and counseling for officers. Rick Cloud will give a copy to the Select Board.

Arne Jonynas has concerns regarding how people can file complaints about the Police Department. Rick Cloud explained there is a complaint form that is filled out which is then reviewed by him or the town manager. The investigation is done by the town or hired out to an independent company, and some are given to the state police. In house complaints are reviewed by watching the video of the incident. The department receives about 2-3 complaints a year where most complaints come from vehicle violations. The complaints usually state the officer was not being professional at the time of the stop. However, after review of the video 90% of the time the persons version of the encounter is not correct. After the video is reviewed a decision is made and then sent to the state, which is how it is done by State Statute. If the complainant is not happy with the outcome it would move forward to the Select Board or the court for review. Arne Jonynas asked if this method causes conflicts of interest within the department. Rick Cloud does not feel that this is an issue because the outcome is regulated by the state. All complaints remain in an officer's file which moves with them as they change departments. All complaints are public record due to the Fair and Impartial Policing policy.

Chief Cloud feels Chester has a pretty good Police Department. His cell phone is available to residents and he gets a lot of calls with positive feedback. He met twice with the organizers of the recent protest before the event and they were happy about that. Heather Chase would like Chester's officers to get involved with the community as much as possible helping gain the trust of the department. She stated the Vermont League of Cities and Towns says that silence is not an option with the recent events. She would like updates from Rick Cloud and to continue the conversation.

Police training is 18 weeks with continued field training of 6-8 weeks after graduation. There is 60 hours of role play training where actors come in and play through different scenarios. There is mandated training on first aide, CPR, taser training, domestic violence, use of force, and tactical. A new Internal Affairs policy and a new policy mandating the use of cameras will be coming soon. The camera policy will require new equipment including cameras, and storage and memory for the video footage.

Julie Hance stated an individual would like to attend the July 1, 2020 meeting to discuss police policy and the way Chester handles department complaints. Heather Chase would like to see the policies beforehand and would like Rick Cloud to let the Select Board know about future changes to the policies.

6. LISTERS: CONTRACT WITH NEMRC

The Select Board has decided to sign the one-year contract with NEMRC for grand list services. Julie Hance reached out to Ed Clodfelter regarding the concerns raised by Peter Hudkins. Arne Jonynas explained not every property grieved decreased by \$10,000 like

was said at an earlier meeting. Some property values went down, and some stayed the same.

Leigh Dakin mentioned she felt the cost was high. Julie Hance explained the contract is for a one-year trial period. Trained and educated Listers are hard to find. The town voted to eliminate the Office of Lister a few years ago for this reason. NEMRC is familiar with Chester due to the reappraisal they recently prepared. Valerie Pantorno will still be in the office with NEMRC doing most things off site. Al and Nate from NEMRC will travel to Chester from Bellows Falls when needed. The overall cost is unknown at this time and will be figured up when the one year is over and things can be reassessed.

A motion was made by Heather Chase to allow Julie Hance to sign the one-year Appraisal Service Agreement contract from NEMRC starting in July. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed.

7. APPOINT DEPUTY HEALTH OFFICER

Amanda Silva has requested a Deputy Health Officer be appointed to assist her on the more questionable visits that are needed. Dan Cook has agreed to be appointed since he is the Ambulance Coordinator and they work well together.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to appoint Dan Cook as the Deputy Health Officer for a three-year term. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed.

8. ADDITION OF 1 STREET LIGHT IN GASSETTS

Bill Austin has asked the town to add a streetlight in front of his house in Gassetts. Currently, there are streetlights from the intersection of Route 10 heading north. However, the last light is located at the property before his. He has had a break-in at his barn and would like to have a streetlight added. Amie O'Brien spoke with Green Mountain Power. They will install the light for the town free of charge. This will add about \$12.00 per month to the current streetlight bill. Green Mountain Power would need a request submitted to them from the town asking for the light to be installed.

Arne Jonynas thought if approved more people would ask for a light near their property. There was a streetlight study done a few years ago that determined some lights in town were not needed. Lee Gustafson would like Bill Smith to be contacted and asked what he has done to provide his own light. He stated that the cost to add this streetlight over a 10-year period would be \$1,500. Amie O'Brien explained if a light were installed it would be aimed at the street not necessarily his property. If he wanted a light installed on his property, Green Mountain Power stated he would have to pay for it. Julie Hance will contact Bill Smith to see what he has done for lighting and revisit the matter with the Select Board at a later date.

VLCT RESOLUTION

Julie Hance read a resolution proposed from VLCT to lobby Congress for direct federal aid to cities and towns.

A motion was made by Leigh Dakin to authorize Arne Jonynas, Select Boar Chair, to sign the VLCT resolution. Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed.

9. SIGN CEMETERY DEED

Three Select Board members will need to stop and sign the Cemetery deed for Fredrick and Debra Wheeler at the town office. Julie asked people to stop in by Friday.

10. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA

July 1: Appoint a new library Trustee. Approve a Cultural Facilities grant for acoustic panels and a sound system for the upstairs of town hall. The State issued guidance indicating that they may have education rates set by July 1. If they do, the tax rate will be set at the next meeting. Heather Chase requested to assess Chester's police policy's, and park ordinance/policy.

July 15: Financial update, Ron Smith will be at the meeting to provide Balance Sheet training and discuss the Reserve Fund Policies. Also, the board will sign the Backhoe Loan and Paving Loan.

11. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Leigh Dakin to adjourn. Seconded by Heather Chase. The meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Amie O'Brien
Secretary of the Select Board

Lee Gustafson
Clerk of the Select Board