

TOWN OF CHESTER
SELECT BOARD
April 21, 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; Barre Pinske; Shawn Cunningham; Mike Donoghue; Scott Blair; Tim Roper; Linda Diak; Ginger Roper; Scott MacDonald

Meeting was held via Zoom.

1. APPROVE MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 7, 2021 SELECTBOARD MEETING

A motion was made by Heather Chase to approve the Minutes of the April 7, 2021 Select Board meeting as written. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

Leigh Dakin would like clarification on what part of Andover Road is considered state highway. Julie Hance will confirm.

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS/ANSWERS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Barre Pinske would like the crosswalk sign near Smitty's to be moved closer to the crosswalk. He pointed out cars do not stop for pedestrians trying to cross to get to Smitty's. Arne Jonynas indicated the sidewalk project will address this concern with the new design of the sidewalk. The project is waiting for the Right of Way approval from the state and is expected to go out to bid this fall with the work starting spring 2022. The sign will be moved closer to the crosswalk and the lines will be repainted to help with this issue.

Barre Pinske is not happy Cathy Hasbrouck is doing three jobs for the town as she has a lot going on. He appreciates all her hard work but would like the community to step up and help. Julie Hance stated the town has put ads out for the Planning Commission Secretary and Zoning Administrator positions.

Julie Hance received a message from the website about concerns over the picnic tables on the Green. She pointed out the tables are for people to use at their own risk, as they were last year. The tables are spaced out properly with plenty of room between each one.

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3. OLD BUSINESS

Public Safety Building: The interior is being primed and getting ready to paint. Julie Hance has a walk through on Friday, April 23, 2021 to see the progress. She will let Lee Gustafson know what time that will happen. The windows, siding, curbing, and topsoil are all being put in. There have been some cost overruns due to winter heating and COVID related increases in material. Russell Construction will link the related costs to COVID, which will then be submitted for grant reimbursement. This will hopefully bring the contingency back to the original amount and will be used on the Highway Department building. Jeff Holden would like Julie Hance to ask Russell Construction when they will be starting the water installation. He has received the parts needed to connect the building to the water system.

Ash Tree Inventory Committee: The committee met and there is another meeting Friday, April 23, 2021. The link to the meeting will be added to the website. Tim Roper made a flyer that will be hung up at various places around town. The committee is looking for volunteers to help inventory the ash trees along Chester's roads. Joann from the State of Vermont will be holding a training in early May on ash trees and how to use the state's app for reporting. Julie Hance spoke with West Windsor and got information on how they went about getting their inventory.

Fall Festival: There is a new group of volunteers organizing the event this year. The festival will be similar as past years with some new ideas and different events added. The group is looking for people to help on the day of the event with things like parking, set up, and take down. Scott Blair, Lee Whiting, or Julie Hance can be contacted if interested. The Select Board will have to approve the use of town property for the festival at the next meeting.

4. PAPER OF RECORD

Jim Condos from the Secretary of State's office and Lisa Loomis from the Vermont Press Association submitted letters in response to the Select Board's decision to use the Chester Telegraph as the Paper of Record. Everyone received a copy of the statements. The submissions were received close to meeting time allowing for little time for review. Lee Gustafson stated he was disappointed with the tone of the presentations given by the Vermont Journal and others at the last Select Board meeting. He felt the board was being bullied into changing their decision and does not want to ever use the Vermont Journal again for the town's Paper of Record. Leigh Dakin pointed out important notices have always been posted at Town Hall and other places around town. If anyone would like to have notices printed and mailed that can be done as well. Heather Chase felt bullied as well and feels it is hard to measure how many people read the Vermont Journal. She thinks the board made the decision based on what is best for the community and their decision has now become personal. Arne Jonynas felt the Vermont Journal should have reached out with constructive dialog instead of the threatening

93 manner in which they used. The town attorney's advice was just an opinion, and the
94 state statute is vague when it comes to this matter. He feels the issue people have with
95 the decision is protecting media revenue, not the best interest of the town. Jeff Holden
96 stated his decision was based on what was presented to him as the Vermont Journal
97 was not present at the time. He feels the board made the decision based on what would
98 best suit the community. Lee Gustafson would like to use the Chester Telegraph and The
99 Commons as the Paper of Record. Arne Jonynas feels the Vermont Journal is a better
100 choice for print because it is circulated to everyone in town.

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102 A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to use The Commons and the Chester Telegraph
103 as the Paper of Record. Seconded by Jeff Holden. Jeff Holden feels The Commons and
104 the Chester Telegraph will be sufficient. Heather Chase stated things can still be posted
105 in other newspapers if needed. The town must be sure things are made easily accessible
106 and this can be done by using the Chester Telegraph, website, and other means. She
107 called Jim Condos' office after reading his email and is waiting for a return call. She will
108 let the board know when that happens. Mike Donoghue from the Vermont Press
109 Association apologized and stated his intention was not to be threatening or
110 condescending. The Select Board voted, and the motion passed with the following
111 votes:

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- 113 • Lee Gustafson- aye
- 114 • Leigh Dakin- aye
- 115 • Heather Chase- aye
- 116 • Arne Jonynas- nay
- 117 • Jeff Holden- aye
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119 5. SPEED LIMIT DISCUSSION

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121 Speed strips will be put down on Andover Road as the weather warms up. Data will be
122 collected in two spots for about two to three weeks. Julie Hance will speak with Rick
123 Cloud about having a part time officer run radar during each shift. Arne Jonynas feels
124 this matter should be handled by enforcement instead of the Select Board. Jeff Holden
125 does not think lowering the speed limit would be beneficial. He said most of the stops
126 he has made on Andover Road have been for expired registrations, not speeding. Julie
127 Hance explained a speed limit is posted based on what the road was designed for and its
128 intended use. She stated not every road is designed for pedestrian traffic. The town is
129 still searching for a part time officer to run radar. A physical police presence will slow
130 people down. Ginger Roper stated though Andover Road was not designed for
131 pedestrian traffic, a lot of people walk there. She feels 50 mph is too fast on that road.
132 Andover Road is a state highway that the town maintains. Changing the speed limit
133 would have to be brought to the state.

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135 6. LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN ADOPTION

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137 A motion was made by Heather Chase to adopt the Local Emergency Management Plan
138 updated April 21, 2021. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed.

139 7. VIETNAM MEMORIAL MONUMENT POLICY ADOPTION

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141 This policy pertains to the Vietnam Memorial Monument located on the Green. The
142 policy has been reviewed with the American Legion. They will confirm if the person is
143 eligible to be put on the memorial and the person requesting the name be added will
144 pay to have it done.

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146 A motion was made by Heather Chase to adopt the Vietnam Memorial Monument
147 Policy. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed. Jeff Holden recused himself.

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149 8. DRB APPOINTMENT

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151 A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to appoint Scott MacDonald to the Development
152 Review Board for a 3-year term ending March 2024. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The
153 motion passed.

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155 9. ADDITIONAL EMPLOYEE FOR WATER/SEWER DEPARTMENT; SUCCESSION PLANNING

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157 Jeff Holden will be thinking about retirement in the coming years. His position requires a
158 lot of training and experience to obtain certifications required to run the department.
159 Adding a fourth position to the department would allow a person to be hired for a
160 smooth transition. This person will also work with other departments as needed. The
161 starting salary would be \$57,000 to \$65,000 depending on experience to be paid out of
162 the Water/Sewer budget. Jeff Holden recused himself as a Select Board member and
163 stated he would like to retire within the next 3 years. The operator of the facility must
164 have a minimum of 2 years' experience in the field and the state only certifies people
165 one day a year. The Select Board gave Julie Hance approval to hire a fourth person to
166 work in the Water/Wastewater Department. She will advertise the position with the
167 hopes of finding someone with experience in the field but will train the right candidate.

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169 10. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA

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- The financial review will be on the next agenda.
 - The data from the road strips on Andover Road will be available for the second meeting in May. Lee Gustafson would like to have the data a few days prior to the meeting.
 - Congratulations goes out to the Whiting Library for a grant they were awarded to do an assessment of the library and the courses offered there.
 - Chester Townscape asked to use the rendering of Town Hall done by Lou Waters for their new walking tour brochure. Lou Waters said the town purchased the picture from him 20 years ago so permission would have to come from the Select Board. Everyone approved of the use for the brochure.
 - Julie Hance will have Cathy Hasbrouck reach out to Scott MacDonald to give him information about the Development Review Board.
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11. EXECUTIVE SESSION: ACT 250 PERMIT APPEAL

A motion was made by Leigh Dakin to enter Executive Session for the purpose of the Act 250 Permit appeal. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The Select Board entered Executive Session at 7:12 p.m. Julie Hance was allowed in.

A motion was made by Heather Chase to exit Executive Session. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The Select Board exited Executive Session at 7:30 p.m.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to appeal the Act 250 Permit as issued due to many factors. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed with one abstaining.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION: POTENTIAL ACQUISITION OF OLD JIFFY MART

A motion was made by Heather Chase to enter Executive Session for the purpose of the potential acquisition of the old Jiffy Mart. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The Select Board entered Executive Session at 7:34 p.m. Julie Hance was allowed in.

A motion was made by Leigh Dakin to exit Executive Session. Seconded by Jeff Holden. The Select Board exited Executive Session at 7:45 p.m.

No action taken.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION: REVIEW & APPROVE TOWN MANAGER CONTRACT

A motion was made by Leigh Dakin to enter Executive Session for the purpose of a review and approval of the Town Manager Contract. Seconded by Jeff Holden. The Select Board entered Executive Session at 7:45 p.m. Julie Hance was allowed in.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to exit Executive Session. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The Select Board exited Executive Session at 7:50 p.m.

A motion was made by Heather Chase to authorize Arne Jonynas, Select Board Chair, to sign the employment agreement between the Town of Chester and Julie Hance as Town Manager. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed.

14. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Jeff Holden to adjourn. Seconded by Heather Chase. The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.