

TOWN OF CHESTER
SELECT BOARD
Meeting Minutes
July 21, 2021

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

VISITORS: SAPATV; Robert Nied; Tim Roper; Cheryl Joy Lipton; Shawn Cunningham; Melody Reed; Patrick Corcoran; Pat Corcoran; Judith Hallberg; Kathy Pellett; Judy Henning; Kate Matracia; David Carey; Steve Mancuso; Jeff Oster; Huzon Stewart; Gail Stewart; Alison Clarkson; Scott Blair; Bev Lauren; Penny Benelli; Gary Baker; Lauren Baker; Thomas Bock; Lynn Russell; Joy Slaughter; Bill Dakin; Nick Boke; Beverly Boke; Ginger Roper; Frank Kelley; Vanessa Rule; Sam (last name unknown); Luna (last name unknown); Sue Bailey; Linda Diak; Arianna Knapp

Meeting was held via Zoom and at the Town Hall.

1. COMMUNITY GREENHOUSE; PUBLIC FORUM

This Agenda item was moved to the first spot. Cheryl Joy Lipton, Chester Community Greenhouse Committee President, Melody Reed and Robert Nied were given a 100 foot by 32-foot 1936 Lord and Burnham greenhouse made out of galvanized steel and cast iron from Walpole, NH. Robert Nied spoke about the greenhouse features and how it operates. The committee was sent documentation about the greenhouse from the New York Botanical Gardens archives. Their plan for this working greenhouse will be to restore it with new paint and double painted glass windows to make it a 3-4 season use structure. An engineering analysis will be done to be sure the structure can hold up to the proposed upgrades. The growing space will include mostly raised beds with some ultra-raised beds for the disabled. Eventually, they would like to add outdoor growing spaces and landscaping. The greenhouse will be used to share ideas, learn for the school, and as a landmark for the town of Chester.

The committee is a nonprofit 501(c) (3) with plans to have the greenhouse self-sustain and be self-funded. Taxpayers will not be paying for any of the greenhouse expenses with their property tax money. No work will be started until the project is fully funded. The 5-year rolling plan will be updated annually. Input from the community is being encouraged by the committee and the Select Board will be involved. New members are urged to join.

Two sites are being considered for the location of the greenhouse. Robert Nied explained the benefits of the two different locations. Behind the Academy building

45 would be ideal because of the character of the neighborhood, new walking trail, and
46 other reasons. The Canal Street location is a larger space near the pocket park and
47 swinging bridge. This location has water, electric, and space to create parking.
48

49 Steve Mancuso questioned the process as being a self-proclaimed business selling to the
50 public. He asked why this is on the Select Board Agenda, not the Development Review
51 Board (DRB). Arne Jonyas explained the two sites are town owned property and the idea
52 is still in the preliminary stages. The board gave the committee a Letter of Intent
53 showing support for the project. The site must be given approval before the committee
54 can go before the DRB. Gary Baker owns property on Grafton Street and asked why the
55 Pinnacle was not being considered as a location for the greenhouse. Tim Roper stated
56 there is not enough level ground at the Pinnacle. Susan Bailey approves of the
57 greenhouse as a former scout troop leader. She believes it will be a great place for
58 learning and a great way for people to grow their own food. The fee will be kept as low
59 as possible if not free for member. Beverly Lauren voiced concerns over the huge
60 undertaking of pulling the project together. Cheryl Joy Lipton stated Beverly Lauren can
61 contact her and she will address the list of concerns. Beverly Lauren may join the
62 committee in the future. Jerry Stewart owns land west of the Academy Building. He is in
63 favor of the project, but not at the Academy Building location. The property located
64 there is supposed to be used to expand the cemetery. Arne Jonynas explained a study
65 was done on the land and it was determined not many graves can be placed
66 underground due to the flood zone. Jeff Oster said the committee's explanation for the
67 use of the greenhouse sounds commercial and residential. Robert Nied explained the
68 greenhouse will not be used for profit and this will be explained in the user agreement
69 signed by members. The greenhouse is being stored in a donated storage facility in
70 Chester.

71
72 Lauren Baker from Grafton Street asked what the Letter of Intent stated and wanted to
73 know how the committee will ultimately decide which site will be chosen. Julie Hance
74 explained the letter was given to show support for the project and will help the
75 committee when applying for grants. She will get Lauren Baker a copy of the letter. The
76 DRB process will be followed, and the community will be notified giving proper
77 opportunity for further input. Nick Boke just moved back to Chester and stated he likes
78 the Academy Building spot. Linda Diak approves of the project but showed concern for
79 the new owners of the Hugging Bear property. This property is now a home with small
80 children. Arne Jonynas stated the driveway to access behind the Academy Building is a
81 shared driveway with the old Hugging Bear. There is also a Right of Way between the
82 Chester House and old Hugging Bear to access this spot. There will only be foot traffic
83 allowed to access the greenhouse if approval is granted for the Academy Building spot.
84

85 Frank Kelley spoke about the importance of the project and how it will impact the
86 Elementary School students that can walk to the greenhouse. Scott Blair is not in favor
87 of allowing the greenhouse to be put at the Academy Building site. He explained the

88 parking for the business on the Green is already an issue and the Chester Fall Festival
89 has used the spot for many years. The festival committee is planning events for the area
90 and this would take away from that going forward. Julie Hance received a letter from
91 Tamasin Kekic showing support for the project. Arne Jonynas stated there is still a lot
92 needing to be clarified before moving the project forward. Cheryl Joy Lipton thanked
93 everyone for coming to the meeting and advised people to reach out with questions or
94 concerns.

95
96 2. APPROVE MINUTES FROM THE July 7, 2021 SELECTBOARD MEETING

97
98 A motion was made by Heather Chase to approve the Minutes of the July 7, 2021 Select
99 Board meeting as written. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

100
101 Lee Gustafson pointed out on line 14 “review” should be “approve”.

102
103 3. CITIZEN COMMENTS/ANSWERS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

104
105 No Citizens Comment.

106
107 4. OLD BUSINESS

108
109 Whiting Library: Colleen Garvey resigned and a future appointment will be needed to fill
110 her spot. Arne Jonynas thanked her for the time she spent as a trustee.

111
112 Gravel Pit: The property has been cleared and brush is being burned.

113
114 Greenhouse: The Letter of Intent has been signed and given to the committee.

115
116 Secondary Well: Scott Stewart sent a letter stating he is not in favor of a secondary well
117 at the Jeffrey Well site.

118
119 Cell Towers: T-Mobile will be submitting a proposal to be added to the cell tower.

120
121 Public Safety Building: The move in date will be in August. An Open House is scheduled
122 for September 12, 2021, in the afternoon. Events for this are being worked out with
123 some traditional Firehouse moving practices and a parade included. Jeff Holden would
124 like to have a flag ceremony. Julie Hance said he should speak with Debbie Aldrich about
125 the flags because she has something in mind with the American Legion Auxiliary.

126
127 Ambulance Service: The service will hold a work fair on August 29, 2021, from 1 p.m. to
128 4 p.m. at the new building. Recruiting is taking place already with a small sign on bonus
129 being offered to certified EMT’s. A class will be held at the new building for interested
130 applicants.

132 ARPA Funding: A letter has been written to the U.S. Department of Treasury asking that
133 the money be split up by town, not county. VLCT is advocating for towns, and if
134 approved, Chester would receive \$630,000.
135

136 5. VENDOR PERMIT; AURORA'S
137

138 The Select Board signed the vendor permit for Aurora's food truck to allow her to sell
139 food at games and events. She spoke to Matt McCarthy, and he approves. Lee
140 Gustafson mentioned adding 2021 to the permit and making the permit exclusive to
141 Aurora McCarthy herself.
142

143 A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the permit for Aurora's food truck to
144 sell food at games and other events in 2021 exclusive to Aurora McCarthy. Seconded by
145 Heather Chase. The motion passed.
146

147 6. CHANGE IN MUNICIPAL RETIREMENT PROGRAM FOR POLICE DEPARTMENT
148

149 Changing the Police Department retirement program from Group B to Group C would
150 increase the budget approximately \$6,778 a year. This change would take effect July 1,
151 2022. The officers working for Chester PD at the time would have the option to change
152 to the 20-year plan or stay where they are at. New hires would not have the choice. Jeff
153 Holden abstained from the vote.
154

155 A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to read as follows: The Town of Chester presently
156 participates in VMERS group B for its qualified employees. We elect to offer to the
157 category of Police the higher group C, effective July 1, 2022. Any existing Police will be
158 administered an election by the VMERS office to remain in their present group B or
159 transfer to the higher group C effective July 1, 2022. Any newly hired police officer after
160 this approval date, will not be given this election and will automatically be enrolled in
161 group C effective July 1, 2022. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed.
162
163

164 7. SPEED LIMIT REVIEW; ANDOVER ROAD, HIGH STREET, RIVER STREET
165

166 The Select Board was given the findings from the speed studies done on River Street,
167 Andover Road, and High Street. The traffic data from River Street and High Street are
168 not concerning. However, the data from the Andover Road study found most people
169 traveled the road at 50 mph or over. The Police Department generally allows drivers to
170 travel about 10 mph over the limit because their speedometers vary in some degree.
171 Rick Cloud suggested patrolling the area more aggressively during the times of day when
172 speeding occurs most. Julie Hance will find out what times of day that is and suggest to
173 the officers they stop more people. Write warnings to offenders just above the limit and
174 tickets to repeat offenders and ones with excessive speed. The Select Board would like

175 to add more signs to the area to grab driver's attention. They suggested getting some
176 flashing signs or moving the sign at the end of Church Street to Andover Road. Ginger
177 Roper stated she would like the limit to be lowered from 40 mph to 30 mph. Julie Hance
178 will look into accident data from the area for the board and verify the class of the road
179 with Mark Pickering.

180

181 8. FINANCIAL REVIEW

182

183 The July health insurance bill was paid in June. The pool has needed a lot of work. The
184 garage door at the Town Garage needed to be fixed. There are some concerns over the
185 bond project. The Town Garage estimate is \$140,000 over budget due to rising
186 construction costs. Items have been taken out of the project such as the sprinkler
187 system, which will be added in the future. There are \$135,000 worth of items for the
188 Public Safety building that were not budgeted for. A total of \$400,000 is needed to
189 complete both projects. Voter approval will be needed to come up with the funds. Some
190 of the Town Garage repairs are necessary and will still have to happen to keep the
191 building in use.

192

193 Jeff Holden spoke about the water/wastewater budget. He has gotten a lot of use out of
194 the new trailer. Adding a man to the department has made it easier to get things done.
195 Lee Gustafson stated he has experience with groundwater and will have a discussion
196 with Scott Stewart about the Jeffery Well station.

197

198 9. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA

199

- 200 • Truck loan documents
- 201 • Health Order from Amanda Silva
- 202 • Bridge on Brookside Trail
- 203 • Update on Preston Bristow as Zoning Administrator

204

205 10. ADJOURN

206

207 A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to adjourn. Seconded by Jeff Holden. The meeting
208 adjourned at 8:40 p.m.