

1 **TOWN OF CHESTER**  
2 **SELECTBOARD MEETING**  
3 **May 4, 2022, Draft Minutes**

4 **Board Members Present:** Arne Jonynas, Ben Whalen, and Lee Gustafson, Heather Chase and at  
5 Town Hall; and Leigh Dakin via Zoom.

6 **Staff Present:** Julie Hance, Town Manager, at Town Hall; and Susan Bailey, Secretary via Zoom.

7 **Visitors Present:** Bill Lindsay, Leslie Thorsen, Reisa Alexander, Tom Diak, Robert Nied, Shawn  
8 Cunningham, Amanda Silva, Arianna Knapp, Steve Vertefuelle, Barre Pinske, Jeannie Wade, and  
9 Matt Wade at Town Hall; and Craig Miller, Ethan Weinstein, Joy Slaughter, SAPA TV, Linda  
10 Diak, Cynthia Prairie, and Hugh Quinn via Zoom.

11 **Call to Order**

12 Arne Jonynas called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the pledge of allegiance. He welcomed  
13 everyone to the meeting.

14  
15 **Agenda Item 1, Approve minutes from the April 20, 2022, Meeting**

16 Lee moved and Leigh seconded to approve the April 20<sup>th</sup> minutes. Arne asked if there were any  
17 changes and there were none. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously, and the  
18 minutes were approved.

19 **Agenda Item 2, Citizens Comments/Answers from Previous Meeting**

20 No comments.

21 **Agenda Item 3, Old Business**

22 Report given by the Town Manager:

23 Solar Field

24 Julie sent in the exercise notice which was received and acceptable. Julie is seeking an appraiser  
25 and found two firms: one out of Boston, which is a nationwide appraiser; and one in Burlington.  
26 She will get costs from both and their availability. She is still trying to collect all the data from  
27 Green Mountain and upon receipt, Lee and she will start the analysis. Bill Lindsay may also help.

28 Upcoming Community Meetings

29 Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup> will be the ARPA Community Forum where Chester residents/citizens will offer  
30 suggestions on ways to spend the approximate \$900,000 ARPA money, which sounds like a lot  
31 but isn't. She hopes to hear how the community wants their tax dollars spent. It needs to be  
32 allocated by 2024 and spent by 2026. She has the department heads' lists of what they would like  
33 the money spent on but would refrain from sharing it on the 9<sup>th</sup> so as not to hinder people from  
34 offering their thoughts and ideas. They will have future meetings to discuss ideas.

35 Thursday, May 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. will be the Public Safety Forum at the new Public Safety Building.  
36 It will be an opportunity for Chester residents to speak with the chiefs of the police, fire, and  
37 ambulance about what public safety means to them and things they would like to see in order to  
38 start bridging and have open communication between the public safety services and the community  
39 of Chester. There will be more coming.

1 Sunday, June 5<sup>th</sup> from 7:30 to 10:00 is the first Public Safety Department Community Breakfast.  
2 The cost will be \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. They are hoping people come to support it and  
3 that it will be a great opportunity for the public to connect with the Public Safety Department.

#### 4 Traffic Counts

5 Julie received an email from Regional Planning and the State will be doing traffic counts on Route  
6 10, Route 103 South of Flamstead, and Route 11, east of the Green. They will be using strips. They  
7 will share the data with Julie. She was more excited about the traffic counts on 103 because she  
8 was hoping to write a grant for a scoping study for a sidewalk to the high school. The traffic counts  
9 will help. Lee asked if it would be both count and speed. Julie said just count. Lee asked if they  
10 could collect speed data. Julie said they could get speed data from their signs. Lee pointed out  
11 there were no signs on Route 10 and Julie said she would ask about Route 10. Arne asked for any  
12 crash data and Julie said she received the updated crash data yesterday. Arne was pleased they  
13 would be able to put it all together.

#### 14 **Agenda Item 4, Police Advisory Committee**

15 Arne said there was an update on a Police Advisory Committee they had been discussing for about  
16 a year. There were reasons why it hasn't gone as quickly as some thought they should. Jim Baker  
17 will start the study at the end of May. Part of the reason for the delay was conflicting schedules  
18 between Jim and the town. Some of the questions they had were what an advisory committee  
19 would look like and did the board and/or community want an advisory committee. It came up at  
20 their last meeting under citizens comments but that limited discussion. It should be a posted agenda  
21 item in order to have an in-depth discussion. Jim's questions were how the board wants to proceed  
22 with it and what is their take on it. Lee said the question that came immediately to mind was what  
23 the role, responsibility, and scope of the committee was. He didn't know the answer to those  
24 questions. He hoped when the review of the police department and current policies was finished it  
25 would answer those questions, including whether the advisory committee was needed.

26 Heather asked if they had reviewed different policies a year or so ago and Julie said they had.  
27 Heather thought that was when they decided they needed input from the consultant and so she  
28 thought, from what they knew, it would be a good thing to have but they needed clarification on  
29 what the direction was. Lee asked her what she saw the role of the commission being. Heather  
30 recalled reading what other towns had done, which varied from reviewing things to participating  
31 and hiring to community policing events. As she recalled, some of those documents they read of  
32 how other towns were doing it, it was really an interfacing between the police and the public and  
33 giving feedback. She didn't think transparency and participation could hurt. Lee agreed. In her  
34 view, she thought it was a good thing but was not ready to answer what Lee had asked. She wasn't  
35 educated about it enough yet to know what the community needed. Julie's idea of doing it as part  
36 of the assessment seemed logical to her at the time. COVID and other things have pushed it down  
37 further than they expected. However, to Julie's earlier point, they want to set up and do it right if  
38 they're going to do it.

39 Leigh asked if after Jim has done the police department internal assessment, could he present his  
40 thoughts and directions to the board that they may want to consider. Arne thought it would be part  
41 of the presentation after he has prepared the document. In preparation of the document, there would  
42 be quite a few community forums to gather public input. Arne said they had discussed an  
43 oversights advisory and he thought that was the direction the board wanted to go as far as not  
44 oversight because it was a little too much power in the control of citizens who weren't familiar

1 with what was going on in the police department and involved more legal aspects to it as far as  
2 information sharing. He thought any committee they set up that helps with communication and  
3 getting the message out between the police department and the public and helps transparency  
4 happen would be a good thing. What shape or form it would take could be determined as they go  
5 forward. He thought Jim Baker's report would play a big part. Since it was coming up relatively  
6 soon, it would help. Arne asked Julie to fill them in on how it would work.

7 Julie said she would be meeting with him next week to finalize the scope of his study, but it would  
8 start with him meeting with all their police officers. He would conduct a full review of how the  
9 department operates, their policies, their procedures, and their day-to-day activity. He would then  
10 speak with each officer independently and learn of any concerns they have or ideas they would  
11 like to see. They have ideas how they would like to see the department improve. She and Jim have  
12 talked about a series of focus group meetings where maybe there are focus groups of businesses,  
13 charity groups in towns, concerned citizens who live outside the village, and concerned citizens  
14 who live inside the village. What policing means to those groups and demographics is different.  
15 He wants to meet with a good cross section of the community and find out what they're looking  
16 for. Community policing has become a big tagline, but it has different meanings to different people  
17 and is not just one definition. The community will be heavily involved. As a result of that, there  
18 should be a report that guides them where to go. This is what your community wants including  
19 how you should tailor your police department, hire more officers, or spend more time running  
20 radar and outsource other things. Jim can guide them through the whole process. He's digesting  
21 the conversation he and Julie had the other day. He has a very good reputation and is hard to get  
22 and they managed to snag him, and Julie was very happy about that.

23 Heather asked if she told him about the community committee. Julie said she let him know there  
24 has been conversations about having an advisory committee and he will include pros and cons of  
25 things to consider if that is the route they decide to take.

26 Ben said Colonel Baker had state police experience and was recently assigned to help corrections  
27 figure out some things and at the same time, was heavily involved with mental health of first  
28 responders throughout the state. Ben said, for him, he wasn't ready to start anything. He thought  
29 it would be good to wait for his study before acting. He had confidence the Colonel would do a  
30 great job. Leigh agreed with Ben.

31 Arne asked if they could get a document or see a sample of an evaluation he had done for another  
32 police department. Julie would ask. Julie said Chester's is a little different because it has a strong  
33 community element that others don't. Julie said they are tailored. Arne said maybe the question  
34 would be something similar or related to what they are looking for because if it was totally off  
35 base, it wouldn't be helpful.

36 Heather asked what timeframe it would be until they had a report in hand if he was coming at the  
37 end of May. Julie had been told a good 6 weeks because of the level of community involvement  
38 Julie was asking for. Heather thought it would make some people happy to know they would be  
39 discussing it in a couple of months. She thought it was quick.

40 Arne said part of the discussion was to get the word out to the public to ensure them they haven't  
41 forgotten about it. They were doing something and in Julie's words, they just want to make sure  
42 they're doing it right. Leigh agreed.

43 Lee wanted to encourage everyone to tell their neighbors about it. They want everyone in the

1 community to have an opportunity to be part of this issue. Leigh agreed.

2 Ben said he wouldn't call it an issue. It was a time for growth and if they go about it as an issue,  
3 there will always be frustrations from someone with the police department but growing and seeing  
4 how they can make the communication better. He thought communication and growth was key.  
5 He said as far as the communication and involvement, what are the things they love about the  
6 police department and what are the things they need to make better.

7 Julie said it was an important reminder that the conversation started more than a year ago and it  
8 wasn't just being done for the police department. She is going through each town department and  
9 conducting internal assessments. Police, fire, and ambulance are departments that she must hire an  
10 external person to assess because she doesn't know their jobs. Ambulance was done first because  
11 it was the department that needed to be rebuilt so they brought in Dan Manza last year. It was  
12 successful. They made some internal changes, and the department is growing and doing much  
13 better. Police is all timing with the new building, and it seemed appropriate. For fire they did an  
14 internal assessment. All the firemen were spoken to, and they made some changes. She was now  
15 working with public works. It wasn't only the police but was part of a very long process of  
16 assessing each department. She deals with department heads daily and almost never with the staff  
17 under them. So, part of the assessment has been one on ones with staff learning their concerns. It's  
18 been a good learning opportunity. They are people she has worked with for 18 years. She's learned  
19 a lot that she did not know.

20 Heather said all those activities not only bring out concerns but, to Ben's point, a good assessment  
21 evaluates the standards for x, y, and z. If it's going well, don't change it. It provides information.  
22 She suspected they would receive positive feedback, as well. Arne said it was important to  
23 emphasize the positive, as Ben said. Leigh thought it was excellent.

24 Jeannie Wade spoke and said when they make the committee up, to have people on the committee  
25 in law enforcement, emergency dispatch, community building, people who know the field and to  
26 keep politics out of it making infrastructure strong. Chester has a few police officers who are high  
27 in the ranks and have been in for years. She wanted people on the committee who don't have a  
28 political agenda but want better emergency services. Her father was a bigtime police officer for  
29 many years and always talked about community building as a police officer, which starts with the  
30 police officers building a relationship with residents. She would start with giving them the tools  
31 and ability to have conversations with people. Julie said that was the goal. Arne thanked her for  
32 the points and hoped she would be involved in the process as they went forward.

33 **Agenda Item 5, Public Safety Building Update on 5-year Plan**

34 Lee gave a presentation as Chair of the Building Committee. He gave history of what they had  
35 done over the past couple of months. He said they had discussions about the long-term goal of the  
36 emergency services departments and how they build community for that. The Emergency Services  
37 Building Committee has met four or five times and has developed a long-term plan that includes  
38 some on the 5-year level. They addressed community outreach because they want people to feel  
39 comfortable coming to the emergency services departments and know who they're dealing with,  
40 so they are planning to hold some open houses annually with demonstrations at the new building  
41 and similar events as needed or as opportunities arise. They held an open house when the building  
42 was first opened. It was a daylong event that included food, demonstrations, and tours of the  
43 building and meeting emergency services personnel. They will host dinners during the wintertime,  
44 special activities, and the National Night Out will be held at the new building. Having the

1 opportunity for people to feel welcome at the new building and help people understand to access  
2 the building from the front. Currently, there is training inside the building and the area behind the  
3 building. The area behind is being used by police, fire, and emergency medical services training  
4 and will be used for regional training attended by other communities. They want to encourage  
5 safety and while it's a public building, it's not necessarily a community building. They want to  
6 encourage people to access the building from the front. The five-year plan is to do something with  
7 the flat area in the back to enhance training options. They would be a host facility, which would  
8 waive the fee for Chester personnel attending. They could use the area for emergency helicopter  
9 landings. Currently, there are 1 to 2 a month and in order to accommodate a landing in town, they  
10 need 3 to 6 people and 2 to 3 vehicles. If the facility behind the building was used, they wouldn't  
11 need anyone available because it would already be preapproved. It would require a little bit of  
12 work to the property to make it level. One of the plans for the building was to have lighting back  
13 there and although it wasn't added in the construction, the electric conduits are in place for the  
14 lighting needs. They could add resources for fire training or dog training in the back of the  
15 property. They would like to add a sidewalk in the front of the building. Adding a crosswalk is  
16 something they'd like to do but they may need state approval as it crosses a state highway. They  
17 also discussed landscaping. They thought a memorial park, like what the fire academy has, would  
18 be a good addition. It would have something for each of the three services with flagpoles in the  
19 center for the U.S. and Vermont flags and one for each service and seating bench and an area for  
20 gathering for memorial services and an adjustment to the parking areas and adding striping to make  
21 the parking stand out. They would like to direct traffic to the front of the building and limit access  
22 specifically to areas where emergency vehicles travel. A four-foot black chain-link fence running  
23 from the front along the southern property line all the way to the back would create a safety barrier.  
24 400 feet of four-foot fence would cost \$14,150. This would address safety issues with training and  
25 for emergency services personnel as the training includes ATVs, dogs, and other things. 5 out of  
26 the 24 fire department personnel are women and 17 out of 20 of the ambulance personnel are also  
27 women. Just having that fence would provide a higher level of safety for visitors and personnel.

28 An unidentified woman in the audience asked how a four-foot fence would protect women. Lee  
29 said people are accessing the property from the sides instead of entering from the front. Lee said  
30 the fence would slow down people for access and direct them to the front of the building. She  
31 asked if a four-foot fence made sense to him in terms of security. She asked if there was a  
32 documented system to see who breaches the fence. She asked if there was a security system. Lee  
33 said they have cameras and there's been documented incidents of people accessing the property.  
34 She wasn't understanding how the fence was effective. She said they were redirecting people who  
35 wanted to be predatory. Lee said they were funneling people to the front where they have people  
36 in the offices in the front during the day.

37 Arne thanked Lee for the report and said it was a catalyst for a lot of positive things and it was  
38 good to see that a group was getting together to discuss a five-year plan. He was aware security  
39 issues had brought it about and was thankful they were addressing it. He hoped the fence looked  
40 inviting from both sides. Lee said that's why they thought a four-foot fence would be better  
41 because you could still see over it, and through it. Arne recalled zoning pushback they received  
42 when the helicopter was first discussed, so he wondered if that would be part of the process. Julie  
43 said they weren't talking about a helicopter pad. She said currently they land wherever they have  
44 space. Arne thought wherever they have space, and a specific area were two different items. He  
45 wasn't sure if it was a zoning issue but was worth looking into. Heather thought with a fence going  
46 up that it would be nice to get the abutting neighbors feedback and how they felt about helicopters

1 landing there all the time. Lee clarified that 1 to 2 helicopters a month didn't mean all times of the  
2 day and that emergencies require the need and then referenced the horrific accident on Route 103.  
3 But he understood what she was saying and wasn't disagreeing. Heather thought when they decide  
4 to allow helicopters land routinely it would be good public communication to reach out to the  
5 people who live there and get their buy-in before they do it. It was just being a good neighbor. She  
6 wanted the costs of the helicopter landing area versus the helicopter landing at the Catholic Church  
7 or softball field. Lee said the lighting wasn't related to the helicopter though would be beneficial.  
8 The flattening was related to the training area though would be an added benefit once the flattening  
9 was done and the lighting installed it would assist with the landing but wasn't necessarily directed  
10 at the helicopter aspect. He wanted to make sure they all understand the flat area behind the  
11 building was for training and would be a huge benefit for them as a town to have an area flat, open,  
12 and secure that they can conduct training.

13 Arne offered the floor to Ben who had indicated he wanted to talk. Ben said the concept of regular  
14 helicopter landings needed definition. He thought 2 a month was high and was probably closer to  
15 1 a month. He thought they should have good communication with the neighbors. As far as options,  
16 when the fire department is called for a helicopter landing, the first thought is whether anyone is  
17 attending church, if the parking lot is full, where do they relocate, if necessary, how much time  
18 they have, and needed coordinates. The idea of a landing zone is a place that has the operational  
19 requirements that DHART is looking for. Heather said the Springfield helicopter pad was an area  
20 with fence around it. Ben said the concerns of hazards are trees and powerlines that may obstruct  
21 the helicopter. As far as lighting, it was minimal. They suggest the fields of the schools and at the  
22 same time, they don't want that. Heather said she wasn't against it but didn't know the pricing on  
23 things. Ben said with respect to a fence, as someone who has been at the building multiple times  
24 and then suddenly someone is walking their dog outback who shouldn't be there, or there's kids  
25 cutting through and so on, there's an amount of liability. To what Lee was saying, directing them  
26 to the front, there's no chance of someone getting hit and that was a big reason for it. They want it  
27 to look friendly and inviting but at the same time, it's his opinion behind the building is not a great  
28 place for people to be.

29 Arne agreed that in an emergency, it would be nice to have a designated place for the helicopter.  
30 Ben said he oversees the campus for the Fire Academy, and they have designated viewing areas  
31 for people to watch but those are the sections they've determined are safe. This was no different.  
32 He clarified the Fire Academy, itself, does not have a memorial. There is one on campus, but it's  
33 operated by someone else.

34 Arne was glad there was a committee considering all the aspects of the emergency services  
35 building, as it is new, and they don't know what changes it may need, or what the future holds.  
36 Ben said the elementary school reached out to him this year and it was nice to suggest a field trip  
37 to the fire station and both kindergarten classes will be coming. They would be giving them ice  
38 cream, too. They would not have been able to do that at the old station. Heather said it was a great  
39 community outreach. Leigh thought so too. Hopefully it would become a tradition going to the  
40 station.

41 Lee wanted to open it up to Steve Vertefuelle and Amanda Silva.

42 Steve said Lee hit the nail on the head and every point they were trying to make. The biggest thing  
43 is public safety. During training, they don't want to worry about someone coming over where they  
44 are and getting hurt because accidents happen. Heather said it was nice for her to hear positive

1 things going on about building. She thought it had made a big change. Steve said the amount of  
2 people that stop by at the new station versus the old station was 30 to 40 compared to maybe 6 in  
3 the 6 or 7 years he's been here. Heather said the lettering looked fantastic. Steve thanked everyone.  
4 Arne thanked Lee and his committee for their work. Lee said it was a great group and he  
5 appreciated their efforts.

6 **Agenda Item 6, Adopt Local Emergency Operations Plan**

7 Julie said they sign it every year and it's required to obtain grant funding. This year there was a  
8 change in ambulance chief. Dan is gone and Amanda Silva stepped up. They also changed the  
9 primary emergency operations center from Town Hall to the new emergency services building.  
10 Other than that, the content was reviewed by the chiefs and there were no other major changes.  
11 Heather moved for Julie to sign the local emergency operations plan dated May 4, 2022, and Lee  
12 seconded. There was no discussion. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

13 **Agenda Item 7, Liquor License and Entertainment Approval**

14 A 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class liquor license for Bea Better Food Company at 90 on The Commons was signed  
15 by the board members.

16 An entertainment permit for PJ's Kitchen was signed by the board members.

17 **Agenda Item 8, Local Cannabis Control Commission Resolution adoption & Potential**  
18 **Candidate Interviews and Appointments**

19 In their packets they got a resolution for a local cannabis control commission for Chester, Vermont.  
20 They previously had said 5 members, 2 of which would be Selectboard members. Their terms  
21 would vary. Arne wanted to touch base on the makeup of the committee. The fact they had 7 people  
22 interested, he questioned whether they wanted Selectboard members on it or just leave it as  
23 citizens. Lee preferred to have Selectboard members as part of the committee from the standpoint  
24 of having leaders from town involved. Leigh agreed. They would be able to answer questions and  
25 give guidance as to what the board may be thinking and bring topics of discussion or questions  
26 back to the board. Heather thought either way was fine. Leigh liked having Selectboard members.  
27 She thought the state would be conducting training and didn't think they had moved too far ahead  
28 because they had a low workforce. She said there were two willing volunteers from the  
29 Selectboard, and she thought an odd number of members was best, so 5 or 7, including the two  
30 Selectboard members. She had read through the resolution and was happy to support it. Arne said  
31 the state was just starting to gear up. He said VLCT had a training on Tuesday, May 24<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m.  
32 and would be for members of the local cannabis control commissions to ask questions and learn.

33 Ben said the biggest thing that had been eye opening for him was what the commission could do,  
34 which was just reviewing and to an extent, not much. He wanted to make sure everyone on the  
35 commission was up to speed on the role they would be filling. He wondered if that was something  
36 that would have a guide or if it was just the commission. Julie said the commission would nominate  
37 themselves a chair and vice chair, but she could certainly attend the meetings. Ben said he wasn't  
38 signing her up for that. He thought 7, which was an odd number, would work. He thought 9 was  
39 too large. Arne suggested wording of a board of 5 to 7 people and up to 2 Selectboard members.  
40 In this case, they would have 5 citizens and 2 Selectboard members. People drop out and it could  
41 change. Arne said the Selectboard could decide they don't need to be involved and step back.  
42 Heather thought they could do 1 and 6. Arne said that type of wording would give them some  
43 flexibility and Heather thought that was good. No more than 2, and 5 to 7 members was agreed

1 upon for wording. Leigh asked where the resolution for the local cannabis control commission  
2 came from. Julie said it was attached to the guidance document she gave them at the last meeting.  
3 It was the resolution the state recommended. The two “be it further” clauses were specific to  
4 Chester relating to the size of the commission and terms of appointment was language Julie added.  
5 Arne read the resolution for the local cannabis control commission, Chester, Vermont:  
6 Whereas, Title 7, Chapter 33 of Vermont State Statues was Amended in 2020 to provide for the  
7 safe, equitable, and effective regulation of Adult-Use Cannabis; and  
8 Whereas, 7 VSA § 863(b) provides that a municipality that hosts any cannabis establishment may  
9 choose to establish a cannabis control commission; and  
10 Whereas, a Local Control Commission may issue and administer local control license for cannabis  
11 establishment within the municipality; and  
12 Whereas, the commission may condition the issuance of a local control license upon compliance  
13 with any bylaw adopted pursuant to 24 VSA §4414 or ordinance regulating signs or public  
14 nuisances adopted pursuant to 24 VSA §2291; and  
15 Whereas, the Local Control Commission may suspend or revoke a local control license for a  
16 violation of any condition placed upon the license pursuant to 7 VSA §863(b); and  
17 Whereas, prior to issuing a cannabis establishment license the State Cannabis Control Board must  
18 ensure that an applicant has obtained a local control license if a municipality has established a  
19 Local Control Commission;  
20 Now Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Selectboard of the Town of Chester has voted affirmatively  
21 to form a Local Cannabis Control Commission effective as of the date of this resolution.  
22 Be it further resolved that, the Local Commission will consist of five to seven members in total  
23 that will include individuals from the Chester community as well as no more than two members  
24 of the Chester Selectboard.  
25 Be it further resolved, that the Chester Selectboard shall appoint members of the local commission  
26 to serve initial terms as follows: two members shall serve a three year term; one member shall  
27 serve a two year term; and two members shall serve a one year term. Thereafter, any positions  
28 filled by the Selectboard members will remain as one year term and all other members shall serve  
29 for terms of three years.  
30 Be it further resolved, the Local Cannabis Control Commission of the town will: a) Review  
31 information provided by the State Cannabis Control Board; b) Review information provided by  
32 applicants for the approval or denial of a local control license; c) Will communicate approval,  
33 denial, or conditions placed on the local control license to licensees and to the State Cannabis  
34 Control Board; and d) Comply with the provisions of 7 V.S.A. § 863 and Cannabis Control Board  
35 Rule 2.14.  
36 Said resolution is hereby approved this 4<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2022 by the Town of Chester Selectboard.  
37 Heather moved and Leigh seconded a motion to accept the resolution. There was no further  
38 discussion. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

39 **Agenda Item 10, Executive Session Interviews for Local Cannabis Control Commission**

40 Arne said they were going to do individual interviews in executive session, but he didn’t think



1 there was much of a need to do it in executive session and if the board agreed, they could say in  
2 open session what was in their letter regarding why they wanted to be on the commission and tell  
3 a little bit about themselves. After they hear from all the candidates, they would hold an executive  
4 session to discuss the appointments. Heather and Leigh were fine with it. The remaining members  
5 were, as well.

6 Susan Bailey, recording secretary, said she moved to Chester a couple years ago and moved from  
7 the Northern Virginia/DC metro area and was originally from rural Pennsylvania. She had spent  
8 most of her life working in the legal profession and held an associates degree in paralegal studies.  
9 She has held various board positions, including public school board, Big Brothers/Big Sisters,  
10 library board, and the Penn State Cooperative Extension. She thought some of the talents she would  
11 bring to the board were being described as a mediator and being diplomatic. She thought they were  
12 good talents to have in a board dealing with various personalities. She had worked in human  
13 resources and thought her legal experience would be helpful. Arne thanked Susan.

14 Robert Nied said it was important to him to be involved in the community he lives in as it was  
15 good for him and made him feel like he was contributing something. He is currently involved in  
16 several areas in Chester. When he first moved to Vermont, he spent a year as the town  
17 administrator and zoning administrator for the town of Londonderry. He was involved in zoning,  
18 administration, and regulatory issues. He thought the experience he could bring would be helpful.  
19 He spent about three decades in a corporate career as a consultant in the academic world dealing  
20 strictly with regulatory compliance, issues and interpretation about regulation. That has been his  
21 career, his life, and his expertise. It boiled down to an issue of regulation that comes down from  
22 the legislators. He thought the regulation they were dealing with now would evolve over time  
23 considering the changes in other states and communities. He thought when the industry shakes out  
24 in Vermont, there may be changes coming from the state Cannabis Control Commission and  
25 maybe from the legislator adjusting to the negative and positive realities for the community. He  
26 thought having the experience of interpreting and teaching about regulations, and as an advisor to  
27 the American Bar Association, he hoped would be helpful. He appreciated the opportunity and  
28 said it makes him feel good. Arne and Leigh thanked Robert.

29 Reisa Alexander said relative to the town of Chester has owned property since 2015 on upper  
30 Trebo Road and she and her young daughter live there now. She first started driving to and through  
31 Chester in 2015. She would come up once a week, then once every other day, and then every day  
32 sometimes. One of the things that was so nice was driving through the Town of Chester to get to  
33 upper Trebo Road. The town was clean and there were flowers on the bridges were nice. She saw  
34 the Dollar General go up and she thought what a nice town. They drove through Stone Village,  
35 and it seemed nice. Over time, they got to know the Village Green and bought smoothies and hung  
36 out and used the town Wi-Fi. They really have enjoyed the town. There are a lot of mosquitos on  
37 Trebo Road, and she has come down at night and walked the Village Green and felt safe. There  
38 were two things she said in her letter. She felt the new state retail cannabis laws didn't provide  
39 enough to make sure to retain the sense of character in towns like Chester that they noticed when  
40 they first started driving through and spending time here. She thought for the Town of Chester, the  
41 locals have spent many years and time on improvement projects spearheaded by both the town  
42 government and caring community members. She wanted to see that maintained. She said she was  
43 not opposed to having a retail cannabis dispensary. She hoped as a commission member she would  
44 help the community manage the location and environment and any advertisement so that it didn't  
45 have a negative effect on the town. She would strive to ensure the relationship between the

1 Cannabis Control Commission and perspective dispensary owners was in no way adversarial. She  
2 didn't believe it needed to be or should be. She thought they could all work together, including the  
3 Selectboard, Commission, community members, dispensary owners, and dispensary patrons to try  
4 to address or solve any issues they may have. She was not opposed to having retail dispensary but  
5 had spent a lot of time in western Massachusetts, particularly the northern part and lived there for  
6 a time before COVID. She said as you drive through Springfield on Interstate 91 North or South  
7 and there are huge cannabis billboards. She said Route 5 from South Hadley into North Hampton,  
8 which is a reputable town, and you see huge cannabis billboards, although she wasn't opposed to  
9 a dispensary, she thought they should have some say to how it looked, where it was at and how it  
10 was advertised. She wanted to avoid an adversarial relationship and they looked at the well-being  
11 of the town. Arne thanked her.

12 Arianna Knapp, a lifelong Vermonter, whose grandfather ran Knapp Farm Supply in Middlebury,  
13 her father graduated from Vergennes High School, and she from Colchester High School and she  
14 raised 5 kids in the Upper Valley. When her kids were all out of the house, she and her husband  
15 decided they could finally get out of the shadow of Dartmouth College and came to Chester and  
16 fell madly in love with the house where the Morse boys grew up. They love it here and being a  
17 Vermonter is part of who she is. She is also an executive for an entertainment company that's  
18 headquartered in Los Angeles and New York. That means she wears her Vermont identity as a  
19 gigantic flag every day. She's had to travel all over the country for the last 25 years and thanks to  
20 the pandemic, her industry tanked, and she got to go home. She's been home for the past three  
21 years and is loving it and doesn't need to travel anymore. It also meant she can finally engage with  
22 her community. As someone who formerly traveled 200 days a year, that wasn't an option but now  
23 is. As a Colchester high school student, she represented her town at girl's state in Montpelier and  
24 went on to represent the State of Vermont at girl's nation. It may have been in 1985 but it shaped  
25 her, and she's waited since 1985 for the chance to re-engage with politics or with community  
26 engagement and that was part of what brought her here. She would also be the first person to stand  
27 up there at the microphone and say she's a consumer of retail cannabis and has been for a few  
28 years. She spent a lot of time in Western Mass for work and other reasons and part of that also  
29 means she can bring to the Commission having visited and shopped in five of the states in the U.S.  
30 that have already legalized it. She has family in Colorado, Washington, California, Nevada, and  
31 Massachusetts. She's seen how these things can be run horribly and has seen how they can be done  
32 well. For her, the most important thing at this moment in time for Chester is that they take a step  
33 back and recognize there is a new industry coming to our state, a new business opportunity, and  
34 there are entrepreneurs who want to come to Vermont and want to do things right. The state has  
35 gone to great lengths to ensure that Vermont's embracing of cannabis is Vermont. They have struck  
36 down half the things Nevada and Washington did and thank goodness we already have no  
37 billboards, so that is not going to happen. Her interest in serving on the Commission is to get  
38 engaged in Chester but also to look at those incoming entrepreneurs because if they were coming  
39 here to start a new business, we would welcome them and invite them. This is an opportunity for  
40 them to engage entrepreneurs as they start out in Chester. This is the beginning of something.  
41 Vermont has maple syrup, cheese, and craft beer and craft artisans. Cannabis is a crafted item like  
42 beer. She is fully aware the commission has only got any jurisdiction over retail, but the fact of the  
43 matter is hopefully there are growers, and laboratories and other elements of the industry that may  
44 be interested in coming to Chester. They have no control over that. If they have a commission,  
45 they'll have communication. If there's a lab coming to Chester, they should know it and participate  
46 and not sit back and let the state tell them what's approved and what's not. She wanted to engage

1 with the town members, future entrepreneurs and Selectboard on the committee and promoted  
2 doing it in a conscientious intentional way that would allow businesses to thrive in a way that was  
3 true to the character of Chester and represents all of them. If someone was coming to town to start  
4 selling shoes, they wouldn't necessarily be able to talk with them how their store looks. They have  
5 a chance now and if they can do it right, they are setting a foundation for a growth industry that is  
6 already legal. There is nothing that will stop the business and she wanted to do it in a way that  
7 works for Chester. That was her commitment to Chester and Vermont. Arne thanked her.

8 Craig Miller had lived in rural communities his entire life. He lived in New York farming  
9 communities and had been in Chester since 1994. The thing he loved about rural America was all  
10 neighborhoods, regardless of whether they were big or small towns, have their own unique culture.  
11 But rural America is unique in its blended culture and brings a sense of greater societal good that  
12 transcends all the secular and political beliefs that exist. Professionally, his career has taken him  
13 all over the country. He has worked in a consultive role both locally and internationally from small  
14 to huge Fortune 100 companies. He is at a point in time where he hoped to retire soon and enjoy  
15 the chance to give back to his community as he did years ago before children. In the past he worked  
16 in several conservation efforts, particularly in Champion lands and its use by the government. He  
17 thought what he could bring to the table from his consulting role and work on various committees  
18 was a level head. He bases things on facts and helps people understand what that is and hoped to  
19 help the community develop a foundation for how they help this industry grow in Vermont. It's  
20 here and he was proud Vermont lead the way in legalizing cannabis and proud Chester voted to  
21 allow its retail distribution. He saw it as a great opportunity for the town and the state. Arne thanked  
22 him.

23 Barre Pinske said for once in his life he was at a loss for words. He didn't feel comfortable  
24 competing for a position with community peers, so he wasn't going to view it like that. He thought  
25 they may have recalled from his comments on Zoom a while back that it was his idea to have  
26 citizens involved on the committee. He is also on the Planning board and has been on for 5 years.  
27 He saw a relationship between planning and the committee that he could help with. He hoped they  
28 all read the letter he wrote. Because it was a public forum, he was reluctant to discuss some of the  
29 private things he included in the letter. One of his interests if he had an opportunity to be a member  
30 on the board would be to help them shape how this new business is perceived in the community,  
31 like public relations. From his perspective, he thought it was important how they allow it to come  
32 in and how it merges in the community. Something he has been fairly good at in his life is he helps  
33 promote the Fall Festival and his Big Buzz carving festival. He doesn't do a lot of promotion with  
34 his business because he's very busy with the work he has. From a P.R. element, how do they  
35 integrate it, so it doesn't disrupt the town? That was his angle. If there are people on different sides  
36 of it, the business is going to come anyway and there wasn't much they could do with respect to  
37 the regulations and rules because they were coming from the state. How could they make sure it  
38 fit in well and be stewards of this new thing going forward? The other thing he thought there were  
39 real issues around addiction, especially in our rural community. One of his interests would be if it  
40 was moving forward and monies would be generated from the sale of legal marijuana would there  
41 be money coming back for education around addiction. As someone who is predisposed to  
42 addiction like he was at a young age, that would be an aspect he would want to be part of on the  
43 board and how they could get some of the monies back if they were available and have an education  
44 element for people in the community and maybe further out so that part of having legal cannabis  
45 in the town, there was education about addiction so they could help lower the rate of use for people  
46 who struggle with addiction. That would be an element that is a little different and let's make it

1 happen. It was something he would be interested in and hoped it would be part of the commission  
2 because it is a big issue here. He knew a lot of employers were having a hard time employing  
3 people because people are struggling with drugs and alcoholism. If they could get some cash  
4 coming back and education and help, he thought it would be a good thing. Several board members  
5 thanked him.

6 Thomas Simmons had withdrawn his name as a candidate.

7 Tom Diak had a background in CM management and fiscal plant management. He had worked for  
8 Vermont Academy for 10 years. His wife, Linda, and he live on Main Street. They recently  
9 purchased a home after renting for several years. He has been affiliated with Chester since 1994  
10 when they moved here from Florida. They had a gallery on The Green for a year or so and then he  
11 went over to Vermont Academy. He is pro-business, as an owner and operator of a business in  
12 Chester. His experience as a business owner he thought would be helpful and useful to the  
13 commission. They have an opportunity to introduce these new businesses to the town and he would  
14 work diligently to see that it was successful supporting you and the voters of Chester who voted  
15 unanimously on cannabis. Several members thanked him.

16 Arne thanked all the applicants and was encouraged and appreciated to see so much community  
17 involvement no matter what happened at the end of it. A lot of times they have a difficult time  
18 filling open positions and he saw there was a lot of interest. He thought partly because it was  
19 controversial but part of it was most of the people sounded like they were talking from their hearts  
20 and cared about the community. That was a good basis to judge things on, if you care about your  
21 community and neighbors. They would go into executive discussion to decide and when they came  
22 out would likely make the appointments at that time. He didn't know how long it would take.  
23 Sometimes it's quick and sometimes they spend way too much time.

24 Ben moved and Heather seconded to go into executive session. A vote was taken, and the motion  
25 passed unanimously. The members went into executive session in Julie's office at 8:06 p.m. and  
26 called Leigh on her phone. to discuss selection of members for CCC.

27 **Agenda Item 11, Appoint Members to Local Cannabis Control Commission**

28 Arne announced they were back in regular session at 8:30 p.m. A few things he wanted to explain  
29 regarding the appointments. The Selectboard members were all one-year terms. It would be a  
30 seven-person committee with one subject for a one-year term, two for two-year terms, and two for  
31 three-year terms. The reason it is done like that, so in March when they reappoint, the one-year  
32 term gets reappointed or someone else gets on for a three-year term. Eventually, all five citizens  
33 will have three-year terms. The only reason it is staggered is, so they don't do all members at once.  
34 They will do it in March because that is when they do other appointments.

35 Arne said it was pretty much unanimous on all the candidates. He announced the three-year terms  
36 were Robert Nied and Arianna Napp. The two-year terms were Reisa Alexander and Barre Pinske.  
37 And the one-year term, which included Selectboard members, Ben Whalen and Lee Gustafson,  
38 was Tom Diak.

39 Arne thanked everyone who applied. He asked Julie to coordinate the first meeting for the  
40 commission and they would set up the structure, and when and where the meetings would be held.  
41 Julie also highly recommended the members attend the webinar that would be held via Zoom on  
42 Tuesday, May 24<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. to noon. The town would cover the \$28 fee. She would email  
43 them tomorrow and if they wanted to attend, she would register them all together. She and the

1 Town Planner, Preston Bristow, would also be attending.

2 Arne thought it would be helpful because it was the state commission hosting the webinar and the  
3 training with it. If there was someone who could answer questions, they would be it. It would also  
4 help the Selectboard to return the information. The two Selectboard members would be like  
5 liaisons to keep communication open. It was option for options. The resolution stated five to seven  
6 members, so if it turns out they don't have Selectboard members on it, they still will have a full  
7 commission.

8 Barre Pinske wanted to tell what he called a bad joke. He said Robert Nied was hoping they could  
9 take a short bus up to the meeting because he used to ride a short bus when he was a kid. Barre  
10 asked if Julie could get a short bus for Robert and them to ride to the meeting. Julie told Barre not  
11 to make the board reconsider his appointment and Leigh echoed her sentiments. Both Linda Diak  
12 and Susan Bailey commented in chat that they found Barre's comments offensive.

13 Arne thanked Susan and Craig for their interest in the position and told them they are always  
14 looking for bodies on different committees and parts in local government. Arne hoped they stayed  
15 active. He told Susan she was a captive audience because she was doing their minutes. He asked  
16 Mr. Miller to stay in touch with the town and appreciated him wanting to be involved in town.  
17 Susan said she would. Leigh thanked everyone for turning out, writing good letters, and showing  
18 interest.

19 **Agenda Item 9, New Business/Next Agenda**

20 Julie said the first meeting in June would be the public hearing for the zoning amendment for The  
21 Village Green. The Planning Commission had been through their public hearing process so the  
22 Selectboard would now go through theirs. Julie had given them, and for those who love looking at  
23 stuff on the internet she would email, a hard copy. She wanted them to have a full month to look  
24 through it. Arne asked if there were any ideas or any suggestions for future agenda items. Lee  
25 asked about the solar field and Arne said they could keep it on old business.

26 **Agenda Item 12, Adjourn**

27 Lee moved and Ben seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the  
28 meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.