

TOWN OF CHESTER  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

October 16, 2019  
Minutes

PRESENT: Arne Jonynas; Ben Whalen; Lee Gustafson; Leigh Dakin; David Pisha

VISITORS: Shawn Cunningham; Sharon Huntley; Julie Hance; Frank Bidwell; Christina Haskins; Phyllis Savage; Tom Elgan; Victoria Elgan; Tory Spater; Doug Houk; Michael Normyle; Robert Neid; Barre Pinske; Kevin Paquet; Bob Ulbrich; Diane Ulbrich

There were no additions or deletions to this agenda.

1. APPROVE MINUTES:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the minutes of the October 2, 2019 Selectboard meeting and Executive Session as amended. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed.

Leigh Dakin noted that on page 3, Number 8, Health Officer discussion, add the word "has"

2. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

Frank Bidwell passed out a chart that discusses the zoning bylaws. He noted that the zoning violations are not reported. Mr. Bidwell read the rules relating to the Zoning Administrator's responsibility relative to violations. Arne Jonynas stated that this may be a discussion for a future meeting after the Board has reviewed the information.

Shawn Cunningham asked that New Business be moved before the Executive Session.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

EMS Building: David Pisha stated that the next public meeting is on October 23 at 6:30. In addition, there is the November 4 public informational meeting with a vote on November 5. David Pisha stated that he has been reviewing financing options for the EMS Building in the Bond Plan. He intends to present these details at the Board's meeting on October 24.

Gravel Project: David Pisha confirmed that the Board received his numbers relative to the gravel project. David added additional costs which he received from Kirby Putnam today. The DRB is reopening the hearing for a site visit because the stake showing the junction point of the pit was misplaced. He indicated that the first year may not show a

positive financial outcome but will not show a negative as savings will begin immediately.

The milling of Route 35 is completed. Paving is anticipated to begin on Monday.

Ben Whalen questioned the progress of repairs of Palmer Bridge. David Pisha stated that the loan has been received but will need to be revoted to extend repayment. Julie Hance stated that Cold River Bridges will be installing this year. They are working on fabrication of the bridge at the moment.

#### 4. CHURCH STREET ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION:

Christine Haskins was present from Dufresne Group to present the alternatives for Church Street. A copy of the Power Point is attached to these minutes.

Christine Haskins noted that there is a historic property that has been identified. Therefore, there will need to be an historic review for this project during any future design phase. There are also areas where there will be a stormwater impact that will need to be addressed as well as a pedestrian component added to the bridge near the rail.

Christine Haskins clarified that when reviewing the cost matrix, the numbers in parenthesis is the number of impacts. Dufresne Group rated the alternatives based upon these identified impacts. Alternative 2 is higher in price due to the number of retaining walls that will be needed for this alternative. Alternative 1 will require 2 bridges, while alternatives 2 and 3 only require 1 bridge.

Dufresne Group stated that their recommendation would be alternative 3 because there is less impact to property owners.

Arne Jonynas stated that the Church Street loop has been a discussion for many years. He expressed his opinion that this sidewalk is necessary as Church Street is heavily used by the community for walking. Leigh Dakin stated that she would like to see the sidewalk installed but has concerns about the safety on this road. She stated that there are still tractor trailer trucks using Church Street and she would like to see that addressed. Ben Whalen stated that he is supportive of providing a safe space for pedestrians. Lee Gustafson questioned if most of the project is within the town's right of way. Christine Haskins noted that there will be mostly temporary easements needed but there are four permanent easements and the railroad easement that will be needed.

Tom Elgan invited anybody interested to come view speeds on the road at his property. He indicated that the speed limit is not under control. A request was made to gather data on Church Street relative to speeds. Also, the location of the radar sign is not properly placed. Tom Elgan indicated that there could be the installation of speed tables along Church Street, primarily at the Meadow Street location.

Ben Whalen asked that this be an agenda item at a future meeting to discuss sign options for Church Street.

Tom Elgan offered his driveway as a location for officers to sit and run radar. Ben Whalen suggested that the CORE program be instituted to enforce speeds on Church Street.

Sandra Henry questioned who has the authority to select the alternative. Arne Jonynas responded that the Selectboard makes the decision relative to the alternative selected. Lee Gustafson questioned the next steps. Christine Haskins stated that the Board needs to select an alternative. Once the alternative has been selected, the engineer will evaluate further and provide a scoping study based on that alternative. Lee Gustafson provided his opinion to proceed with alternative 3. Arne Jonynas provided his opinion that adding sidewalks may help to slow down traffic as the road will be narrower. He also supported alternative 3. Leigh Dakin stated that she wants "no thru trucks" on Church Street.

Barre Pinske asked if a traffic study has been done on Church Street. Shawn Cunningham asked the width of the sidewalk. Christine Haskins stated that the sidewalk is 5 feet in width. The right of way has also been confirmed at 3 rods.

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to move forward with Alternative 3. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

5. TEMPORARY SIGN DISCUSSION:

Michael Normyle was present to discuss an issue regarding temporary signs. He indicated his frustration that there are many who follow the rules and get their permits. However, there are a few that do not, even though they know that they are in violation. Michael Normyle stated that several weeks ago he removed several signs and put them in the back of town hall. This did cause an issue with the business owners. The signs are now back up.

Michael Normyle stated that he does not want to spend the town's money on enforcing these smaller, temporary signs but would like the Selectboard's support. He is also going to be working with the Planning Commission on this issue.

Michael Normyle suggested that the town use the Police Department or Highway Department to remove signs that are in violation. This process would be started with a phone call to the sign owner then followed by a letter. If the signs are not removed by the owner, then the town could remove the signs.

Ben Whalen questioned what the bylaws say regarding signage. He also questioned if there is an enforcement of these violations. He indicated that he would like to make sure whatever is decided is enforced equally across town. Michael Normyle stated that he will also be speaking with the Planning Commission about areas where the bylaws need to be amended. Lee Gustafson stated that he would like to see the bylaws reflect what is

allowed and not allowed and what process would be used for enforcing violations. The Board agreed.

Barre Pinsky offered that some of these signs are cultural things that are not really harming anything. He suggested that some of these things be written into the laws.

6. FINANCIAL UPDATE:

David Pisha stated that revenues are up \$100,000. Tax collections are up as well as collection of delinquent taxes. Town rent is higher as well as the refund from the school. Expenses are slightly higher this year. This is due to public works sand/salt purchases due to mud season and the change in computer management. Expenses grew faster than revenue during the first 9 months. Ben Whalen noted that the Police Department is over \$68,000 and revenue is down \$11,000 and questioned if this is correct. David Pisha stated that this revenue shortage is due to tickets. The department is over budget primarily due to medical premiums, computer services and consulting services. These are all one-time expenses with the exception of premiums. David Pisha indicated that he has spoken with Suzanne Swanson who will be reviewing the plans for next year.

Arne Jonyas questioned the \$12,000 under ACT 250 in public works. Julie Hance will speak with Cil Mathews about these expenses and if they should be reallocated to the Hurricane Irene Fund.

David Pisha stated that the water department is operating in the positive. The water crossing repairs have been completed. The water department will also be reimbursed for the new pipe at the Highway Garage once the bond has been approved.

David Pisha reviewed the solar farm production. He noted that this year, the town has saved \$4,000 compared to last years negative \$1,500, producing a \$6,000 swing. These numbers are the net savings back to the town.

David Pisha stated that delinquent taxes are lower in the first 9 months compared to last year. The transfers are being made and he is hopeful to have numbers completed prior to the town vote.

Arne Jonynas questioned if the town has achieved the water rate required to receive the negative interest rate on the water project. David Pisha noted that it has.

7. SPEED LIMIT DISCUSSION:

David Pisha provided a summary of the traffic information gathered from the radar sign. There are a few high speeds, but the average speed is 23 mph. It was suggested that police presence would help the situation. The Board asked David Pisha to speak with the Police Chief.

Discussion ensued regarding the statutes and what is required. Julie Hance is waiting to hear from Jason Rasmussen regarding the process. The Board asked that a Dead End sign be installed at the beginning of High Street.

Frank Bidwell mentioned that the concave speed bumps could be helpful on some of these roads.

8. TOWN MANAGER SEARCH:

The Board reviewed the job descriptions for the Town Manager and Asst. Town Manager positions.

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to approve the job descriptions are dated October 11, 2019. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

The Board reviewed the potential salary range of comparable Town Managers.

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to set the salary range from \$60,000 to \$75,000. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

The Board discussed the letters that were received. Julie Hance will create a ranking sheet and email to Board members tomorrow. The Board will then make the appointments at their October 24 meeting.

Julie Hance will put together a ranking system for Town Manager attributes.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION; AT&T CONTRACT NEGOTIATION:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to find that the public disclosure of contract negotiations AT&T will necessarily involve communications of and relating to the specific terms of said contract, disclosure of which could place the Town of Chester at a substantial disadvantage in any further negotiations. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Leigh Dakin to enter executive session, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(A) for the purposes of negotiating and reviewing the terms of contracts with AT&T. I further move that the Selectboard finds that the public disclosure of the negotiations could place the town at a disadvantage. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to exit Executive Session at 9:06 pm. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

10. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA:

The auditor, Ron Smith will be at the October 24 meeting to lead a training on reading a Balance Sheet. The next agenda will also include appoint manager search committee and review financing for EMS project.

The Board agreed that the November agenda should include discussion relative to the Academy Building and marijuana legislation. November will also begin the budget discussions.

The Board signed a Cemetery Deed.

11. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to adjourn. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Julie Hance  
Secretary of the Select Board

Ben Whalen  
Clerk of the Selectboard