

TOWN OF CHESTER
SELECTBOARD MEETING

July 5, 2017
Minutes

PRESENT: Arne Jonynas, Heather Chase, Dan Cote; Lee Gustafson; David Pisha

VISITORS: Shawn Cunningham; Robert Miller; Carla Westine; Wanda Purdy; Neil Allen; Claudio Veliz; Julia Purdy; Barre Pinske; Phil Perlah; Glen Gustafson; Julie Hance

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Arne Jonynas.

There were no deletions to the agenda. Dan Cote asked that the Board discuss the speed signs that were purchased.

1. APPROVE MINUTES:

June 7, 2017:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the minutes from the June 7, 2017 Selectboard meeting and June 7, 2017 Executive Session Meeting Record. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

June 14, 2017:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the minutes from the June 14, 2017 Selectboard meeting as amended. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

Feasibility Study – Arne Jonynas stated that he remembers that Claudio Veliz advised that there would be a committee formed closer to the end of the process.

Page 2, 2nd sentence – should be UDBs not DRB

2. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

Wanda Purdy provided the Selectboard with a quick update on the Reappraisal. She stated that there was only one bid received, which is the same company used in the past. Wanda Purdy stated that the project will begin in July, 2018 and will be completed in 2020. The consultant will handle all of the computer work, grievances and BCA appeals. The cost received was \$168,000.00. Wanda Purdy stated that the exempted properties are not included in the price. They will do this additional work if needed and should not increase the cost extensively.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

Master Plan: David Pisha stated that the steering committee is beginning to wrap up the Master Plan process. The next meeting is scheduled for July 12, 2017 at 10:00 at The Free Range.

Feasibility Study: David Pisha stated that Claudio has begun the work on the feasibility study. He has communicated with town employees, researching maps and visiting the sites - the town garage location and the EMS land on Pleasant Street. Claudio Veliz stated there are a couple of minor issues that surfaced with the site review, one of which relates to flooding issues. Claudio Veliz stated that there are options such as putting the larger buildings on one site and the smaller buildings on the EMS land.

Claudio Veliz stated that the town garage property does not have a topographic survey. Don Stein has given a price of \$2,800.00 to perform this survey. He stated that this information will be important in order to complete the feasibility study for this location. The Selectboard indicated their desire to move forward with this.

Yosemite: David Pisha stated that Jim Carroll has indicated that he will be speaking with Steve Ankuda to get the completed paperwork. He will then carry the paperwork to the Court for filing.

Speed Signs: Dan Cote questioned the status of the new radar signs. David Pisha stated that the Police Chief has been working with the State of Vermont regarding the locations of the signs. Dan Cote stated that he is concerned about the speeds that are passing by the senior housing on Main Street. Lee Gustafson also stated that there is a portable speed sign that could be used. David Pisha will follow up with the Police Department.

Solid Waste District: The Selectboard has been provided with some information from Derek Suursoo regarding monies being held by the Solid Waste District. This will be a topic at the next meeting.

Arne Jonynas questioned what will be happening with the land now that ACT 250 has been completed. Davis Pisha stated that Jim Goss will be back in July and he will be working on the boundaries of the land that is being released from the Deer Wintering Area.

Arne Jonynas questioned the status of the sidewalk project. David Pisha stated that the curbing crew has been held up due to weather. They are scheduled to be here Monday with paving happening the following week.

4. BOB MILLER COMMENTS:

Bob Miller was present from the Vermont Journal. He stated that the Selectboard has slandered his name. He stated that at the June 7 meeting, the Selectboard indicated that Chester is not being covered because the town is not using the Vermont Journal as the paper of record. Bob Miller explained that coverage is based on money. The money that comes in from towns is what pays for the reporters. Arne Jonynas stated that he did voice

his opinion at that meeting. Heather Chase stated that her comment was that she finds it unfortunate that might happen. Bob Miller expressed his dissatisfaction with the Selectboard's actions.

Heather Chase stated that the Selectboard is responsible for establishing a paper of record and it is their responsibility to review all options. She told Mr. Miller that the paper of record could cycle back around. The Board indicated to Mr. Miller that they do not care for the attitude being displayed. Bob Miller explained the bid process as he remembers it. He stated that he is upset that on March 15 he provided the Board with a bid. The Board then solicited bids from other papers. Lee Gustafson stated that the Board is not required to accept the low bid.

The Board asked Mr. Miller to clarify what he is requesting tonight. He stated that he would like the Board to rescind their decision regarding the paper of record. The Selectboard did not agree to rescind their decision.

5. TOWN FOREST HARVEST PLAN:

Arne Jonynas stated that a letter was received from Sam Schneski. His letter stated that he was looking to do logging on the town forest land. This logging is part of the town's forest management plan. This would involve the logging of soft wood to allow for the hard wood to grow. The wood logged would be on a mill sale determination.

Dan Cote and the Board agreed to have Sam Schneski at the first meeting in August so that questions could be asked and answered.

Arne Jonynas stated that if there is a walk through with foresters again, he would like to have the Board notified so that they can participate. Dan Cote stated that some photographs would be helpful as well.

6. DISCUSS POSSIBLE LAND SALE:

Glen Gustafson was present requesting that the town sell a piece of land that abuts their property. Lee Gustafson recused himself from this discussion since he is related to the individual.

Glen Gustafson stated that there is a piece of town property that abuts his property. He stated that he would like to clean up the property and manage the vegetation better. David Pisha stated that the Steering Committee has been reviewing this location for a potential pocket park on both sides of the swinging bridge. This would include cleaning up the property and creating river access. This walkway is used extensively and would be nice to have it cleaned up and the pathway fixed up.

Heather Chase stated that she would like to look at the property before she makes her decision. Arne Jonynas agreed.

7. SIGN BOND DOCUMENTS:

A motion was made by Heather Chase to sign the Loan Agreement General Obligation. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed. Arne Jonynas questioned if the interest rate includes the administration fees. Julie Hance clarified that it does. David Pisha explained the interest rate and bond sale process. David Pisha clarified that there are other bonds. He referred everybody to the Town Report which contains the Capital Plan showing the repayment of the bonds.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to sign the Resolution and Certificate of General Obligation. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to sign the Municipal Tax Certificate. Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Dan Cote to sign the General Obligation Bond R-1. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

8. SET TAX RATE:

David Pisha described the process used to create the tax rate. He stated that this year's tax rate is .6967 which is up 1 penny. The local agreement rate is \$.0045. The resident education tax rate is 1.2262 and the non-residential education tax rate is 1.2781. Both education rates are down. The overall combined tax rate is down.

A motion was made by Dan Cote to set the non-residential tax rate at 1.9793 and the residential tax rate at 1.9274. Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed.

9. DESCRIBE SELECTBOARD VISIONING PROCESS:

Arne Jonynas stated that the budget process has been discussed several times. The Selectboard is looking to establish a process for budgeting that allows for more Selectboard input.

David Pisha explained the visioning process. There will be easels and flip charts set up in the room. The Board will not think about numbers, but think about large projects or thoughts that they would like to see get accomplished. The Board members will then vote on those topics that appeal to the entire board the most. Once the priority topics are identified, the Board will then begin to break the topic down into more detail. The staff will then be brought in to look at numbers, timelines, grants, budgets, etc. This allows the Board to establish a philosophy of what they think is important any given year. This process allows for tracking particular projects and provides a sense of scope for each project.

Lee Gustafson stated that the department heads need to be a part of this visioning process. Heather Chase and Dan Cote both stated that this process should be more philosophical

with no numbers presented at this time. This process is establishing an overall vision for the town. This visioning workshop also incorporates the Planning Commission and the DRB. Heather Chase stated that she would like the visioning process to begin with the Selectboard, then the department heads, then the other boards.

Carla Westine was present from the DRB. She stated that David Pisha had invited her to attend this meeting. Carla Westine stated that her presentation is about the roles of the Planning Commission and the DRB. She did state that she is going to hold off on her presentation since the Selectboard is just now beginning its process. Carla Westine did poll the DRB who all indicated that they were willing to participate in a joint meeting.

Lee Gustafson stated that he would like the Boards to get together and discuss what they do. David Pisha stated that he is thinking about an annual meeting after Town Meeting. Carla Westine reminded the Board that Chester is not the only authority. The State of Vermont and the Regional committees establish law that the town needs to be abide by. Heather Chase also reminded the Board that the DRB is not a philosophical board. They must enforce what is presented to them.

The plan at this time is to begin the visioning workshop at the first meeting in August.

10. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA:

The Selectboard signed two Cemetery Deeds.

David Pisha stated that the email from Frank Bidwell was in the packet. Arne Jonynas stated that the Selectboard does review policy when it is needed. It is usually upon recommendation from the Town Manager.

The visioning workshop will be on the first meeting in August.

11. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to adjourn. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Julie Hance
Secretary of the Select Board

Ben Whalen
Clerk of the Select Board