

TOWN OF CHESTER
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

October 18, 2017
Minutes

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

VISITORS: Shawn Cunningham; Seeley Morton; Julie Hance; Lyza Gardner; Matt
McCarthy; Matt Wilson; Claudio Veliz; Robert Buchan; Mark Verespy;
Steve Vertefeville; Frank Bidwell; Steve Sykes; Sarah Brock

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairman Jonynas. He then asked every one to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the minute of the September 27, 2017 Special Selectboard meeting as amended. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

Heather Chase is listed as the clerk and it should be Ben Whalen.

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to approve the minute of the October 4, 2017 Selectboard meeting as amended. Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed.

Heather Chase is listed as the clerk and it should be Ben Whalen.

A motion was made by Dan Cote to approve the minute of the October 11, 2017 Special Selectboard meeting as amended. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

Heather Chase is listed as the clerk and it should be Ben Whalen.

2. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

Seeley Morton was present to discuss signage the Recreation area. He stated that there are trees planted in memory of individuals with stone plaques. However, it is very difficult to keep the grass from growing over stones. Seeley Morton suggested a berm of some form where the stones could be imbedded with bark mulch around each stone. Seeley Morton also suggested as an alternate, that a lectern be constructed with a laminated map of the recreation area.

Lee Gustafson questioned the location of the berm. Seeley Morton suggested that it go between the pool and road, or in the corner of the parking area. Arne Jonynas questioned when the dedication trees began. Seeley Morton stated that Wilma Barrett was the first tree dedication but does not remember when she passed away. Arne Jonynas stated that these stones should be maintained since the town took the initiative to dedicate these trees in the past. Arne stated that he will bring this up at the joint committee meeting on October 24.

Frank Bidwell stated that he is discouraged that he has inquired but has not received information back. The Board questioned the inquiries and how they were made. Frank Bidwell stated that they are inquiries he has submitted by email. Ben Whalen suggested a letter to the Selectboard. Arne Jonynas stated that he will request that things be handled properly in the future.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

Master Plan: David Pisha stated that there will be a public presentation of the Master Plan at the American Legion at 6:30 tomorrow night. There will be a second presentation at Newsbank on Sunday at 1:00.

Water Tank: David Pisha stated that the tank is finishing up. The leak tested will be completed on Friday. The electronic controls still need to be changed out as well as some landscaping issues. David Pisha stated that they trying a new product from OMYA that will be used in planting the trees at the old Irene site.

Yosemite: David Pisha stated that the documents have finally been filed with the Court.

Assessor Position: David Pisha reported that the joint effort has not been successful. The town will now advertise a part time position. Heather Chase stated that this is unfortunate, but she likes the concept.

Salvage Yard Ordinance: David Pisha stated that Jim Goss has drafted a Salvage Yard Ordinance which has also been sent to Jim Carroll for review.

David Pisha stated that the Selectboard has received an email chain regarding wind farms on the Tomasso land. NEFF has indicated that there will not be any wind farm developed on this property. Arne Jonynas stated that there was a good turnout at the event on the Tomasso land and was pleased with the day.

Arne Jonynas questioned the robo calls. Julie Hance stated that she has spoken with Current Concepts about developing a program. They will be meeting with town hall in November.

Arne Jonynas questioned what happens next with the new water land. David Pisha stated that Jim Goss is now working on the Easement and delineating the boundaries of the easement. Heather Chase stated that she would like to have a timeline for the completion

of this and future projects. She would also like a rough idea of cost for the ACT 250 process.

4. WEATHERIZATION PRESENTATION:

Sarah Brock was present from Vital Communities. She has been working with Vermont Foam in her efforts. Vital Communities is a non-profit organization who helps property owners weatherize their properties. Most projects cost the property owner \$7,000-\$8,000 and provide 26% reduction in energy costs.

Sarah Brock stated that Springfield has formed a committee. She is present to find Chester representatives to work with this committee in spreading the word to Chester and finding property owners who would like to utilize this weatherization project.

Sarah Brock stated that she will need to know if Chester wants to form a team within a month. In order for Chester properties to participate in this program there needs to be at least one volunteer. She stated that the time commitment is scalable. There will be a kickoff event and some phone calls that will need to be made. Sarah Brock estimated that 2 or 3 volunteers would spend approximately 1-2 hours per week. She stated that there will be a meeting Friday at 10:30 a.m. in Springfield for anybody that is interested.

The Board agreed to advertise this on the town's website for volunteers that are interested. It was suggested to contact Frank Kelley and the Green Up group. It will also be mentioned at the joint committee meeting next week.

5. RECREATION DEPARTMENT UPDATE:

Matt McCarthy was present to provide an update on the Recreation Department. He stated that the recreation facility has had many upgrades. The pool liner and decking is all new this year. The pumps and plumbing at the pool are all new as well. Matt McCarthy stated that a grant has been received to add 9 additional holes of Frisbee golf and renovate the old ski shack at the top of the hill.

Heather Chase stated that she is pleased that we are taking the initiative to improve our recreation area. This was a vision during the Master Plan process.

Dan Cote asked what things we have for the elderly population. Matt McCarthy stated that his philosophy is that if people have an idea that can work, he will try to make it work. There are currently Zumba classes, adult swim time and he ice rink.

Lee Gustafson questioned what he would like to see in the future if he could have anything. Matt McCarthy stated that an indoor recreation facility would great to have in town. This would include a weight room, indoor basketball, etc. The town and school work very well together to use these facilities.

Heather Chase suggested teaming up with the Edgar Mae Center to offer aqua-aerobics in the summer at our pool.

The Board thanked Matt McCarthy for his work.

6. EMS FEASIBILITY STUDY:

Claudio Veliz was present to provide an update on the Feasibility Study. He stated that all data has been gathered and has been compiled. The first draft has been completed. There are two items still needed from the town and employees.

Claudio Veliz stated that all departments have outgrown their space. There is additional space needed in order for departments to run efficiently. Claudio Veliz stated that they reviewed several properties which were culled down to just a couple of options. One of the next phases will be the formation of a committee, as well as potential cost ranges.

Arne Jonynas clarified that the final report will identify possible locations, square footage needed for each department as well as cost ranges. It will also include the necessary layout of the buildings. Claudio Veliz will also provide a recommendation in the report. Claudio Veliz also confirmed that this report will provide what the department heads and users need to complete their job. This report will provide the design team what is needed to begin their process. Frank Bidwell questioned if expansion needs will be addressed. Claudio Veliz confirmed that it will.

Robert Buchan stated that he has been working on identifying the permitting needs. He also stated that there has been an environmental review. It was noted that there is a wetlands review being conducted at the town property, which could be an issue. The wetlands specialist suggested that the town hire a consultant to represent the town's interest during the State's review. Lee Gustafson questioned how this discovery was made by the State? Robert Buchan stated that he believes this would have been revealed during the permit review process. Claudio Veliz suggested that it is not a natural wetland.

It was suggested that a cost be obtained from the consultant and be presented back to the Board. Arne Jonynas suggested that a phone call to Jim Goss could be made to discuss this issue.

Dan Cote questioned why this issue hasn't been addressed by the architect. He requested that the cost of the consultant and what they will do be addressed at the next meeting. Lee Gustafson stated that the town's consultant will definitely influence the state's findings. This will speed things up and will likely be more cost efficient.

Ben Whalen stated that the initial deadline was September. Now it is likely not until November or later, due to this finding. Claudio Veliz stated that there are things that appear during a feasibility study. Heather Chase stated that she would rather have a thorough job rather than a quick job. Claudio Veliz stated that he is waiting on last

minute comments from the Board and employees. Arne Jonynas told Claudio Veliz not to wait on the Board's comments as those should have already been received.

7. FINANCIAL UPDATE:

David Pisha stated that tax collections are up from last year. Revenues are up and doing well. David noted that the expenses look like they are up in each department. This is because the accounting of benefits is done differently this year. Benefits are accounted for in each department instead of all together. He reported that the TAN has been paid off and the school has received their payment. Overall things are going well.

David Pisha stated that Administration expenses are up slightly primarily due to the new accounting system, new employee and the moving of benefits.

Arne Jonynas questioned where the solar farm income shows. David Pisha stated that the rent is in General Government but has not been paid yet. The meter credits are deducted from the electric bills, primarily the sewer electric bill.

David Pisha reviewed water and sewer. Water is making progress compared to last year due to the rate increases and increased collections. He stated that overall, water is doing well in spite of the projects that are taking place. Legal fees are up in the water department due to the issues with Fish and Wildlife.

Arne Jonynas questioned where the proceeds from the logging of the town forest will go. Discussion ensued regarding past history. General consensus was that the money should go where it is needed the most. It was suggested that it should be saved for a one-time expense.

David Pisha stated that sewer is doing well. Fees are up but excess BOD charges are down. Overall expenses are down and the net is up. Arne Jonynas the sewer bonds which have a few years remaining.

David Pisha stated that delinquent taxes are down significantly. The outstanding balance is \$397,000 which is significantly less than previous years. This is primarily due to additional tools that the town has available to it.

David Pisha stated that the Economic Development Fund has grown by 12% over the past 2 years. The Board discussed the use of these funds. It was agreed that the Board will review the Chester Development Fund policy at a future meeting.

8. SEVCA APPOINTMENT:

A motion was made by Heather Chase to appoint Kathy Poston as the representative to the SEVCA Board for a 3 year term. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

Arne Jonynas thanked Kathy for her service. It was suggested that David Pisha contact Ms. Poston to see if she is willing to volunteer for the weatherization project.

9. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA:

Lee Gustafson questioned if there is any way to spread the word that the Master Plan will not be implemented all at once. The Board noted that this will be discussed and presented at the two presentations this week. Heather Chase noted that the Master Plan is really a vision for the town's future. A suggestion was made that funding opportunities should be discussed.

The Chester Development Fund should be discussed at an upcoming meeting.

Lee Gustafson stated that he has heard from an individual who is very frustrated with the town. He stated that they have had road blocks thrown up at them preventing their permitting. Lee Gustafson stated that there may be a perception that Chester is difficult to operate in. He would like the Board to discuss this further if there is a perception out there. Arne Jonynas stated that the business atmosphere should be discussed at a future meeting.

10. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to adjourn. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Julie Hance
Secretary of the Select Board

Ben Whalen
Clerk of the Select Board