

TOWN OF CHESTER  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

May 15, 2019  
Minutes

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

VISITORS: Julie Hance; Leslie Thorsen; Scott Kilgus; Harry Goodell; Lillian Willis;  
Harry Goodell; Sharon Huntley; Wanda Purdy, Frank Kelley

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Arne Jonynas. There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

1. APPROVE MINUTES:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the minutes of the May 1, 2019 Selectboard meeting. Seconded by Ben Whalen. Motion passed.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the minutes of the May 10, 2019 Selectboard meeting as amended. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. Motion passed

2. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

Leslie Thorsen read her response in connection with an investigation of Officer Jeff Holden. She expressed concerns about the inaccuracy of the report and stated that Jeff Holden's statements in the report were not true.

Leslie Thorsen stated Officer Holden was not asked substantive questions about the events, as she and her husband were. He was only required to provide a summation of the events. She does not feel that this provides a true account of the events.

In addition, Ms. Thorsen noted that the Chief of Police had performed an investigation of officer Holder as well. This report was not referenced or included in the outside investigation. She stated that there is discrepancy between what Chief Cloud reported and what is reported in this investigation.

Ms. Thorsen continued to comment that they believe there was a second officer at the scene. She would like officer Holden to answer how he could have been at the front door, as well as shining lights in multiple windows and recording what was taking place. She feels that this proves that there was more than one officer at the scene.

Ms. Thorsen reiterated that she and her husband feel that they have been harassed. She does not feel that this is the form of community policing that Chester needs. She noted

that she and her husband are more than willing to sit down with Officer Holden to discuss the issues at hand.

Arne Jonynas stated that the Selectboard cannot speak to this issue due to the nature of the complaint. This issue is being handled by the town's attorney. Leslie Thorsen stated that she is not asking the Board to speak about the event. She is asking for there to be police responsibility and accountability on this issue. She stated again that the report issued by Chief Cloud was not truthful.

Leslie Thorsen asked for the minutes to better reflect her comments this time. She felt that the issue was glossed over in the last meeting minutes.

Heather Chase questioned the process going forward. Arne Jonynas suggested that this conversation should be had with Jim Carroll one on one to start. He further noted that if the Board wants to discuss policy and procedure at a future meeting, then this could be discussed then. Heather Chase questioned when the Board will be able to be informed about this particular issue. She stated that she will come and talk with David Pisha.

Frank Kelly was present from the CCC and the Green Up Day program. He thanked the community and all those involved in the process. The Board thanked him for his coordination of the event. Frank Kelley offered stories of the day and thanked the Highway Department for their work.

### 3. OLD BUSINESS:

Marketing: David Pisha is still working with the Chamber on their marketing and Transportation committee. He is also working with an inhouse committee which includes Julie Hance, Bob Flint, Rick Paterno and Lee Whiting. This group is working on a larger marketing plant and will be presenting to the Board at a future meeting. David Pisha noted that this will likely require some funding of some form.

EMS Building: David Pisha stated that he will provide an update at the next meeting.

David Pisha noted that the old cell tower will be down soon. They are waiting on weather cooperation.

David Pisha stated that he and Julie Hance met with a company today regarding increasing wifi accessibility on The Green.

Arne Jonynas stated that there will be a meeting with Vtrans on Monday, May 20, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. regarding the speed limit signs at the High School. There will be a site visit to follow. Julie Hance will put up a notification that the Board will be present at the meeting. Leigh Dakin questioned if David Pisha has spoken with Chief Cloud about moving the portable speed limit sign down by the High School to gauge the speeds that people are traveling.

4. JEFFREY BARN UPDATE:

Lillian Willis was present from the Historic Preservation Committee to provide an update on the assessment of the Jeffrey Barn. She stated that the assessment is showing that repair of the barn is over \$205,000 which does not include the roof. It has also been identified that the boards are not hand hewn, they are sawed. Lillian Willis stated that she has done some research about the potential uses of the barn if restored and is finding that a typical use would be storage. She does not feel that this is a use needed for Chester and the Committee has not identified a future use that would work for the location and for the community. There is no parking for the building.

Lillian Willis stated that at this time, the Historic Preservation Committee is handing this over to the Selectboard for their suggestions. Leigh Dakin stated that she has reviewed the site and feels that there are very limited possibilities due to the location of the barn. Ben Whalen stated that he cannot think of a use that would be high priority given other priority items that are present now. Arne Jonynas stated that there might be someone who wants the boards that would be willing to take it apart and remove it from the site. Ben Whalen suggested contacting Shelburne Museum to see if they know of anybody in the market for this type of structure.

Lillian Willis stated that the committee has done their due diligence in investigating necessary repairs and potential uses. Heather Chase suggested that David Pisha investigate salvage places to come and look at the barn. Ben Whalen further suggested that perhaps some of the barn could be saved and reused by the town in some way. Lillian Willis reminded the board that Ron Patch did feel that there is value in the silo. Heather Chase commented that the barn should be documented with photographs for history.

5. TOMASSO PROPERTY UPDATE:

Arne Jonynas stated that this is on the agenda to provide an update on the purchase of the Tomasso land. The specifics cannot be released at this time, until the offer has been accepted, but the Board wanted to make sure the process is known.

Arne Jonynas stated that the purpose of the offer is to remove the property from the market to allow the town time to complete a community assessment. The purchase will go before the voters for final approval should the community assessment support it. Heather Chase also clarified that the Board is aware that this process feels backwards. However, the town cannot proceed with the community assessment until an offer has been accepted.

Wanda Purdy questioned the community assessment. Arne Jonynas stated that it is an assessment of the project at large to determine if the community is interested in the potential purchase. This process will reveal the financial viability of the project, the infrastructure needs, economic benefits, etc. It was also clarified that there are many contingencies that allow the town to back out of the contract if needed.

Ben Whalen further added that if the offer is accepted, the town has 18 months to do its due diligence to figure out if the town wants to buy it.

6. INFORMATION BOOTH SEWER CONNECTION:

Arne Jonynas stated that the town acquired the Information Booth a couple of years ago. The tank is needing to be pumped every 3 weeks throughout the summer with a cost of \$3,000 per year. The Board discussed potential options such as installing a 1000 gallon tank.

Lee Gustafson questioned if the Academy Building bathrooms could be upgraded instead of the Information Booth. It was discussed that the Historical Society currently holds a lease to the building which is up in 2020. Lee Gustafson asked that this be an agenda item at a future meeting.

The Board agreed that they would like to hear from Naomi Johnson about the design of the system. They would also like to discuss where the money will come from to pay for this project. Arne Jonynas suggested that this come from the Economic Development Fund.

7. APPROVE 250 NOISE AND TRAFFIC STUDIES:

David Pisha stated that he has been communicating with Jim Goss about the ACT 250 permit. Jim Goss is now asking for a noise and traffic study to be conducted on the property. It is the intent to use the previous company to complete the study to help keep the costs lower. The cost of the studies total \$14,000. Lee Gustafson questioned if this could be piggybacked onto the State's traffic study. David Pisha will speak with the State.

Heather Chase stated that she would like to hear from Jim Goss directly about the process moving forward, how much money the town has spent so far and what the anticipated future expenses are. She further stated that she wants to slow down and make sure that the project is done thoughtfully and correctly.

Leigh Dakin stated that she is new to this process. She has previously requested from David Pisha to review the file on this project. She also suggested that Jim Goss come to a meeting to answer questions. Arne Jonynas stated that this process has been going on for a year at this time. David Pisha has had communication with the attorney during this process. Heather Chase stated that she wants to have a conversation directly with Jim Goss. David Pisha suggested that Jim Goss could provide a summary of the events to date and the status of the project. Discussion ensued. The Board agreed to have Jim Goss write a summary for the Board and then schedule a phone conversation with him.

Discussion also ensued regarding expenses to date. Jim Goss initially estimated \$25,000 for the project. The studies would be an additional \$14,000.

8. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA:

Lillian Willis stated that Amie O'Brien has posted information on the website on the history of the buildings in town.

Lee Gustafson would like discussion about the Academy Building and Lease, Information Booth and solar field. In addition, the Town Plan should be on the next agenda. Arne Jonynas suggested that the board discuss chapters 6 and 10 at the next meeting and hold the energy chapter for a separate meeting.

Heather Chase stated that she would like an executive session at the next meeting to update the Board on employee information that she was requested to research.

The Board signed a Cemetery Deed.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION; DRB INTERVIEW:

A motion was made by Leigh Dakin to enter Executive Session for the purpose of interviewing Harry Goodell for the position of DRB member. Seconded by Ben Whalen. Motion passed.

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to exit Executive Session at 8:14 p.m. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. Motion passed.

10. APPOINTMENT TO THE DRB:

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to appoint Harry Goodell to the DRB for a term of 3 years ending in March 2022. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed. The board thanked Harry Goodell for his willingness to serve another term.

11. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to adjourn. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Julie Hance  
Secretary of the Select Board

Ben Whalen  
Clerk of the Selectboard