

TOWN OF CHESTER  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

October 3, 2018  
Minutes

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

VISITORS: Shawn Cunningham; Lillian Willis; Richard Cloud; Cathy Hasbrouck;  
Frank Bidwell; David Willis; John DeLauriers; Scott Blair; Julie Hance

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

There were no additions to the agenda.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Dan Cote to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2018 Selectboard meeting and Executive Session Record. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

2. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

Shawn Cunningham requested that Item 12 be moved to before the Executive Session. The Board agreed.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

EMS Building: David Pisha stated there was an EMS building committee meeting yesterday. Lee Gustafson stated that they discussed minor modifications to the draft plans for both the new building and the Town Garage. They have made some recommendations for changes and requested cost estimates. They anticipate making a full presentation to the Board soon. Lee Gustafson confirmed that they are hoping to have the buildings presented to the public for a bond vote in March. The Board discussed potential funding and questioned if bond rates are increasing.

Implementation Committee: David Pisha stated that the committee met yesterday. The group reviewed projects that have been identified, have begun and have been completed.

David Pisha stated that the Events Coordinator position was discussed at the CEDC meeting this morning. He explained that this position is not just for Fall Festival but for other events as well. He noted that this will be presented to the Selectboard at the next meeting.

4. PUBLIC HEARING; UDB ACCESSORY USES:

Arne Jonynas opened the Public Hearing for questions and comments. There were no comments made.

5. POLICE DEPARTMENT UPDATE:

Richard Cloud was present to update the Selectboard about the Police Department. There were 216 warnings issued in 2017 and 122 in 2018. In 2017 there were 308 tickets issued compared to 371 in 2018. The tickets are up, but the warnings are down. This is due to the new traffic radar signs. The fines in 2017 totaled \$55,764 and in 2018 the are \$67,241. Accidents are up by 5, one being serious and a double fatal. Alarms are up by 25, DUI are holding the same at 7, burglaries have doubled in number and thefts went from 17 to 33.

Chief Cloud stated that the traffic radar signs were installed last year. Reports have indicated that they are doing their job. The towns people have asked for 2 more signs – North Street heading towards Ludlow and both ends of Church Street.

There were 26 calls using Dutch this year. There were 15 drug searches, 5 public speaking demos, 4 missing persons and 2 tracks. Chief Cloud explained the uses for Dutch which are primarily drug detection and apprehension. Dutch is certified in 7 drug detections. The Board discussed the drug forfeiture process. Chief Cloud stated that the Marshal Service takes a percentage as well as the town where the stop happened.

Dan Cote asked if there are other needs of the Police Department. Chief Cloud stated that as he goes through the budget process he will identify the things that may be needed. He indicated that he knows there are computer needs as well as evidence storage needs.

Ben Whalen questioned if there are more CORE hours being used. Chief Cloud stated that it is a hard position to fill. There is not much interest in getting the overtime. There are more traffic stops being done during shifts.

Arne Jonynas questioned if there is a penalty for false alarms. Chief Cloud stated that most false alarms are new owners. However, there is a process for over 3 false alarms. Arne Jonynas also questioned when the next new cruiser will be purchased. Chief Cloud indicated that the next purchase will be 2020. Arne Jonynas stated that there needs to discussion about the colors of the next cruiser.

6. OKEMO VALLEY CHAMBER UPDATE:

Carol Lighthall, Executive Director was present from the Okemo Valley Chamber of Commerce. She has been with the Chamber for approximately 90 days.

Carol Lighthall stated that Vail has recently purchased Okemo Mountain. There has not been much communication with details but will keep the towns informed as she learns

more. She stated that there is a health insurance component brought back to the Chamber. Again, she will keep towns updated as more information is released.

Carol Lighthal stated that there are a couple new member committees being created, a Membership Committee as well as a Marketing Committee. It is her goal to have as many businesses engaged as possible with the Chamber. The committee will also review member benefits to make sure they line up with the member needs. She also discussed that the Department of Tourism has stressed that events are what bring people to Vermont and for towns to keep this in mind.

Arne Jonynas questioned how the transition from Okemo to Vail has affected the Chamber. Carol indicated that she has communicated with Stowe, who is also owned by Vail and is keeping in touch with them as things progress.

Dan Cote emphasized the “regional” component to the Chamber and stressed the importance of having a regional approach to marketing.

7. BEGIN VISION PROCESS:

David Pisha stated that it is his intention for this to be just the beginning of the process. He inquired if there are any changes to the visioning process that need to be taken into consideration before the Board begins the process. He asked the Board to be thinking about their vision.

Lee Gustafson stated that there are many things on the horizon. He stated that he believes that the public does not fully understand the Board’s vision. Lee Gustafson recommended that the Board review their goals for the next 10 years and identify their goals. Julie Hance stated that she will prepare a spreadsheet identifying all the projects that exist and are coming, their costs to the town and their completion timeline as well as economic benefits. She was also asked to identify why we are doing these projects.

Heather Chase indicated that the philosophy of the Board is very different than 10 years ago. There are also different methods of payment of capital items. The Board discussed the importance of the visioning process and the benefits that come from it. Lee Gustafson also questioned how the Board can create community pride.

Frank Bidwell stated that he would like the spreadsheet to include capital expenditures that are needed in the future.

Heather Chase stated that the town may need to be better at informing the public about the benefits of projects that have been completed. The Board discussed this further and identified the need to discuss these items in more detail in the future.

8. YOSEMITE COMMITTEE UPDATE

David Pisha stated that he has spoken with VLCT about the official vs. unofficial committee. He indicated that the League did not give a firm opinion one way vs. another. The League did make clear that either form of a committee does not allow them to spend money, make final decisions, etc. That remains the responsibility of the Town Manager and Selectboard. The decision of official or unofficial is the decision of the Selectboard. Arne Jonynas stated that since it is the Board's decision, they would like to defer to the committee itself and their preference. The Historic Preservation Committee has indicated their preference to remain unofficial.

Ben Whalen stated that he feels confident with the vision that has been presented. Frank Bidwell stated that he would like to make sure he understands the advisory role. Julie Hance stated that if the committee does not have authority, then they are advisory.

Shawn Cunningham stated that he was here to speak as a private citizen, not as the Chester Telegraph. He presented his credentials with museum history. Shawn Cunningham provided his opinion that the committee become official. His comments were: An advisory committee collecting both objects and money for the museum are doing business in the name of Chester; by collecting artifacts and ephemera, the committee will be making contracts and obligating the town for the proper storage and care of those items in perpetuity; All gifts would be received using the town's tax ID number; Who is liable for any problems arising from the actions of an unofficial committee; there should be detailed minutes and public notice as a record of the committee's actions.

Lillian Willis commented that there is a process in place that has been discussed for accepting of items. She stated that all processes and plans will go through David and then the Selectboard. David Pisha gave his opinion that he is fine with Jim Carroll approving forms, etc. All changes to the building will have to go through him as well as the Selectboard.

Lee Gustafson stated that the open meeting laws are cumbersome but do prevent side conversations and decision making. He asked if there is history with this group and other projects they have taken on. Lillian Willis stated that they are a new committee and they do primarily background work on the historic buildings. They review the buildings and make recommendations to the Town Manager of things that need to be done.

David Pisha stated that there is the option to change and form an official committee later if things aren't working. Dan Cote agreed that there are restrictions that are difficult with becoming an official committee. Ben Whalen agreed and stated that he trusts the group of people that are working on the project. David Pisha acknowledged that there needs to be open communication between the community, the Selectboard and the Town Manager's office.

Frank Bidwell stated that the committee looks at all 5 historic buildings in town. He also stated that a project of this size requires a long-term planning process that he is not sure an advisory committee fills this role. The Board noted that logistics of municipal building renovation should be worked through with the Town. This committee will need to work closely with the town.

The consensus of the Board was to leave the committee an unofficial committee.

Devan Coleman spoke with David Pisha about moving the Yosemite Fire House 50 feet to get the building away from the river and the road. However, in further communication with Devan it became apparent that the building can only be moved back about 10 feet and that it needed to remain in the exact same position as it does now. In addition, the building cannot be moved further into the flood plain.

Lillian Willis stated that Scott Jensen has indicated that there cannot be more boulders added to the river bank.

It was the consensus of the Board to leave Yosemite where it is, not move it.

A motion was made by Dan Cote to authorize the expenditure of an additional \$5,000 for the work to the piers at Yosemite. Seconded by Ben Whalen. Discussion ensued.

Arne Jonynas stated that he would prefer to do the work next year when there is more time and the remaining funds can be budgeted. Ben Whalen agreed that there may end up being issues that arise during construction. Dan Cote stated his opinion that unplanned costs may arise now or in the spring. Lee Gustafson expressed his opinion that if issues arise, there may not be time this construction season to finish the work. Heather Chase stated that the costs may be higher next year than now. Lillian Willis stated that the first step in righting the building is the piers. Shawn Cunningham suggested that the town prepay a service for work in the spring. Julie Hance will also ask if this quote is high because it is getting crammed into this year. Frank Bidwell questioned if there are items in the building that will need to be moved prior to construction.

A motion was made by Heather Chase to table the motion. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed.

Lillian Willis stated that a man door needs to be installed within the sliding doors, which will be replaced anyway. David Pisha stated that Graham Kennedy will go look at the door again and see if this can be done. Frank Bidwell also suggested that maybe there is a way to prevent ice from building up in front of the main door, which would prevent the man door from having to be built. David Pisha will check with Graham.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION; WAYFINDING

A motion was made by Heather Chase to find that the public disclosure of contract negotiations regarding the wayfinding plan 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 Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Heather Chase to enter executive session, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(A) for the purposes of negotiating and reviewing the terms of the wayfinding plan contracts. I further move that the Selectboard finds that the public disclosure of the negotiations could place the town at a disadvantage. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed. Both Julie Hance and David Pisha were invited into the Executive Session.

The Board entered Executive Session at 8:29 p.m.

A motion was made by Heather Chase to exit Executive session at 8:45 p.m.. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION; US CELLULAR:

A motion was made by Heather Chase to find that the public disclosure of contract negotiations regarding the addition of Sprint and US Cellular to the cell tower 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 Heather Chase 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 Sprint and US Cellular. 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.

The Board entered Executive Session at 8:46 p.m.

A motion was made by Heather Chase to exit Executive session at 8:58 p.m.. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION: TOWN MANAGER REVIEW

A motion was made by Dan Cote to enter Executive Session for the purposes of conducting a review of the Town Manager. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

The Board entered Executive Session at 8:58 p.m.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to exit Executive session at 9:20 p.m. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

12. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA:

The Board agreed that the next agenda should include a Financial Review, the vision process and the Event coordinator position.

The Selectboard signed a Cemetery Deed

13. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to adjourn. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Julie Hance  
Secretary of the Select Board

Ben Whalen  
Clerk of the Selectboard