

TOWN OF CHESTER  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

May 18, 2016  
Minutes

PRESENT: John DeBenedetti; Heather Chase; Arne Jonynas; Ben Whalen; Dan Cote David Pisha

VISITORS: Julie Hance; Shawn Cunningham; Deb Daniels; Tory Spater; Frank Bidwell; Ron Patch; William Lindsay; Mike Leonard; Suzy Forlie; Hugh Henry; Thomas Junker; Deb Daniels; Claudio Veliz; Donna Allen; Tom Hildreth; Jessica Holmes;

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by John DeBenedetti.

There were no deletions or additions to this agenda.

1. APPROVE MINUTES:

May 4, 2016:

A motion was made by Heather Chase to approve the May 4, 2016 minutes of the Chester Selectboard meeting as amended. Seconded by Arne Jonynas. The motion passed.

Page 3, Correct spelling of Bill Borger

Page 3, Not Harley Davidson Club, should be Iron Adventure Run

Page 3, Add a sentence stating that later in the meeting, Mr. Borger confirmed their attendance.

May 13, 2016:

A motion was made by Dan Cote to postpone the minutes of the May 13, 2016 Selectboard meeting until the next meeting. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed.

2. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

Frank Bidwell stated that there is no information on the town's webpage regarding the 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration. He also stated that the calendar is incomplete. He stated that he did find the information on other pages, but none of the information is consistent. Dan Cote asked if there is an individual who is responsible for the website. David Pisha stated that Amy O'Brien helps out with the website and will update with whatever information is available. He will get with the 250<sup>th</sup> Committee to put their information on the webpage. Discussion ensued regarding the webpage and upcoming changes. Tory Spater recommended contacting the High School to help with this.

Payne Junker stated that he has concerns regarding Jack's Diner. He stated that there is a dumpster that gets filled up every few weeks and is left so that animals get into it. David Pisha stated that Michael Normyle has been working with the town's attorney regarding this issue. He will also contact the Health Officer.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

Master Plan: David Pisha stated that nine bids were received for the Master Plan. There will be a meeting of the Selection Committee on May 31.

Water/Sewer/Stormwater: David Pisha stated that one bid has been awarded and the other two are being reviewed.

Potash Brook Road: David Pisha stated that bids were received for the three culverts in Potash and are being reviewed by the engineers.

Yosemite Fire House: David Pisha stated that this item is on the agenda.

Dirt Road Maintenance: David Pisha stated that there has been no action on this item.

New EMS Building: Ben Whalen asked if David Pisha and the Fire Chief have visited the Castleton Fire Station. David stated that he will get a date set.

Single Home town roads: David Pisha stated that there has been no action on this item.

Striping the Green: David Pisha stated that Graham Kennedy knows a person who does striping on a part time basis. He will coordinate with the businesses. Waiting to hear back regarding a price.

4. TREES ON THE GREEN; CHESTER TOWNSCAPE:

Tory Spater stated that she brought this item to the Board two weeks ago. She stated that there are no records found that these two trees were planted in memoriam. She stated that if someone comes forward stating their memorial, the Chester Townscape will place plaques in their place. They are requesting removal of the two trees located on either side of the gazebo as well as the stumps. The plan is to remove the trees and review if something should be planted in their place. John DeBenedetti asked if the trees could be pruned instead of removed. Tory Spater stated that she has been advised that it is not worth it as the trees are dying. Arne Jonynas and Dan Cote both agreed that the trees are dying. The Board also discussed the Christmas tree.

A motion was made by Heather Chase to accept Tory Spater's request to have the trees on either side of the gazebo on The Green removed by the Town. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

Arne Jonynas questioned the status of the roots. He suggested that stump grinding might would be better than removal. David Pisha stated that he will speak with Graham Kennedy regarding available methods of removing stumps. David Pisha stated that he will also check into the Christmas tree.

## 5. CEMETERY EXPANSION PRESENTATION:

David Pisha stated that this project has not been as easy as once expected. Deb Daniels provided a presentation of her draft design. She stated that there are constraints on the Brookside Cemetery property. Deb Daniels stated that she has reviewed the flood plain areas, the existing conditions of the property, the existing uses of the property and the desire of the future of the area.

Deb Daniels then reviewed her plan. She explained that there will be a road access to the property and through the grave sites. She reviewed the boundary lines of the streambank buffer, the FEMA flood plain as well as the River Corridor boundary. Deb Daniels has also suggested a phased process. An area has been set aside in a depressed portion of the property for the location of a garden area and gazebo.

Deb Daniels then discussed access to the property behind the Academy Building. She explained that the pathway between the Academy Building and Hugging Bear Inn is only 12 feet wide and is not recommended for both vehicular and pedestrian access. Therefore, Deb Daniels is recommending that a pedestrian pathway be created on the other side of the Academy Building between the existing cemetery and the Academy Building. This would require a covered walkway on the portion that runs alongside the Academy Building.

Another thought for vehicular access would be to relocate some grave sites and use the access through the old cemetery. In addition, there is an access on the west side of the Hugging Bear Inn.

Deb Daniels reviewed other aspects of the new cemetery. She suggested that the Selectboard entertain the thought of running water and electricity so that any flag pole could be lit and people would have access to water. She further provided examples of what other towns have done with laying out graves and signage; the potential of adding a gazebo for services to be held; a potential flag pole; decorative features with gardens.

Deb Daniels discussed the potential bridge that would connect the cemetery with a future hiking trail on the other side of the stream.

Deb Daniels has stated that she will be meeting with Michael Normyle next week to review this plan with him in terms of permitting. She will also be working with Dufresne Group on the engineering aspect of the project. In addition, she will speak with the State of Vermont regarding any permitting that they may require.

John DeBenedetti stated that the ramp at the Academy Building was built with Preservation Trust money and questioned what permission might be needed to relocate the ramp. Ben Whalen and Dan Cote questioned if the covered walkway would create a hazardous area for existing stones that would be located in the fall zone. Ben Whalen also questioned if a pedestrian pathway could be created to go through the old cemetery. Deb Daniels stated that she has been speaking with attorneys regarding the rights to walk over existing graves. Ron Patch suggested that the Selectboard speak with Ken Barrett regarding the history of the covered walkway. The

Selectboard discussed alternate pathways around the Academy Building. David Pisha stated that he will speak with Preservation Trust to see if a covered walkway is possible.

It was agreed that Deb Daniels would gather information to answer these questions and come back to the June 15, 2016 meeting. Heather Chase stated that she would like to see the phasing and the costs associated with each phase.

6. YOSEMITE FOLLOW UP:

John DeBenedetti stated that the Selectboard met on May 13, 2016 to review the Yosemite Fire House. At that meeting, it was mentioned that any person interested in being a part of the committee should let David Pisha know.

A motion was made by Heather Chase to accept the Historical Society's offer of the Yosemite Fire House. Seconded by Dan Cote. Discussion ensued.

Arne Jonynas stated that he has many questions regarding what can be done with the property should the town take ownership and what are the options. Heather Chase stated that the committee should be charged with the task of determining what to do with the property. She feels an urgent need to decide whether or not to take over the building.

Dan Cote stated his agreement with Heather Chase on taking ownership now. He feels that a committee could be used to determine what to do with the building once the town has ownership. He stated that he does not envision the town spending a lot of money on its own for this building. Ben Whalen stated his agreement. However, he further stated that there are current town assets that need to be taken care of. He stated his opinion that a town vote may be appropriate.

Discussion ensued regarding the timeline of taking over the building and the potential of a town vote.

Ron Patch stated that he feels that the Historical Society should be part of the committee. He also requested that Barre Pinske not be allowed to be a part of the committee. Mike Leonard was present and reviewed some history of the Yosemite Fire House and other town buildings. Heather Chase thanked Mike Leonard for his comments and his work.

John DeBenedetti stated that there are many existing properties in town that need a lot of work. He stated that he is hesitant to take on another building that needs a lot of work. He further stated that he does not know what can be done with the building. John DeBenedetti stated that warning a town vote would allow the committee an opportunity to do some research. William Lindsay questioned if the town can take over the building due to reversionary language in the deed. Arne Jonynas stated that he wants the legal questions answered before anything happens. Discussion ensued regarding previous grants that would be required to be paid back if the property was sold by the Town of Chester.

Discussion further ensued regarding whether or not a committee should be formed or if the Selectboard should do the research.

John DeBenedetti called the motion. Heather Chase and Dan Cote voted affirmatively. Ben Whalen, John DeBenedetti and Arne Jonynas voted in the negative.

It was agreed that David Pisha will review the insurance, the deed and the grant history. David Pisha recommended that the Board not predispose the committee that the building will be owned, but rather that the committee should review the best preservation of the building.

Tory Spater suggested that a committee be created to address all historic buildings.

## 7. FINANCIAL UPDATES:

General Fund: David Pisha stated that the town is performing ahead of last year. It is ahead in tax collections over this last month. Expenses are down largely in public works due to a mild winter. A Budget to Actual review shows that revenues are up while expenses remain close to the same. The Balance sheet shows that assets are growing, TAN note borrowing is down from last year and total equity has improved by \$163,000. The Board questioned the bounced check that keeps showing up. David Pisha will check with the bookkeeper. John DeBenedetti questioned the insurance payment that was received for the damaged truck. He further questioned the growing worker's compensation line item. David Pisha noted that the Fire Department has caused most of this increase. Property/liability insurance is up and is this is a timing issue. John DeBenedetti questioned the Fire Department line item 01-422-71 foam expense which is over budget. He questioned where this gets reimbursed. He further questioned line item 01-456-76, town hall which is for the solar.

William Lindsay questioned line item 01-415-94, propane tank purchase. David Pisha explained that every year the town bids its fuel. There is a need to replace the tanks when there is a new supplier. It was in the town's best interest to purchase the tanks.

Water: David Pisha stated that revenues are up \$1,900. The Contracted Services line is up due to the water project. This will be reimbursed when loan funds are issued.

Sewer: David Pisha stated that the Sewer Department is in good shape. Sewer is earning a small profit. The Board questioned why the utilities line is up so high. David stated that he will sit with Cil and figure out the solar farm revenues.

Delinquent Taxes: David Pisha stated that taxes are \$12,000 ahead of last year. The town collected \$52,000 in April. He stated that Water/Sewer delinquencies are up.

Ambulance: David Pisha stated that transports are down from last year. Receipts are close to last year. The new ambulance employee has started. Ben Whalen requested that the calls be broken down to show the increase of transports due to this position. David Pisha stated that there will be some changes coming to the ambulance service as there are discussions relative to a more regional approach with Ludlow and billing moving in house. David Pisha will work with Dan Cook to revise the reporting data.

Solar Agreement: David Pisha stated that the town made \$664.18 during the last billing period which pushed the cumulative savings to \$1,570.00. The other sources of income will be rent and tax revenue.

Small Funds: David Pisha stated that the CDBG grant has been reimbursed. Other funds show minimal use.

Chester Development Fund: John DeBenedetti questioned when People's will come back for an update. David indicated that they will be back in a year from investment.

Audit: David Pisha stated that a single audit was required due to the water project loan funds. The results should be coming soon.

8. OUTSIDE CONSUMPTION PERMIT:

Payne Junker stated that they have applied for a liquor license with the State of Vermont. It should be issued soon. He stated that the outside area has been sectioned off by a split rail fence.

John DeBenedetti stated that the findings of the Development Review Board permit state that the hours of operation are until 9:00 p.m. The entertainment permit will be entirely inside the building. Payne Junker changed the time on his permit from 10:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

The Selectboard signed the Outside Consumption Permit for 103 Artisan's Marketplace.

9. ENTERTAINMENT PERMIT:

Payne Junker changed his permit to state that entertainment would be inside only.

The Selectboard signed the Entertainment Permit for 103 Artisan's Marketplace.

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10. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA:

There is a meeting tomorrow at 7:00 at town hall. Garrett Baxter will be there from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns to discuss Conflicts of Interest.

Heather Chase would like an update on the water project in one of the upcoming meetings.

The Yosemite Fire House should be on the next meeting.

Heather Chase asked David Pisha to find out how many lots are available for sale currently and how many lots are typically sold in a year at the cemeteries.

The Selectboard signed a Cemetery Deed.

11. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Arne Jonynas to adjourn. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Julie Hance  
Secretary of the Select Board

Heather Chase  
Clerk of the Select Board

The SAPA-TV recording of this meeting is hereby made a part of the permanent minute record of this meeting.