

TOWN OF CHESTER  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

October 4, 2017  
Minutes

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

VISITORS: Shawn Cunningham; Jeff Holden; Frank Bidwell; Julie Hance; Robert  
Forguites; Forest Randall; Tory Denis; Daniel Cook; Derek Suursoo; Julia  
Purdy

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 Dan Cote to approve the minute of the September 20, 2017 Selectboard meeting. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the minute of the September 27, 2017 Special Selectboard meeting as amended. Seconded by Heather Chase. Julie Hance stated that the minutes were not complete. Ben Whalen will get her the motions tomorrow morning. The minutes were tabled.

2. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

Jeff Holden from the Water Department discussed the boil water order that was issued this week. He stated that when the hydrant on Depot Street was being replaced, the town received a water hammer which caused potentially contaminated water to enter the water system. Jeff Holden stated that the piping in that location is 100 years old with lead joints and can be fragile. He apologized for the inconvenience but the boil water was issued as a precautionary measure in order to keep people safe. The water is being chlorinated and the testing has been done. Jeff Holden stated that the first test result came back today clear. The second round of testing will be received back tomorrow. Jeff Holden stated that the hydrants are continuing to be replaced and all work is going well.

Dan Cote clarified with Jeff Holden that no individuals were hurt. In addition, Jeff Holden stated that the hydrants at the west end of town will be replaced when the new tank is online so that the water can be shut off but service will not be discontinued.

Jeff Holden discussed the improvements that are being done at the sewer plant. This is work that needed to be done in order to keep the sewer plant operational and safe.

Dan Cote questioned how the word gets out during this type of a crisis. Julie Hance explained that they flooded social media, the school robo system was used and VTel's robo system was used. She further stated we will be looking into establishing a robo system for the town in the future. Heather Chase suggested establishing a debriefing system for the town so that notes are kept and can be looked at later in the future.

The Selectboard thanked Jeff Holden and the staff for their work on this issue.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

Master Plan: David Pisha stated that there will be two presentations of the Master Plan coming up on October 19 and 22.

Clean Water: David Pisha stated that there are new regulations that are coming regulating road reconstruction. There are meetings coming up that staff will be attending. David Pisha also stated that the purchase of a compaction roller will be very important going forward. The Board agreed that there needs to be discussion on this before it is added to the budget.

Frank Bidwell questioned if there are areas in town where ditches can be removed such as Church Street. Arne Jonynas stated that this would be a good discussion to have with the Road Foreman.

EMS Building: David Pisha stated that Claudio Veliz will have his report at the next meeting.

Yosemite: David Pisha stated that he has spoken with Jim Carroll. When questioned on the timeline, Jim Carroll indicated by the first of the year.

Assessor: David Pisha stated that Tom Marsh from Windsor has expanded the advertising area to see if a better selection of applications would be received.

Salvage Yards: David Pisha stated that he has done some research on this topic. He is working with Attorney Jim Goss who will be putting something together to be presented to the Board.

Heather Chase stated that she attended the Town Fair this afternoon and cast a vote on behalf of Chester. She stated that it is a great opportunity to network and would like to see other board members attend.

Heather Chase stated that she has been paying attention to Rainbow Rock as she drives by. She stated that she is seeing trash there. It was agreed to add a garbage can to this location to help maintain the trash.

Heather Chase reminded David Pisha to ask NEFF about the possibility of windmills being installed on the Tomasso land. Arne Jonynas stated that there will be an open house on October 14 from 12 – 4:30 with guided hikes and mountain bike trips.

Arne Jonynas questioned the status of the cell tower. David Pisha stated that the town equipment is being moved over. He will check on the status.

4. SOLID WASTE DISTRICT DISSOLUTION:

Forrest Randall, Bob Forguites and Derek Suursoo were present from the Solid Waste District. Bob Forguites provided a history of the Solid Waste District and its separation from New Hampshire. At the time of the separation, Vermont was left with \$400,000 to be reserved for the towns. These funds were accumulated by tipping fees over several years. Recently, the Solid Waste District agreed to dissolve this fund and distribute to the towns. Chester's portion is \$30,764.00.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to authorize the Town of Chester to accept a check in the amount of \$30,764.00 from Southern Windsor/Windham Counties Solid Waste Management District in full and final payment of Town of Chester's share of funds received as a result of the dissolution of the New Hampshire/Vermont Solid Waste Project and to authorize Arne Jonynas to sign acknowledging receipt of the funds. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

5. AMBULANCE DEPARTMENT UPDATE:

Dan Cook from Chester Ambulance was present to provide an update on the ambulance service. He stated that the full time ambulance administrator has resigned. They are now beginning the process of advertising for a new position. Arne Jonynas questioned if the finances are working out. Dan Cook stated that they will with the right person.

David Pisha stated that the Board will receive a 9 month update at their next meeting. He also reported that revenues are still as projected. Dan Cook stated that the ambulance has responded to 288 calls with only 5 calls turned over to mutual aid. Monday – Friday calls from 6:00 to 6:00 is 129. The calls average \$500.00 per call. The billing rates have been increased and the billing has been enhanced. David Pisha stated that the billing has also been turned over to Town Hall to be managed by the bookkeeping department.

Heather Chase stated that keeping the ambulance service in Chester allows for a quicker response time and a local face, compared to using an out of town service. Ben Whalen questioned how many of the 129 calls was mutual aid needed to complete the calls. Dan Cook will get these numbers. Ben Whalen questioned the time and service being provided to the calls. He further questioned the agreement with Ludlow. Dan Cook explained that our full time person will cover Ludlow when necessary and Ludlow covers Chester when needed. Ben Whalen stated that for emergency services, revenue is not important. He is more concerned with response times and care of the residents. Ben

Whalen also questioned the call transports. Dan Cook responded that if it is a life situation, the immediate facility is used. If not, it is done on a per call basis and will transport where needed. Typically they are transported to Springfield.

Dan Cote questioned the process that has been used. David Pisha stated that the billing person was changed as well as the billing system. Dan Cook and David Pisha will review the position and determine the level of needs at this time.

6. TOWN HALL RENOVATION DISCUSSION:

Lillian Willis stated that the Chester Historical Preservation Committee has been charged with reviewing the historical buildings for the town. She stated that a list of small needs for the library have been given to Julie Hance and David Pisha. Lillian Willis stated they are still working on an assessment for the Jeffrey Barn.

Lillian Willis stated that they are currently working on the Town Hall in anticipation of a grant that Julie Hance will be applying for. The work will be focused to the exterior of the building and the second floor. She is seeking consensus of the Selectboard before they move forward with further work.

The exterior work is the primary focus. Rohr Cook will be doing a fly over to determine work needed on the roof. It is anticipated that the roof will need to be replaced. The other exterior work is identified in Tom Keefe's assessment.

Lillian Willis stated that the interior work allows for more leeway. She urged the Board to visit the Ludlow Town Hall which is a very similar space to Chester. She discussed the needs of the floor and the ceiling. In addition, sound panels would be installed to help with the sound. The diagonal stairs would be removed and the back stairs would be utilized to access the balcony. The balcony would be used for audio/visual equipment. She also noted that room darkening shades could be used on the windows. It would be nice to have a large screen so that movies could be shown.

The Board discussed the grant program being used. Julie Hance explained the USDA grant/loan program. She further stated that the decision of whether or not to phase the project will depend on the overall cost of the project. The Board agreed with the project overall.

7. CONTINUE VISIONING PROCESS:

Dan Cote stated that his intention for this process was to make sure that the Board was like minded entering into the budget season. Arne Jonynas stated that this will be a good guide moving forward. He further stated that CEDC is also making efforts in moving the town forward in the area of economic development. David Pisha stated that at a recent meeting, Claudio Veliz reported that in his dealings with State officials, there is positive feedback regarding Chester.

Dan Cote stated that he would like the various committees involved in the budget review process. The Board discussed the budget process from this point. David Pisha indicated that the numbers will start being formed now. The final numbers will not be known until January.

Frank Bidwell suggested that as departments come forward they should present their budgets to the Board so that they can be thinking about the big ticket items. Arne Jonynas stated that this is the typical process used and would expect to be used this year as well.

8. SIGN USDA LOAN DOCUMENTS:

The Board discussed the signing of the loan documents. The Board signed the Resolution & Certificate, Tax Certificate and Capital Improvement Note in connection with the loan documents for the USDA Grant/loan for renovations done to the Whiting Library.

9. RECENT FRANK BIDWELL COMMUNICATION:

Frank Bidwell was present to discuss various concerns he has. He stated that a primary concern is regarding the management of the Old Business report. He stated that there is not one place to go to figure out what is old business. He also indicated that the items from the new business section don't make it to the old business list. Arne Jonynas stated that some of the items are dealt with immediately and don't make it to the list. Heather Chase stated that David Pisha also prepares a summary sheet for the smaller items that don't need to be added to the old business list.

Lee Gustafson stated that the Board will have their laptops soon. The Board members can each have their list to keep track of their items. The Board discussed the issue and agreed that not all items need to be tracked on the old business list. Discussion continued about the process that the town uses to keep track of items that need to be addressed in the future.

Frank Bidwell explained that he would like to be able to search documents/minutes on the website to learn the history of specific items. He suggested that a search word line be put on the website.

Arne Jonynas stated that he is not sure that the town will get to the level of service that Mr. Bidwell would like at this time. Perhaps in the future a system could be developed.

10. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA:

Lee Gustafson stated that he received a letter from Larry Edwards on Circle Dive and would like to discuss after everybody has had an opportunity to read it.

The budget will be on the next agenda. Heather Chase asked for explanation in the comparison between the previous years' budgets.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION; TOWN MANAGER REVIEW:

A motion was made by Dan Cote to enter executive session for the purposes of finalizing the 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 Heather Chase to exit Executive Session at 9:11 p.m. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION; INTERVIEWS:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to enter executive session for the purposes of continuing review of the applications for the Planning Commission and Development Review Board. Seconded by Heather chase. The motion passed.

The Board entered Executive Session at 9:12 p.m.

A motion was made by Heather Chase to exit Executive Session at 9:14 p.m. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION; SANDRI:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to find premature general public knowledge of contract negotiations regarding the potential sale of town property would place the Town of Chester at a substantial disadvantage in any further negotiations. And, to enter into executive session, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. §313(a) for the purposes of discussing contract negotiations regarding the terms of a potential sale of town real estate. Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed.

The Board entered Executive Session at 9:14 p.m.

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to exit Executive Session at 9:36 p.m. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

14. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to adjourn. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:37 p.m.

Julie Hance  
Secretary of the Select Board

Heather Chase  
Clerk of the Select Board