

TOWN OF CHESTER
SELECT BOARD
November 18, 2020
Select Board Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: Arne Jonynas; Lee Gustafson; Leigh Dakin; Heather Chase; Julie Hance; Amie O'Brien

VISITORS: SapaTV; Shawn Cunningham; Sharon Huntley; Bob Flint; Carla Westine; Scott Blair; Ginger Roper; David Carey; Ralph Falanga; Jeff Sheldon; Matt McCarthy; Ruthanne Batchelder

Meeting was held via Zoom and at the Town Hall.

1. APPROVE MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 4, 2020 SELECT BOARD MEETING

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the Minutes of the November 4, 2020 Select Board meeting as written. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed.

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS/ANSWERS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Leigh dakin stated the No Parking sign next to Jiffy Mart is still there and is being ignored.

3. OLD BUSINESS

Jiffy Mart No Parking: Julie Hance reached out to Mark Pickering about the trucks parking on the side of the road near Jiffy Mart and he has not responded. She will get back to the board after she hears from him.

Dispatching Services: Julie Hance spoke with Tom Bock and VLCT regarding the proposed dispatching fees for the Police Department. Bill S.124 states no unfunded mandates can be passed onto taxpayers. This means the State Police cannot charge the town to dispatch for the Police Department. Heather Chase feels the State police is already funded by tax dollars. By charging town's money to dispatch, they would be taxing people twice for the same service. This will be discussed at the state level in January to try and find other ways to fund it.

Police Policy: Trevor Whipple is a specialist hired by VLCT to help town's review their police policies. He will review Chester's policy at no charge to the town. His recommendations will be sent to the town next week. The policies are state mandated, and state controlled. Additional procedures will be added pertaining to the new Public Safety building. The new holding cell, sallyport, and other items will require additional procedures.

Popple Dungeon Construction: The town was awarded the third grant to help pay for the construction engineer. This will go out to bid mid to late January 2021. Construction will start next year.

Acoustic Panels: The contact person at Atomic Pro helping with this project passed away. The owner of the company visited Town Hall and came up with some different ideas for the project. He feels adding panels to the ceiling and covering the windows with window treatments would be effective. The project will be done in phases adding more panels over time if needed.

Sidewalk Project: This project will go out to bid in January or February 2021. If VTrans has not reviewed the right of way for approval by then, the project will be put on hold until 2022.

4. ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH; USE OF GREEN

St. Luke's has decided against holding this event due to COVID.

5. CHESTER SNOWMOBILE CLUB; USE OF TOWN ROADS

The Chester Snowmobile Club consists of volunteers that maintain the snowmobile trails over the winter season. Every year the club asks for the towns permission to cross town roads to access the trails.

Roads requested this year include:

- 300 yards of Smokeshire Road from the 4th bridge north to the snowmobile bridge
- Marc's Drive from Les Allen's property to the far end of the road
- Blue Hill Road from the end of Kengeters field across the town bridge into Vail's file at a distance of about 120 yards
- Across the turn around on Old Forge Road
- 80' of Ethan Allen Road, just past Malfunction Junction. We are moving off the road for about 100 yards
- 120' of Nudist Camp Road at the start of Williams Road
- All of Williams Road

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to authorize Julie Hance to sign the form giving the Chester Snowmobile Club permission to cross town roads to access the trails. Seconded by Heater Chase. The motion passed.

6. WAYFINDING PLAN

Carla Westine is the Chair of the Master Implementation Committee and has worked with Bob Flint and other members on this project. The Wayfinding Plans main focus is to direct people to the Green, the Depot, and the Stone Village so they see the important parts of town. The first part to be implemented will direct people to the Green that are traveling on

103 North turning onto Maple Street. People tend to miss the Green altogether when traveling 103 North. The plan will be done in phases as money allows over time.

Leigh Dakin pointed out the signs already in place around town need to be refurbished. She has heard comments from people in town about the signs needing to be fixed up. Lee Gustafson suggested adding a U-shaped sign to direct people to drive along the Green in the correct direction. People tend to drive down Common Street the wrong way without knowing it is a one-way street.

The Select Board appointed members to the Master Plan Implementation Committee several years ago but no reappointments have been made. Only two members of the committee are still active because everyone else's appointments have expired. This will be added to a future Agenda. The committee could be changed to an unofficial committee allowing them to work freely without having to be appointed to do so.

A motion was made by Heather Chase to approve the Wayfinding Plan as submitted and to allow forwarding to the Transportation Information Council. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed.

7. SPEED LIMITS; RIVER STREET, HIGH STREET, ANDOVER ROAD

The speed study for River Street, High Street, and Andover Road has been completed. The data showed the average speed for travelers on High street was 33 mph, River Street was a little higher with some people traveling at speeds of up to 45 mph, and the Andover Road data showed more people were exceeding the speed limit at about 9 mph over. The data collected on Andover Road showed most people's speeds to be between 41 and 45 mph. However, there was also data collected that showed a speed of 106 mph and one at 70 mph. An explanation for this could be a state trooper on the way to a call, but there is no way of knowing. The River Street data indicated large trucks travel that road often. Lee Dakin showed some concern for this because the street does not have sidewalks for pedestrians. She would like the speed limit to be lowered to 25 mph on River Street.

The Select board is concerned that lowering the speed limit on these roads will not slow people down. The Speed Limit guide sent by the state says people will travel at a speed they feel the road can handle and will ignore the speed limit. Chief Rick Cloud feels lowering the speed limit on Andover Road could create dangerous driving situations with more people speeding and trying to pass. More enforcement is needed especially on Andover Road. Heather Chase would like more enforcement over the next 6 months then do a new study to gather additional data. She would like to add more permanent signs around town. A question was asked if the speed signs can collect data without showing the speed limit. Julie Hance will investigate this and get back to the board.

Ginger Roper feels the data was collected at the wrong time of year when fewer tourists are in town. She asked to see the results of the study to better understand the data. She has stood in her yard with neighbors and watched the sign as people pass. Most cars are

traveling in excess of 50 mph in the 40 mph zone. Reducing the speed limit on Andover Road would not have a negative impact and would not cost money. She feels a lower speed limit would slow travelers down and make it safer for the people living on that road. Julie Hance will send the speed data and state's Speed Limit Guide to Ginger Roper and others that request it.

Ralph Falanga lives on Andover Road and would like the speed limit lowered. He has trouble pulling out of his driveway because cars speed past. Drivers honk their horns at him while he is trying to pull out. He feels there will be a tragic accident on Andover Road at some point. The decision to wait on lowering the speed limit disappoints and disgusts him as he feels this should be a priority.

A part time cop has been hired dedicating his time to running radar and enforcement. Arne Jonynas asked if there is crash data information available from the state for review. Julie Hance will try to obtain that data and find prices on portable radar signs. The speed limit on Andover Road in Andover is 50 mph. The board would like to have a conversation with Andover about lowering the limit in that area. The Select Board has decided to wait until Spring to collect more data and make a more informed decision on changing the speed limits.

8. ARREARAGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM; WATER/SEWER USERS

The Cares Act has added delinquent water/sewer charges to the list of utilities they will help people pay. Chester has registered with the state making this available to water/sewer users. This will help pay bills due after March 1, 2020 that are 60 days past due. People use a portal to submit their past due bills and Julie Hance verifies the amounts. The money comes directly to the town. Amie O'Brien identified about 40 eligible people and mailed them a flier with information about the program. Due to COVID regulations the town is unable to shut off water to delinquent accounts right now. The town accepts payment arrangements and will work with residents to get caught up.

9. 2021 GENERAL FUND BUDGET; RECREATION, PARKS & CEMETERY, PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

Matt McCarthy spoke about the 2021 Recreation Budget which he combined a lot of items to make it easier for tracking purposes. The budget is similar to the past couple of years. The Facility Repair line will be used to create screening between the abutting property owners to the Pinnacle on Lover's Lane Road. Also, the skate park needs repair to make it safer for kids to use. The ramps need new screws, metal, and wood in some areas. The grant applied for to help pay for some of the repairs was denied. COVID started to affect the activities of the Recreation Department in the Spring. Matt McCarthy was able to hold one-on-one clinics and other sports during the summer as the Governor allowed. Winter sports are on hold for now, but he is taking sign-ups to be ready for when things can start back up.

Before COVID, he kept track of his mileage and found he drove about 125 miles per week. Julie Hance explained the amount he gets paid for mileage is to compensate for wear and

tear on his truck. She feels the amount is fair and would rather pay the expense than buy him a vehicle. The Select Board would like to know if his personal insurance covers him while he is working, or if the town is liable for any incidents that may occur. Julie Hance will clarify this for the board. Chester's Recreation Department is a successful program and is great for marketing the town to potential buyers with children.

Jeff Sheldon explained the 2021 Cemetery Department budget has been kept about the same. He cut things where he could and will not need new equipment in 2021. A survey of the High Street Cemetery will take place.

The Public Safety building has been added to the 2021 budget and has been estimated for a 6-month period. Floor mats, towel dispensers and other items will need to be purchased initially. The electric and water/sewer have been estimated from what the town garage uses. The amount for propane has been estimated at \$3,000, which could be more than what is needed. An analysis can be done to get a better idea but would cost money. Lee Gustafson stated there should have been a heat loss calculation done during the bid process. Julie Hance will check to see if this was done. The budget does not include a dumpster because the one at the town garage will be used. Propane tanks will need to be purchased to be buried in the ground. Two tanks might be required for the site, one to run the building and one to run the generator. Insurance has been estimated for the 6-month period.

10. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA

Ralph Falanga mentioned there are some properties near his that have a lot of junk cars and would like to review the Junk Yard Ordinance. Julie hance explained hours have been added to the Zoning Administrators position for enforcement. Michael Normyle no longer holds this position. The applicants to fill the position have been interviewed and the recommendation for first choice will be presented to the Select Board at the December 2, 2020 meeting.

The next budgets to be reviewed are the Highway Department and Library. The Reserve Fund Policy will be on the next Agenda. The Act 250 negotiations are continuing. More will be known in December.

11. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to adjourn. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Amie O'Brien
Secretary of the Select Board

Lee Gustafson
Clerk of the Select Board