

TOWN OF CHESTER  
SELECT BOARD

May 20, 2020  
Meeting Minutes

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

VISITORS: SAPA; Mary Semones; Scott Blair; Scott Wunderle; Shawn Cunningham; Ambers Wilson; Ron Patch; Sharon Huntley; Karen Ericson; Cil Mathews; Tom Hildreth; John (last name unknown); Ken (last name unknown)

**Meeting was held via Zoom.**

1. APPROVE MINUTES FROM THE MAY 6, 2020 SELECT BOARD MEETING AND MAY 8, 2020

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the minutes of the May 6, 2020 Select Board meeting as written. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2020 Select Board meeting as written. Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed.

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS/ANSWERS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

There were no citizen's comments.

3. OLD BUSINESS/LAST MEETING

Library: The Library Trustees voted to approve the \$1,500 to match the Select Board's contribution towards their employees' benefits. Julie Hance and Heather Chase will be meeting with the Trustees on Friday, May 22, 2020 to start the discussion regarding the relationship between the 2 entities. Robert Nied and Julie Hance will be speaking to discuss identifying a group of people to begin this process. Heather will be included for the Select Board.

Amie O'Brien has put a notice out over social media and the town's website making people aware of the option to prepay taxes and letting them know of ways to pay, as requested.

Ron Smith will be coming July 15, 2020 instead of June 3, 2020, which will line up with the next quarterly financial review. While he is here, he will also discuss the Fund Balance/Reserve Fund Policy with the Select Board.

Julie Hance has contacted the Trustees of Public Funds regarding the request for \$5,000 to refinish the North Street Cemetery tomb doors. The meeting was Tuesday, May 19 at 10:00 a.m. The Trustees of Public Funds approved the \$5,000.

Emergency Services Building: Bids for the civil package and concrete came in yielding a \$20,000 savings. The low bidder for site work is Bazin Brothers and the low bidder for concrete is Cretepavers. The bank run material in the Reservoir pit meets the sieve analysis to be used as structural fill with one more test still needing to be done. If the material meets this next test, this could save potentially \$50,000. Kirby Putnam is working with the engineer to determine logistics and make sure that the town can handle moving the material in a timely manner. Lee Gustafson pointed out the test could show the material does not have enough moisture, which can be added to make it pass.

Julie Hance has heard from people directly and through Select Board members asking why the town is proceeding with the Emergency Services building given the potential financial situations. The new building is being financed through a Bond. Therefore, whether the town builds the building or not, the town is required to repay the bond on its amortized schedule regardless of how much is drawn. The Bond is not a line of credit. Therefore, the town should take advantage of a positive bidding climate and hope to save some money.

#### 4. COVID-19 UPDATE

The Governor has extended the State of Emergency until June 15, 2020. However, he also began loosening the stay home order by allowing various businesses to begin opening at a reduced level. The personal service industry will be allowed to open soon, as well as outside dining. Julie Hance has been speaking with Michael Normyle to determine how outside dining can take place on a temporary basis for Chester's local restaurants without requiring additional permitting.

The Governor announced there will be a large Economic Development package presented to the Legislature very soon. The loans and grants will be given to businesses through the Regional Development Corp. Businesses should contact Bob Flint for the information regarding these packages. The town's Revolving Loan Fund, if loaned to local businesses, will be backed by the state if default occurs. If there is money taken from the town's fund, the money will be loans not grants. Bob Flint has been trying to get the word out to local businesses. Once the package passes, the town will send a letter to businesses informing them of their options. Heather Chase would like Bob Flint to attend a meeting to help the board decide what to do regarding the Revolving Loan Fund. Lee Gustafson asked if business owners in town are in dire straits now. Julie Hance explained that some might be, but not due to COVID-19. She has been sending businesses to Bob Flint for advice.

5. EMERGENCY SERVICES BUILDING LANDSCAPING PLAN PRESENTATION; SCOTT WUNDERLE

Scott Wunderle presented his design for the Landscaping Plan for the Emergency Services Building. He has worked with the Building Committee and has made all modifications requested by the committee. What he showed the Select Board is the final product.

Scott Wunderle took drone pictures of the area and showed the Select Board slides with sketches where the building and plants would potentially go. He thanked the Select Board for moving forward with his ideas. The plans were modified taking out the plants in front of the building allowing trucks to be pulled parallel to the building. The Fire Chief will give approval for any trees planted near the entrance. All plants were removed from the plan allowing the police to keep the side door free. A sitting area was included in front with mid-sized trees and shrubs on the street edge creating privacy. Included in the lower right is a memorial that the Fire Chief requested for the future site, which will be visible from the parking lot and as people drive by. There will not be any large trees around that area avoiding the power lines and to keep maintenance low. Around the side of the building will be a sitting area for the Fire Department with an Elm tree for shade. On the back bank there will be plantings to help screen the apartment building, including shrubs and roses. There will not be anything planted in the open field out back allowing the area to be used for training. A path already used by the tenants at the apartment building will be kept for them to continue using. The site plan for the area requires some lift which the town could supply some of the fill needed. Bio mat will be used for the areas with shrubs being planted through it. Some trees will be planted so the sound and lights from the vehicles will be blocked from going through to the apartment house. At a DRB hearing Carla Westine mentioned that some of the pine trees that are already there could be saved and used when the area is ready. The back of the building is the least important part, not being seen as much. The surface under the sitting areas could be local rock and the benches could be like the ones already around town. All the details for this plan are on the project sheet. The Bid Sheet has been sent to Kevin Racik, which was designed to be bid ready so that it could be included in the project.

Arne Jonynas thanked Scott Wunderle for his presentation and feels that the outside of the building is just as important as the inside. He asked Scott Wunderle why the plants in front of the building were taken out of the original plan. Scott Wunderle explained that Matt Wilson had concerns about being able to turn trucks around in the parking lot, and for snow removal purposes.

Jeff Holden wondered where the sign for the building and where the flagpole would be located. Scott Wunderle said the flagpole will be mounted to the building. The red Italian marble sign donated to the town that says Chester Public Safety Building was not implemented because it is too small to be placed on the road. This would possibly be added into where the small sitting area is going. He will add it into the plans.

Arne Jonynas asked if the plan can be broken down into phases. Scott Wunderle said yes, this could be done by area, adding there are dozens of different areas. The part that would be

difficult to do in phases would be the topsoil needing to be 8-12 inches deep. The proper soil depth should be communicated with Bazin Brothers.

6. JEFFREY BARN DISCUSSION; RON PATCH

Ron Patch presented a plan for the Jeffrey Barn and its surrounding area. An article he wrote, and some photographs were submitted to the board, which are attached to the minutes. He explained some of the history behind the Jeffery Barn and the reasons for wanting to preserve the area. Artifacts possibly dating back 8,000 years have been discovered on the lands surrounding the barn and some of the stone used does not exist in this area. The girders holding up the wood deck going from the ramp to the barn are railroad track from 1949 and only exist at the barn. He feels that this site is the most historical place in town.

He would like the ramp area, which is overgrown, to be cleaned out. Kim Kendall from Kendall's barn would like to support this project. He has 6-7 stone posts which came off Trebo Road that he would like to donate. Ron Patch would like them to be set up in the field. The Historical Society will be pay for a plaque to go on the post. There are apple trees that need to be trimmed clearing away the dead branches. The North side of the barn would need to be attended to most. The silo has a grape vine going up the wall getting into the side separating the boards. Same vines are on the base of the barn as well. The south side should be repaired with possibly a couple hundred feet of clapboards. The milk house built below ground used to keep milk cold long ago should be cleaned out and the building should be assessed. Ron Patch would like to move the marble monument set on concrete down into the field. He does not feel that there will need to be any money spent on this project, just labor.

Jeff Holden said he has stone from a fence on his property that he will donate. He used to keep the barn yard mowed but has not this year. He has a list going for the guys in his department to start cleaning out that area. They have done some already. A pile of old lumber was ready to be moved, but he was worried someone would comment about where it was moved to. Lee Gustafson asked if there is any liability to the town in asking for people to volunteer instead of using the town guys. Julie Hance stated she will talk to Kirby Putnam about having them do it and believes it can be done in house. Arne Jonynas thinks it is a great idea to preserve the area without too much expense. Lee Gustafson said that this will let people see the barns potential and possibly do more in the future. Heather Chase agreed to go with Julie to assess the area.

7. PICNIC TABLES ON THE GREEN; SCOTT BLAIR & JASON TOSTRUP

Scott Blair and Jason Tostrup asked the Select Board for permission to add picnic tables to the Green. A narrative has been included from Scott Blair and Jason Tostrup as requested.

Scott Blair explained to the Select Board the picnic tables would be properly spaced with signs on each table explaining the rules. Jason Tostrup and Scott Blair will keep the area clean by each checking it once per day. They will provide trash cans outside their restaurants for people using the tables. The other business owners on the Green support the idea. Scott Blair has received

donations to help pay for the tables. Leigh Dakin asked about restrooms and was concerned about who will maintain the Information Booth. Julie Hance explained the Information Booth is currently open for use and the town plans to provide sanitizer and will put up signs asking people to spray the area down after each use. The town is unable to have an employee stay there all day to maintain the booth. Julie Hance will clean the booth each morning, at lunch, and after work.

Scott Blair mentioned that people are now using their backseats and motorcycle seats as a place to eat. He would like the tables to be placed on the Green for people to use to avoid this from happening. Jeff Holden said he went to Wicked Good BBQ in NH recently. There they had tables with plastic covers on each table with sanitizer spray bottles. When patrons were done eating, they sanitized the area themselves and this seemed to work well. He said that the tables on the green will have to be temporary because it is town property. He would like an end date to be set for this. Heather Chase agrees and suggested possibly allowing them through September. Scott Blair would like the tables to be approved through foliage season, possibly the end of October. He will store and remove the tables when it is time to do so, adding that he would move them if they are in the way of the Sale on the Green in September.

A motion for 5 picnic tables to be added to the Green through Columbus Day Weekend 2020 was made by Arne Jonynas. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. Lee Gustafson stated that if Scott Blair and Jason Tostrup maintain the area by keeping it clean and making sure it is not being abused, the Select Board will revisit the idea for next year. The motion passed.

## 8. OUTSIDE DINING FOR LOCAL RESTAURANTS

Julie Hance explained to the Select Board the situation surrounding allowing restaurants to open for outside dining. The Governor will allow outside dining starting Friday for restaurants in Vermont. There are potential zoning problems stemming from this, however, the town will not issue citations at this time. A letter will be sent to the local restaurant letting them know to be mindful of pedestrian safety, noise, and other complaints the town could receive. Businesses will have to talk with Liquor Control to get permissions for outside consumption of alcohol. Alcohol will not be permitted on town property due to the alcohol ordinance. Heather Chase said that the board will have to stay on top of this and make expectations clear to businesses. Scott Blair stated he would add no alcohol consumption to the signs that will be located on the picnic tables at the Green. The Select Board discussed the problems that could arise allowing for alcohol consumption on town property, including insurance and liability issue and enforcement. Jeff Holden feels that there should not be any alcohol allowed on town property because of enforcement issues. Arne Jonynas and Heather Chase disagree and feel this should be reconsidered to help local businesses with sales. Heather Chase says the ordinance should be viewed in a way that times are different and would like to look at it after the Governor's decision.

Julie Hance then explained to the Select Board the retail businesses in town may want to have outside sales as well possibly allowing them to use the Green or Cobleigh for small booths. The Select Board could approve a temporary policy allowing certain types of uses in these areas

specific to the business. She will speak with Jim Carroll about the legal ramifications of allowing alcohol on town property and creating a policy for other businesses to use the properties for sales. Scott Blair said the Governor approved restaurants for outdoor dining starting Friday night with strict guidelines. Julie Hance will start working on this now.

#### 9. GRADUATION ANNOUNCEMENTS ON THE GREEN

Lauren Feirman called the town asking to place three signs on the Green recognizing the 2020 Green Mountain graduates, one on each end and one in the middle. Each graduate will have A sign for their lawn. The Select Board agrees that this is a great idea.

A motion was made by Leigh Dakin to allow Green Mountain High School to place three signs on the Green. Seconded by Jeff Holden. The motion passed.

Amber Wilson addressed the Select Board asking to place each graduate's individual sign on the Green. She thinks this would be a better way to acknowledge the graduates than just the three signs the high school asked for. The signs are currently placed at the high school and are not visible to people as they drive by. She pointed out surrounding towns such as Springfield and Poultney have their graduate's signs displayed where everyone can see.

Leigh Dakin stated the signs could be displayed on the Academy Building lawn, which was a school, or near the monument in front of the stone wall. Jeff Holden said he would ask the American Legion to see if the signs could go in the field across from the high school. Amber Wilson felt the signs would not be visible enough down the bank in the field. The Select Board was concerned that placing the signs on the Green with the new picnic tables would cause too much clutter. Lee Gustafson would like a time frame of a couple of weeks for this because the signs would interfere with mowing. Julie Hance will work with Public Works regarding mowing around the signuys and will work out the details with the school.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to allow Julie Hance to negotiate with the high school to put 50 individual senior signs on or around the Green, or in the field at the American Legion. Seconded by Arne Jonynas. The motion passed.

#### 10. LOAN DOCUMENTS FOR CRUISER

The total cost for the Police Cruiser is \$41,000 which is \$11,000 under budget. This has a 4-year payoff, each payment is \$10,250 with an interest rate of 2.75%. Lee Gustafson asked where the \$11,000 savings would go and if it could be applied to shorten the loan. Julie Hance explained the separate article voted on was for an amount not to exceed \$52,000 for a 4-year term. She said it would be a good idea to keep the 4-year loan allowing for some flexibility in 2021 when things might not be so good. The years 2021-2024 will have large budgets. The \$11,000 could be recognized in the 2021 Capital Plan.

A motion was made by Arne Jonynas to approve the 4 year loan in the amount of \$41,000 with each payment being \$10,250 and having an interest rate of 2.75% for the new police cruiser. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed. The Select Board will have to sign the documents at Town Hall.

11. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA

Green Up Day is scheduled for May 30. The dumpster will be delivered to the town garage on May 22 and will be there until June 6. Bags are at the Town Hall for people to stop and pick up.

The Capital Plan should be ready for review. Ron Smith will be coming on July 15 instead of June 3.

12. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to adjourn. Seconded by Arne Jonynas. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Amie O'Brien  
Secretary of the Select Board

Lee Gustafson  
Clerk of the Select Board