

TOWN OF CHESTER
SELECT BOARD
July 15, 2020
Meeting Minutes

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

VISITORS: SAPA TV; Derek Sursoo; Joan Grossman; Shawn Cunningham; Cil Mathews; Ron Smith; Bill Lindsay; Julie Parsells; Jessica Frasca; Steve Mancuso; Bill Dakin

Meeting was held via Zoom and at the Town Hall.

1. APPROVE MINUTES

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the Minutes of the July 1, 2020 Select Board meeting as written. Seconded by Jeff Holden. The motion passed.

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS/ANSWERS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Jeff Holden in speaking for the American Legion stated they straightened the American flags and removed the tattered ones from the poles that line the Green. The traffic on Main Street and the wind contribute to the flags condition. Due to COVID-19 the American Legion will not be replacing the flags this year. Jeff Holden voiced some concern over the way the situation was addressed. He would have liked the issue to be brought to the American Legion instead of the Select Board. Arne Jonynas said he does not feel this reflects the Legion in a bad way, just that the flags should be displayed properly.

3. OLD BUSINESS/LAST MEETING

Public Safety Building: Jim Carrol has been sent Amendment A of the Guaranteed Maximum price for review. A special meeting will be set for the Select Board to review and sign the documents once all changes have been made. Work will hopefully begin late July.

Pinnacle: The Gate at the Pinnacle has been installed and the sign is being constructed. The sign will be done at the end of next week.

Police Department: A copy of the 2013 Assessment was sent to the Select Board. This will be added to an Agenda in August for further discussion.

Skate Park: The Building and General Services grant has opened. This grant has been used before by the town. Julie Hance will work with Matt McCarthy and some of the skateboarders in town to identify the needed improvements to the skate park. A price will be determined with more to come on this along with a plan to take better care of the

park after improvements have been done. Skate park is about 15 years old. Arne says it gets a lot of use.

COVID-19 Update: Julie Hance met with Bob Flint and Carol Lighthall regarding marketing strategies the help boost Chester's economy. A request for funds from the Development Fund will be coming at a future meeting. Details will be worked out for this.

The Legislature has approved a grant program for municipalities to help cover COVID-19 related expenses. More information will be coming with respects to what types of expense will be covered. Chester has expended approximately \$4,500 on COVID-19 necessary items as well as \$31,000 from the sick bank for COVID-19 related payroll prior to layoffs.

A press release was sent out about a person at the pool that tested positive for COVID-19. Julie Hance spoke with the Vermont Department of Health about the situation. They determined the girl was not contagious Thursday while she was at the pool. The family was being retested and it is likely the first test produced a false positive result. The rapid test results yield a 60-70 percent false positive outcome. The pool was open to all for a short time but will now be limited to Chester and Andover Residents. People are required to sign up for a time slot. When they come to the pool, they give their name, phone number, and their temperatures are taken. Julie Hance will speak with Matt McCarthy about the number of people allowed in the pool at once and see if putting it back to 25 is better for now. The pool will be cleaned thoroughly by a professional company.

Arne Jonynas said following state guidelines is a good idea, but we can take it farther. Even though the tests could be false positive there is still a chance it is correct. He feels it is the towns responsibility to notify people before rumors get started. He asked what the recent activity at the little league field was. Julie Hance explained the Governor began to allow team vs team games, not tournaments. The teams at the field in Chester have not been Chester teams. The little league teams rotate towns where they play games. Some towns do not have an adequate field, so Chester's fields are used for those games. Arne Jonynas hopes that people will follow CDC guidelines during these games.

Heather Chase would like Julie Hance to keep track of all COVID-19 related expenses, including cleaning the pool, for the purposes of the grant program. Manchester has enacted a mask mandate. She would like Chester to consider doing the same. Social distancing and wearing masks will help protect people from the virus. Jeff Holden says a mask mandate would take away people's rights. Not all doctors agree on this issue. Studies have found oxygen levels drop while wearing a mask. He feels this should be left as a choice for people to make on their own. Business and store owners could ask people to wear a mask to enter if they choose to do so. Heather Chase read somewhere COVID-19 would be gone if everyone in the US wore a mask for 60 days. She will try to get more information on this.

4. FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Select Board has received the financial statements to the second quarter for the General Fund and Water/Sewer. The General Fund is underspent by \$240,000 and is holding at 42.8% expended. There may be expenses that arise that cannot be cut but the hope is to maintain this trend until the end of the year. Arne Jonynas asked what the Public Safety Income State Aide is. Julie Hance stated the aide comes in quarterly in the amount of \$195,000. Tax bills have been sent out and revenue is coming in. Expenses are being cut this year so expenses will be down for the year. Heather Chase said she appreciates people keeping spending down considering what is happening. She said after September 15 the board will have a better understanding of where the town stands in respect to revenue.

5. BALANCE SHEET DISCUSSION; RON SMITH

Ron Smith from the auditing firm addressed the board to give them a better understanding of how the Balance Sheet works. He explained a Balance Sheet should be paired with the Budget Report. The Balance Sheet is a presentation of the financial condition of the town at a certain point in time and shows what is owned compared to what is owed. The town has a cash flow problem mitigated by the Tax Anticipation Note (TAN). The TAN has a max limit of \$750,000 which about \$240,000 is left unused. The things to focus on are how much money is in the bank compared to the towns obligations. The reports show the town has been consistent to where it was in the past. With COVID-19, he is concerned for the condition of the town because businesses and residents may not be able to pay their taxes next year. Town's will have to be lenient in the years to come to help save businesses and property owners. Giving the board the Balance Sheet and Budget Report for review once a month will be helpful in assessing the towns financial position. He suggests the board pay close attention to the comparative section of the report to keep track of the trends over the coming months. The Select Board should consider ways to bring money in such as TANs and other forms of loans to be sure future budgets can be met.

Ron Smith explained the Due To Due From line of the Balance Sheet. This is an internal feature of the software and one reason why the town switched from cash based to accrual accounting. The number in the Due To Due From line consists of all the business the town does. All the money is pooled from all accounts and is added up into the number on this line. This number changes as a lot as money comes in and is paid out.

6. RESERVE FUND POLICY; RON SMITH

Establishing a Reserve Fund was adopted at Town Meeting with conditions on how to fund it and how to spend it. The board will have to establish a Reserve Fund Policy and present it to the voters. Funding will be from tax surpluses at the end of the year. The money will be spent on unanticipated expenses that happen throughout the year.

Ron Smith explained there are state statutes that must be followed pertaining to the town's Reserve Fund. The current policy needs more details on how the fund will perform. He will work with Julie Hance to create a detailed policy to present to the board.

7. ENTERTAINMENT PERMIT; P&JS COUNTRY KITCHEN

The Select Board signed an Entertainment Permit allowing the Country Girl Diner to have outside music consisting of classic rock with a band of 2-4 people. The dates for this will be July 17, July 25, August 22, and September 26 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

8. LIQUOR LICENSE; FULLERTON INN

The Select Board signed the First and Third Class Liquor Licenses, and approved the Outside Consumption Permit for the Fullerton Inn's new owners. Leigh Dakin recused herself.

A motion was made by Jeff Holden to allow Deborah Aldrich to sign the Outside Consumption Permit for the Fullerton Inn. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the First Class Liquor License, and Third Class Liquor License for the Fullerton Inn. Seconded by Jeff Holden. The motion passed.

9. SIGN LOAN DOCUMENTS:

- Backhoe Loan: The Backhoe came in \$47,000 under budget

A motion was made by Jeff Holden to approve and allow Arne Jonynas, Select Board Chair, to sign the Town of Chester Capital Equipment Note for \$110,000 to purchase a backhoe. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Jeff Holden to approve and allow Arne Jonynas, Select Board Chair, to sign the Town of Chester Resolution for Capital Equipment Borrowing in the amount of \$110,000 to purchase a backhoe. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve and allow Arne Jonynas, Select Board Chair, to sign the Town of Chester Non-Arbitrage Certificate for Capital Equipment Borrowing in the amount of \$110,000 to purchase a backhoe. Seconded by Jeff Holden. The Motion passed.

- Paving Loan: The completed paving came in \$8,000 higher but will be covered through the Highway Budget.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve and allow Arne Jonynas, Select Board Chair, to sign the Town of Chester Capital Improvement Note for \$100,000 for paving. Seconded by Jeff Holden. Jeff Holden feels borrowing money to pave is not ideal and would like to avoid it in the future if possible. The motion passed.

Steve Mancuso addressed the Select Board about an Entertainment Permit for a yearly event he holds at his residence. Julie Hance explained the town has a noise ordinance that pertains to businesses, which is attached to Conditional Use permits. Jeff Holden said the State of Vermont has a noise ordinance that towns must follow. This policy is enforced after 10 p.m. if the noise level at a residence is too loud or is a nuisance to neighbors. The board does not give Entertainment Permits to residents for parties. Julie Hance will review the town's Entertainment Policy and get back to Steve Mancuso.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve and allow Arne Jonynas, Select Board Chair, to sign the Town of Chester Resolution for Capital Improvement Borrowing in the amount of \$100,000 for paving. Seconded by Jeff Holden. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve and allow Arne Jonynas, Select Board Chair, to sign the Town of Chester Non-Arbitrage Certificate for Capital Improvement Borrowing in the amount of \$100,000 for paving. Seconded by Jeff Holden. The Motion passed.

- Dump Truck Loan: The Dump Truck came in as budgeted at \$140,000.

A motion was made by Jeff Holden to approve and allow Arne Jonynas, Select Board Chair, to sign the Town of Chester Capital Equipment Note for \$140,000 to purchase a dump truck. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. Lee Gustafson asked if this was the price for the black body. Julie Hance said yes, painting the body blue would have cost more money. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Jeff Holden to approve and allow Arne Jonynas, Select Board Chair, to sign the Town of Chester Resolution for Capital Equipment Borrowing in the amount of \$140,000 to purchase a dump truck. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Jeff Holden to approve and allow Arne Jonynas, Select Board Chair, to sign the Town of Chester Non-Arbitrage Certificate for Capital Equipment Borrowing in the amount of \$140,000 to purchase a dump truck. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The Motion passed.

10. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA

A review and discussion of the speed limits on High Street, Grafton Street, and River Street will be added to the August 5, 2020 Agenda.

Jim Carroll will be at the August 19, 2020 meeting to discuss Conflict of Interest.

Heather Chase would like to review the old and outdated town policies at a future meeting.

11. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to adjourn. Seconded by Jeff Holden. The meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Amie O'Brien
Secretary of the Select Board

Lee Gustafson
Clerk of the Select Board