

1 **TOWN OF CHESTER**  
2 **SELECTBOARD MEETING**  
3 **April 19, 2023, Minutes**

4 **Board Members Present:** Arne Jonynas, Lee Gustafson, Peter Hudkins, and Arianna Knapp at  
5 Town Hall; and Heather Chase via Zoom from the Capital.

6 **Staff Present:** Julie Hance, Town Manager, and Cathy Hasbrouck, Recording Secretary, at Town  
7 Hall.

8 **Visitors Present:** Matt Gorsky, Bill Gorsky, Barre Pinske, Cathy Hasbrouck, Bill Lindsay, Nancy  
9 Lindsay, John Cummings, Deb Aldrich, Cynthia Prairie, Shawn Cunningham, Wendy and Steve  
10 Schnieder, Bob Greenfield, Nick Giberti of The Vermont Journal, Steve Mancuso, Hugh Quinn,  
11 Lori Quinn, Fred Potter, Sam Melansen, and Rene Melansen at Town Hall; and SAPA TV via  
12 Zoom.

13  
14 **Call to Order**

15  
16 Chair Arne Jonynas called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the pledge of allegiance. He  
17 welcomed everyone and asked that they sign the sign-in sheet.

18  
19 **Agenda Item 1, Approve minutes from the April 5, 2023, Selectboard Meeting**

20 Lee made a motion and Arianna seconded it to approve the April 5, 2023, minutes. Lee said on  
21 page 9, lines 18 and 37, Tom Bock's name was misspelled. The minutes were approved as  
22 amended.

23 **Agenda Item 2, Citizens' Comments/Answers from Previous Meeting**

24 Arne noted there was an executive item added to the end, #12, for a personnel issue.

25 Bill Lindsay was at the last Selectboard meeting and had read the minutes thoroughly. He said he  
26 made the mistake of leaving the meeting early. He understood there were discussions that had to  
27 do with the Planning Board. Both Tom Bock and he had served on the Selectboard and Planning  
28 Commission simultaneously. He was somewhat confused about a conflict-of-interest policy, and  
29 he wasn't sure how it applied to the local government other than the obvious if you had a pony in  
30 the race and didn't let people know you owned the pony, there could be a problem. Bill thought  
31 some of the conflict-of-interest was self-explanatory. He raised the issue because it appeared the  
32 policy had to do with a Planning Board member stepping away to satisfy the issue. Bill said there  
33 was no problem with Selectmen serving on the Planning Board in prior years and was even a good  
34 thing. He said they had a reading file that the minutes from the Planning Board were put into so  
35 the Selectmen could understand what happened at the meetings. Bill understood from the minutes  
36 of the last Selectboard meeting that there was a question of communication between the two  
37 boards. Bill has seen Selectmen at Planning Board meetings. Bill attends about 90% of the  
38 Planning Board meetings because he has prior experience and some meetings in recent years  
39 weren't, in his opinion, in the interest of the overall community because members of the board  
40 weren't getting along. He thought that had improved greatly and they were doing a better job. The  
41 Planning Board is an instrument of economic development and is listed as a quasi-board and  
42 doesn't have legislative power or approval. He thought if there was a Selectboard member on a

1 Planning Board, it would only be one vote. Bill said he rarely sees a dissenting vote on the Planning  
2 Board. Whatever they adopt is presented to the Selectboard who holds a public hearing.  
3 Realistically, Bill thought it was difficult to see where the policy would help any conflict-of-  
4 interest. He brought it to their attention because of short-term rentals which was a hot topic and  
5 noted that Planning Board Member at the time, Peter Hudkins, indicated he had a short-term rental.  
6 Bill was having difficulty understanding how the conflict-of-interest policy demanded Peter step  
7 down. Bill said Peter had a wealth of knowledge which was required on the Planning Commission.  
8 Bill sat out in the audience when the Planning Board had difficulty convincing the public  
9 everything was okay and it wasn't okay and then the town suggested they do a re-write of the  
10 zoning language. Bill found the conflict-of-interest not suitable in this case and noted two former  
11 Selectboard members had served on both boards and there was never a dispute or charge of  
12 conflict-of-interest, and he recommended Peter Hudkins be reappointed to the Planning  
13 Commission. Bill understood it was a board decision but wanted to raise it for reconsideration.  
14 He also said that he didn't see where the open positions were advertised and thought the two  
15 candidates stepped up quickly. Bill said one of the biggest things needed in Chester was housing  
16 and there needed to be a collaboration between the Selectboard and Planning Commission to make  
17 it happen. He asked those who don't understand the Grand List to educate themselves about it. The  
18 town services cost money and the Grand List needed to be increased to support them.

19 Arne said the openings for the Planning Commission were advertised and if they were going to  
20 change their minds about Peter serving on the Planning Commission, they would first need to  
21 address the conflict-of-interest policy and it could be done in the future. The policy was changed  
22 in 2016 after Tom Bock had served and was the current policy in place. They are only adhering to  
23 it. Bill recommended they revisit the policy because he believed there was no state statute under  
24 Vermont law that would prohibit Peter from serving.

25

### 26 **Agenda Item 3, Old Business**

27

28 Report given by the Town Manager:

29

#### 30 Solar Field

31 Lee and Julie were finally able to meet with Greenbacker. Greenbacker is obtaining their own  
32 appraisal and was concerned about Chester's. Lee will review an email Greenbacker sent with  
33 different industry standards they don't agree with in the town's appraisal. Greenbacker will  
34 reimburse the town \$5,000 for the cost of the town's appraisal.

35

#### 36 Citizen Advisory Committee

37 Last night was the first meeting of the committee and there was a lot of good discussion. The next  
38 meeting has been advertised and their meetings will take place on the third Tuesday of each month  
39 at Town Hall at 6:30 p.m. Frank Kelley has been nominated as Chair, Vince as Vice Chair and  
40 Wendy Germain as the Clerk/Secretary. Julie anticipated positive things from the committee.

41

#### 42 Julian Quarry

43 It is leading toward legal action, so they were unable to discuss much in open session, only that  
44 Preston is working with Julian on advice of the attorney on violations that can be easily addressed.  
45 Jim will be issuing an opinion to outline the steps for the board in the process. Arianna asked if  
46 there was a mechanism for keeping the concerned community members informed. She wondered

1 if they were relying on them to go to the website and look at the meeting minutes or if they were  
2 engaged with them. Julie said Preston was engaged with them, but they aren't using a group email.  
3 They have given Mike and Cheryl Leclair high level updates and she believed they were sharing  
4 with the community. Heather asked if it could remain on the old minutes thread to stay updated.

#### 5 Housing Committee

6 Several months ago, the board had given Julie permission to start thinking about an ad hoc housing  
7 commission. She had done some research and it would be on an upcoming agenda for the board to  
8 begin thinking about. Julie wanted to stand up a true housing commission for Chester and it was a  
9 process and something they could benefit from. There are a lot of programs and new ones that will  
10 remain after programs like ARPA and IJJA money are gone. It would be good to have a  
11 commission to review needs. This commission would work closely with the Planning Commission  
12 who are doing a lot of work. It is a long-term process to resolve the issues and how housing can  
13 be created in Chester. Rather than a committee, a housing commission for a long period of time is  
14 what is needed. Arne thought it would be a good collaboration between the Planning Commission  
15 and Housing Commission. Julie will attend an upcoming Planning Commission.

#### 16 17 Green Mountain Power work at the Pinnacle

18 They knew it was coming but didn't know it was happening this year, so it wasn't budgeted. The  
19 conduit and work needed to the pool and work to be done while GMP is there will cost \$20,000 to  
20 \$25,000 and is unbudgeted. She wanted them to be aware it was something they would need to  
21 deal with. The project has been in the works for a few years, and they are replacing lines and  
22 burying them and while they are here, they will run power to provide lights at the facilities. Arne  
23 said it was a big upgrade and a definite improvement such as lights for the ballfield and tennis  
24 court. It is a positive thing for the town.

#### 25 26 Northern Borders Regional Commission Grant

27 The letters of interest are due Friday, and then you receive an invitation to apply. Vermont is  
28 allowed to apply now for this opportunity. They are thinking a community center expansion to the  
29 pool house at the Pinnacle would qualify for this opportunity. It was a big conversation had when  
30 ARPA funds were discussed. The letter of interest won't bind Chester to anything. If the grant  
31 were received, it would cover about 70% of the project. The benefit of the grant is that other federal  
32 grants may be used to match it, which is rare. Because the building would be brand new  
33 construction, it could also become a true emergency shelter in Chester which would qualify for  
34 FEMA Emergency Shelter dollars. Julie noted they may not even be invited to apply but it was  
35 worth looking at and IJJA (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) money won't be around for a  
36 long time and is one-time big dollars. Projects that bring communities together are priority  
37 projects. It would involve a big discussion, but Julie needed to submit the letter to be considered  
38 for an invitation to apply so she asked for the board's approval to do it. Steve and Matt are  
39 gathering information to get an idea of the proposed cost. It may be a one-time opportunity and  
40 there was a lot of community interest to have a community center. It would replace the pool house  
41 and provide space for indoor sports, a kitchen, a generator, and bathrooms, among other things. If  
42 they are invited to apply, Julie will come back to the board. Heather said they should apply.

43  
44 Arne noted they had also talked about speaking with the schools about providing more availability  
45 to the community to use their facilities. Julie said Matt had reached out to the schools and she  
46 hoped they would be open to working something out for possibly 2 hours on Sunday afternoons

1 during the winter months. In the past they were not open to this.

2  
3 Bill Gorsky and another citizen both asked about the Julian Quarry. Julie explained the process is  
4 very legal and statutorily driven and they were acting, but it would take time. Bill specifically  
5 asked about All Stone's Quarry and if the white water would continue to come down the brook.  
6 Julie said the town cannot enforce pollution to waterways, which is the state. Bill owns the land  
7 beneath the water, and they were polluting it. Julie said they do not have legal authority to tell  
8 them to cease and desist. Arne could see the process dragging on and optimistically, a year or two.  
9 Arianna said none of it meant they weren't acting. Lee said what the town can do can take years  
10 and the state must do their part. Lee encouraged them to keep talking to their state representatives.  
11 Heather said she had talked to Act 250, the Natural Resource Board. Julie and citizens can't just  
12 rely on the town because the town and neighbors had separate interests. Heather said they all need  
13 to let Act 250 know they are still concerned. A lot would be explained in Jim Carrol's document  
14 that was coming. Bill Gorsky said he learned that Act 250 only handles things over 10 acres in  
15 Vermont and neither quarry together equals 10 acres which was why the state was at a stall. Bill  
16 is a neighbor and never gets communication about what's going on and thought more should come  
17 from the town. They are encroaching on his property. Heather asked if he had contacted Act 250  
18 and he said it had to be 10 acres or more. Julie said there is a permit on the property, and he is  
19 asking them to enforce the violations of their own permit which had nothing to do with 10 acres.  
20 Julie told them there was a jurisdictional opinion and Act 250 needed to get the jurisdictional  
21 opinion upheld and enforced, which would be a legal process. Arne said as things moved along,  
22 they would share material they are allowed to and inform them what is going on.

23  
24 Lori Quinn, who is on Route 10 in Gassetts, felt for her neighbors and appreciated the Selectboard  
25 hearing it out. She offered to help inform the neighbors. She complained about the trucks hauling  
26 the quarry rock, the noise, and speed and suggested the police monitor the road. Arne agreed they  
27 could try to have extra patrols to alleviate any speeding.

28  
29 Rene Melansen said the town used to enforce weight limits during mud season and wondered when  
30 they stopped. Julie said they do enforce it if they know about an issue. Rene asked if they could  
31 video the trucks and show the police. Julie said yes. Lee asked if the roads were posted. They are.

32  
33 Barre Pinske said he had spoken with the Julians, and he thought they were interested in pleasing  
34 their neighbors and being part of the community. Barre knew there were people present who had  
35 strong feelings about what they were doing, and he was willing to communicate with them. His  
36 concern was the money spent on attorneys to help a small group which may become a difficulty  
37 for the Selectboard. He suggested having a group work together cohesively and communication  
38 with the Julians, the town, and Act 250. It would be difficult to have the town spend tons of money  
39 to fight people who have tons of money. He was willing to be helpful and communicate with them.  
40 He thought it was good having Preston involved. Barre knew Preston as a Planning Board member.  
41 Preston is nice with good communication skills and was sure he was listening to the community  
42 and would do a good job communicating with the Julians and they would be in a better position.

#### 43 **Agenda Item 4, Appoint Town Clerk/Treasurer**

44 Lee moved and Peter seconded a motion to appoint Deb Aldrich for a three-year term as Town  
45 Clerk/Treasurer. Peter thanked her for her years of service, which Julie had previously noted was  
46 40 years as a town employee. Arne thanked her and said she was good at her job. The motion

1 carried unanimously.

2

### **Agenda Item 5, Paper of Record**

3 Arne said for the past three or four years they have used the same two papers, The Vermont Journal,  
4 which was basically an old-school newspaper on print with a website too, and The Chester  
5 Telegraph, which is exclusively online. It had worked well using both and they got the word out  
6 to the community. Arne knew a lot of people who prefer a newspaper in their hand while some get  
7 all their news from a mobile device. Arne said there had been controversy in the past, but it was  
8 all working out well. The Vermont Journal publisher had submitted a letter that was included in  
9 the packet. The Chester Telegraph had submitted a letter with interesting data regarding a  
10 breakdown of clicks and viewership and who they were connecting with. Arne found it interesting  
11 that some people were reading The Telegraph at 3:00 a.m.

12 Arianna moved and Heather seconded a motion to have The Vermont Journal and The Chester  
13 Telegraph as the papers of record for the upcoming year. Lee said they had talked about ad blockers  
14 a while ago and his phone tells him he can't read the article, but his computer doesn't. Cynthia  
15 Prairie, Editor of The Telegraph, said if anyone had a problem with an ad blocker to contact them  
16 and they would take care of it. Lee thanked her. The motion carried unanimously.

17

### **Agenda Item 6, Executive Session: PC & DRB Interviews**

18 Arne noted lately interviews and discussions had taken place openly with appointments in  
19 executive session. He asked the board how they wanted to do it. Peter preferred to do them in  
20 executive session. Lee was open to doing it either way but thought the executive session gave them  
21 more leeway. Heather was fine with holding them in open session and Arne agreed.

22 Arne announced there were three appointments to the Planning Commission, two three-year terms  
23 that went until 2026, and one unexpired term until 2025. Tim Roper and Barre Pinske were seeking  
24 reappointment and John Cummings and Bill Gorsky were newcomers.

25 Tim Roper thought the work of the Planning Commission was important to the town. They look  
26 ahead to the future and try to decide what's best. Tim thought he had been a member for five years.  
27 In those five years, he thought the latter part been the most productive and attributed it in large  
28 part to Preston's involvement and Hugh Quinn chairing the commission and the experience he had  
29 gained over that time. Although it was work that sometimes he considered not doing, in the end,  
30 he thought he should, especially because they were currently in the middle of some important  
31 things like the unified development bylaws and the housing piece. Tim thought he brought  
32 beneficial points of view to the commission and liked that they were a diverse body and would be  
33 honored to continue. Peter said by Tim's record and meeting minutes, he was in favor of raising  
34 the height limit of housing in Chester to 45 feet when the limit is 35 feet. And even when the  
35 Chester Fire Department said they couldn't service anything higher than 35 feet, Tim voted in  
36 favor of the higher limit. Peter asked him to explain why that was his opinion. Tim said that was  
37 a long time ago, he was in the minority, and they had moved on from it and didn't see any reason  
38 to rehash it. Lee asked Tim what his vision was for Chester over the next 10 to 20 years. Tim  
39 wanted to see them align with the results of the town-wide survey conducted last fall. Some of the  
40 consistent points from it were residents wanted to keep the small-town atmosphere and wanted to  
41 keep the rural flavor so there were two things that really defined Chester and would be a key for  
42 him. Tim had spearheaded the conducting of the survey because he felt sometimes, they were  
43 working in a vacuum. Bill Lindsay had mentioned earlier that sometimes there are one or two

1 citizens who come to meetings, which makes it harder for them, as commissioners, to know what  
2 is important to the town and that was the point of taking the survey. Tim wanted them to use it as  
3 a guide going forward. Lee asked what the commission's role would be in reaching those goals.  
4 Tim said a lot of things people want them to do aren't in the realm of what they can guide but those  
5 things are affected by zoning. The work they are currently doing is crucial. Tim said the big  
6 challenge is keeping a rural small-town atmosphere while adding housing. Heather thanked Tim  
7 for his five years of service on the commission and that it was appreciated. Lee wondered if Tim  
8 had spoken to any owners or leaders in town about how the bylaws would allow them to expand  
9 their businesses. Tim said he knew quite a few but couldn't say he had spoken to a lot of them.  
10 Tim wondered how they balanced having a successful business environment that's needed with  
11 maintaining a small-town atmosphere and said one of the things he has been advocating for is more  
12 mixed-use that would allow more business to fit in along the main streets and was something  
13 currently in discussion. Tim said he is also a business owner and would be happy to speak with  
14 anyone about their concerns. Arne thanked Tim.

15 Barre Pinske, who has been on the commission since 2017, thought he may be the longest tenured  
16 member. Initially, he stepped up because there weren't many others. He found being involved in  
17 town government to be rewarding and has helped him mature and develop better communication  
18 skills and have pride in his community. He thought he brought a unique aspect as a creative thinker  
19 with ideas and having a business in town. He was on the Downtown Master Plan Committee,  
20 which was interesting, but didn't think much had come forward. Julie interjected they had done a  
21 ton. From Barre's perspective, he thought the stuff they were doing with zoning was important but  
22 not much happens in Chester. Barre wanted to see more planning with working in economic  
23 development and the Housing Committee. Barre thought in real planning, they wanted to be the  
24 nose of the dog and he saw them more as the tail. Barre thought they had a great team and were  
25 on a good path. Preston was invaluable and working with Jason Rasmussen was invaluable. They  
26 were communicating well and getting quite a bit done. Barre felt like he was contributing with his  
27 experience and when they have people less experienced, it takes time to learn. Lee asked if Barre  
28 agreed with Tim's comments about the survey results and how he would retain that feeling in  
29 Chester in 10 to 20 years. Barre said he grew up in a town of 350 people with a grocery store and  
30 hardware store and lots of stuff going on in town that was no longer there due to transportation  
31 and box stores. He moved to another town which was closer to the city with industrial parks and  
32 community center because they planned. He said Chester is interesting because they're tourist-  
33 oriented, but they lack a lot and wondered if a handful of people on the committee were smart  
34 enough to figure out what is needed to save the town to make it vital. He wished they had more  
35 responsibility, a budget, and doing those sorts of things. Barre was afraid things could disappear  
36 and wanted to be able to go to a place to see families eating spaghetti because it makes you feel  
37 part of a community. He called Johnson & Wales to see if they could get a restaurant started. They  
38 said if Chester got one going, they could send interns up. He mentioned the Grafton Inn which he  
39 thought worked under a trust and thought Chester needed to figure out some of this stuff because  
40 of what they lack. Arne wondered if the work he was doing on the Planning Commission was  
41 helping with the serious issues he was talking about. Barre wondered how they deal with what they  
42 need to and look ahead. He answered Arne's question in the affirmative. Barre said the biggest  
43 thing going is they're a place where people can have a home occupation. Unfortunately, more  
44 people are buying houses and only occupying them on the weekend and not patronizing local  
45 businesses. Barre said there were a lot of people with money coming through town. He thought if  
46 they got into marketing and advertising, they could sell some of these things, but some things were

1 beyond their control. Arne thanked Barre. Barre said Hugh was doing a good job as chair and all  
2 the members were. Barre added that Peter was an asset with his engineering mind and hoped they  
3 could keep their core members. He thought if people were too self-driven with their own ideas and  
4 didn't care about the future of the town, they could get stuck on that.

5 John Cummings was born in Brattleboro and went to UVM to study finance and graduated. He  
6 worked with Jeld-Wen in Ludlow and ended up moving to North Carolina where he got moved to  
7 Seattle and then Pennsylvania. He came back to Vermont in 2006 and had 3 younger kids and  
8 wanted to raise his family here. He has one child who graduated from college and two in college  
9 and a 12-year-old at home. In the past 25 years, he has worked at Jeld-Wen and Drew's in town.  
10 When he began at Drew's, they had 25 employees in 2009 and when he left in 2021, they were  
11 just under 200. He left Drew's and went to Applied Bolting, which is a great local company with  
12 25 employees. He now has the time available to serve on the commission. He and his wife have  
13 talked about moving from the area because they're older and his wife informed him that they're  
14 not. When he was recruiting manager for Jeld-Wen in '06, it was difficult to keep a young college  
15 educated manager in this area because there wasn't enough going on. They wanted Applebee's  
16 and malls. He recruited a lot of people, but they didn't stay. He thought Chester could find a niche  
17 and there is an opportunity to do it here in town. John has a lot of respect for the schools and sports  
18 programs and everything that goes on at the meetings and hearings and since he has time now, he  
19 wants to contribute to the area. He has 25 years of planning, organizing, budgeting, disciplining,  
20 which is the stuff he thrives in. John also recently signed up to be a firefighter and Julie welcomed  
21 him aboard. Lee asked him what he saw as the role of the Planning Commission. He said he wasn't  
22 an expert in town government but could learn. He thought he could bring to the table helping to  
23 draw the lines in the area to connect where they want to be down the road and how to navigate  
24 wisely now to make the right decisions so 20 years from now, his kids would want to raise their  
25 families here. He said they needed systematic and wise growth and he would bring a balance of  
26 that. His brother works for the federal government, so he reminds him the government is designed  
27 to move slower than private enterprise for a reason and brought that up to say there's a lot for him  
28 to learn. He doesn't know all the answers but has experience working with different folks and  
29 getting things done and thought it could benefit the town. He thanked the board for their time and  
30 consideration.

31 Bill Gorsky was born in Brattleboro and raised in Springfield on Valley Street which they called  
32 Pollock Avenue back then. He has owned a general contractor's company and a small engine repair  
33 company and has dealt with a lot of people. He was on the road commission for Charlestown for  
34 three years and did a lot of planning for the new developers and site visits. He likes Chester the  
35 way it is with mom-and-pop stores, The Fullerton Inn, and restaurants. He said if they put up big  
36 restaurants, out-of-staters will stop. The Inn is usually full. If they are going to add more, they  
37 should look at the outskirts of town where it doesn't interfere with the town itself. He wanted to  
38 see a recreation area not only for children but also seniors. He wanted to see the town grow the  
39 right way so they can look back and not have any disorder about what they did and feel good. He  
40 knew he had trouble in Charlestown. Bill said some towns grow too fast and lose their way and he  
41 didn't want to see Chester do that. He thought the armory had potential. The out-of-staters are  
42 always looking for a place to stay and, being a ski hub, they could probably put up some housing  
43 there if they could get the land cheaply, even for \$1.00. That's what he wanted to see for the town.  
44 Lee asked how he saw the bylaws. Bill thought the Planning Commission needed to go through  
45 the bylaws first and get them right. Lee asked how he would do that. Bill said from what he  
46 understood, there was residential, in-town, and the outskirts where he lives. He thought it should

1 be the same so there was diversity between residential and business. He thought once zoning was  
2 handled, they would move to planning. He said some of the old stuff in the books was no longer  
3 relevant and they sat back and looked at zoning. Lee asked for his view on the business community  
4 in Chester and the business environment. Bill liked the businesses here and shopped here. He gets  
5 his groceries in New Hampshire because there's no state tax there. He does shop at Smitty's and  
6 Ace [sic] Hardware and frequents the restaurant some. Lee wondered what he saw to help  
7 businesses in Chester. Bill said he grew up with a bakery and there used to be a bakery here. He  
8 wanted to see businesses grow and mentioned there were a lot of vacant properties and something  
9 could be planned when zoning was done. They could consider increasing parking for businesses.  
10 He said he would need to study what they could do for businesses, and it was important to keep  
11 them happy or they would go somewhere else. He liked Chester the way it is and that was why he  
12 moved here in 2009. He said all the businesses were great, even the small ones.

13 Arne suggested before they went into executive session to discuss the appointments, they could  
14 speak with Robert Greenfield who was present to seek reappointment to a three-year term on the  
15 DRB. He is also the current chairman.

16 Robert Greenfield thought about when he started and there was an opening, his selection and said  
17 it took over a year just to understand the terminology that the Development Review Board uses in  
18 their decisions, questions, and the way they operate. He liked it and it became fun and interesting  
19 and two years later when the chair resigned and the other members wanted him to be chair, he told  
20 them the only way he would take it was if they fully supported him still learning the language and  
21 making mistakes. Peter said he applied to be on the DRB and ended up on the Planning  
22 Commission. Robert said he's having fun, seeing things in Chester he never would have, and  
23 meeting people he never would have, and he's enjoying it was giving back to his community. Arne  
24 asked how he felt about the relationship between the Selectboard and the DRB. Robert didn't have  
25 an issue with it. The way the DRB was explained to him is they are a judicial branch interpreting  
26 the laws the Selectboard makes. That's the way Robert approached it. He said the laws and  
27 ordinances the Selectboard makes don't always fit and they must adjust, but they do and that was  
28 how he views the relationship. Lee and Arne appreciated him, and Arne said sometimes it was a  
29 thankless job. Robert said the DRB members don't always agree but they find a consensus  
30 somewhere. Heather thanked him.

31 (Executive Session)

### 32 **Agenda Item 7, Appointments to PC & DRB**

33 Arne said they had a productive conversation regarding the appointments.

34 Lee moved and Peter seconded a motion to appoint Robert Greenfield for another three-year term  
35 on the Development Review Board. Arne noted they appreciated the work Robert had done and  
36 for stepping up to the position again and there was nothing but praise and good comments for the  
37 work he had been doing. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

38 Heather moved and Arianna seconded a motion to reappoint Tim Roper for a 3-year term on the  
39 Planning Commission. The motion carried unanimously. Arne appreciated Tim's time on the  
40 board.

41 Heather moved and Arianna seconded a motion to reappoint Barre Pinske for a 3-year term on the  
42 Planning Commission. Arne noted there had been a little controversy with Barre over the years  
43 but felt he had grown in the position and been an asset. The Commission Chair who recommended



1 they reappoint the two members weighed heavily in their decision. It wasn't easy and was divided.  
2 Heather, Arianna, and Arne voted aye and Peter and Lee voted nay. The motion carried.

3 Arianna moved and Lee seconded a motion to appoint John Cummings to the Planning  
4 Commission to fill out the remainder of a term expiring in 2025. Arne said that both John  
5 Cummings and Bill Gorsky were good candidates with deep roots in Vermont and good intentions  
6 to help their town. The motion carried unanimously. Arne told Mr. Gorsky that he appreciated his  
7 time and he hoped he would come forward again. Lee thanked him too.

8 **Agenda Item 8, Adopt Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP)**

9 Julie said there was nothing different from last year other than renaming chiefs and people in  
10 positions. All the department heads had reviewed the plan to be submitted to the state by May 1<sup>st</sup>.  
11 Arne noticed that only the American Legion was listed as a shelter. Julie said due to FEMA's  
12 requirements to be truly recognized as an emergency shelter, they don't have a true shelter. They  
13 have warming centers and that is why the proposed community building could be a shelter because  
14 they would be building it from scratch to meet FEMA's requirements. Businesses were concerned  
15 about that. It would meet a lot of requests if they could get there. Peter mentioned there was no  
16 generator at the cell tower and Julie said there was but that it ran out and the carriers are responsible  
17 for servicing the carriers. Arne said they ran out of gas. Peter said a lot of people spoke to him  
18 about not having service during the storm. Peter said they had talked about a tower in Gassetts at  
19 the Planning Commission meeting and said each carrier would have their own generator. Julie  
20 thought there was one generator that runs the tower. She said this was the first time they lost power.  
21 Peter said a lot of people gave up landlines for cell phones and Arne added the landlines didn't do  
22 well either. Julie suggested they could dig out the contracts and review them, but the town was not  
23 responsible for the generator to the tower, the carrier was. She offered to get Peter more details.

24 Lee moved to approve the Local Emergency Management Plan and Peter seconded the motion.  
25 The motion passed unanimously.

26 Steve Mancuso was glad to see LEMP on the agenda. He said there was a lot of conversation  
27 between the community and business members during the last storm and it was all in the same  
28 direction of wondering what they could do to help. He had spoken with multiple people since and  
29 had spent a lot of time speaking with the 211 ladies on their off day who educated him about 211.  
30 211 is the goods, services, and resources in the local community that are available. There is a  
31 signup sheet every year. Steve said you can enter Chester's zip code on the 211 page to learn what  
32 is offered and available. It takes the weight off 911, where they are over their heads as there is no  
33 mutual aid. Every other town is suffering the same consequences and must leave their families in  
34 the dark to serve. Steve said as climate events are happening around the country, communities are  
35 the last line of defense. There must be a way to reach out and sign people up who want to help. He  
36 said they need to discuss disaster scenarios and who they will call and rely upon in those events.  
37 Steve said there are plenty of volunteers they can call who would be willing to talk a cat out of a  
38 tree. Steve said if they decided to form a committee, he would gladly volunteer. Julie said they had  
39 discussed it at the Citizens Advisory Committee about a committee not just to the police but to  
40 public safety in general. Julie said several members discussed forming neighborhood groups and  
41 an initiative they would take up and Steve would be hearing more. They will reach out to the  
42 Chester Business Coalition and other non-profit groups in town to form connections and they had  
43 Steve's name. Arne said the Advisory Committee meets the third Tuesday of every month at 6:30  
44 p.m. at Town Hall. The members thanked Steve.

1                                   **Agenda Item 9, Composition of Local Cannabis Control Commission**

2 Arianna, who is Chairman, wanted to discuss the commission and the future of it. She said when  
3 it was empaneled one year ago, the regulations were not in place and the town was unclear about  
4 what would happen, so they had a robust panel of seven. The state had now completed their  
5 legislation and organization and had created very little work for them. She thought a 7-person  
6 commission wasn't needed for this perfunctory process. She said both Lee and Ben had stepped  
7 down due to conflicts. She suggested the Selectboard modify the panel, so they stay at 5 members  
8 with her remaining to keep a Selectboard member on it. Arianna was happy to take questions, put  
9 it to a vote, and/or have it on the next agenda if there were concerns or more research required.  
10 Arne asked if they met regularly or only when needed. Arianna said they had suspended regular  
11 meetings and will meet as needed. They anticipate a meeting for an approved license from the state  
12 for their approval. She thought once they successfully navigate the process, they may consider  
13 coming back again to revise how to act. Until they see the process through, they are in a holding  
14 pattern. Arianna said they could remain as 7 with 2 vacancies and require new action and she  
15 would be comfortable with that as commissioner and bring it back again in a year. Arne thought a  
16 5-member board would be sufficient because they don't have much power. She said currently, the  
17 commission can be a resource and collect information, and a gathering point for concerns and  
18 questions and address them and is happy to continue the commission in that role. If things don't  
19 change, she thought it should be modified. Arianna thought when the commission was empaneled,  
20 they would have an active role. As the state put everything into place, there was nothing left for  
21 the towns to do so if they removed the local commission, it would be the same as if they were  
22 there. They could be a resource for incoming entrepreneurs and community members. Arianna  
23 said there had not been an appetite for towns to get more. The businesses are comfortable with  
24 their relationship with the state. Both the industry and state feel good about where they are, and  
25 she didn't see a lot coming back to town control. Julie pointed out that the problem with leaving it  
26 at 7 members and not filling the vacancies was their quorum would be 4 so if they ever had to vote.  
27 Arianna moved the board alter the makeup of the Cannabis Commission to be a 5-member  
28 commission with one silent member on it. Lee seconded the motion. Heather wondered if Arianna  
29 should recuse herself from the vote or even make the motion. Arne thought she could make the  
30 motion. Arianna said she would abstain. Lee said he would make the motion if she couldn't. Julie  
31 suggested keeping it clean by having Lee move and someone else second. Lee moved the Local  
32 Cannabis Control Commission members be reduced from 7 to 5 with one Selectboard member.  
33 Peter seconded the motion. Arne thought it was a shame the town didn't benefit financially. The  
34 motion passed with Arianna abstaining.

35                                   **Agenda Item 10, Approve Liquor Licenses**

36 Julie said there was only one license for approval, and it was an outside consumption permit. Lee  
37 moved to approve the liquor license for MacLaomainn's Scottish Pub with Peter seconding. The  
38 motion passed unanimously.

39                                   **Agenda Item 11, New Business/Next Agenda**

40 Julie notified them they would be reviewing a bylaw amendment that would be coming to them  
41 from the Planning Commission.

42 She hoped they would have a financial update for the first quarter.

43 Lee asked if they would hear from the investment team from M&T. Julie said she would arrange

1 that but wasn't sure they would be available for the next meeting.

2 Arne asked about the Housing Committee and Julie said she wanted to meet with the Planning  
3 Commission first.

4 Arne asked about having a potential student representative from the high school. Julie said at the  
5 beginning of the school year the high school would start their vetting process for student  
6 representatives to the school board and they would do the same for the Selectboard. Arne suggested  
7 they coordinate their discussion around the same time regarding details of the position. Julie  
8 agreed. She said the superintendent will advertise the position and vet the candidates to ensure  
9 they are qualified to sit on a public body. Arne thought it would be interesting to know the process.  
10 Julie said they would touch base this summer. Peter suggested having someone on the Planning  
11 Commission also because they have a lot of discussion, and it would be interesting to hear that  
12 student's view and may prove incredible value. Arne agreed and suggested having someone on the  
13 DRB. Peter thought the DRB would pose a problem because it was judicial, but Julie and Arne  
14 pointed out that they wouldn't vote and could be excluded from executive session. They would  
15 discuss it further in the summer. Arianna thought it would be a good fit to have a student who  
16 attended the committees in three-month intervals.

17 Arne wondered if they should start a conversation on the back property. Julie said there had been  
18 discussions this week. Julie said when they did the Village Center Master Plan, they intentionally  
19 excluded the Green because they felt it was a separate standalone project because the Green in  
20 front of the Academy Building and behind the Academy Building were all viewed as one space.  
21 There has been a lot of discussion about wanting to have a platform in front of the building for  
22 music and add electricity and a bandshell in the back, which had been discussed many times over  
23 the years. Julie pulled out the file that discussed the master plan for the Village Green. She had  
24 planned to come to them at a future meeting. Scott Wunderle had some very early concepts a year  
25 and a half ago. There is a lot of interest from different groups and people about what they would  
26 like to do on the Green and in front and behind the Academy Building. She thought it was time to  
27 rally everyone together and develop a plan of how they want to use the spaces. Peter thought if the  
28 service was only 100 amps at the Academy, they could take a lot of small steps to get enough  
29 electricity in the building first. Julie thought they should develop a plan to incorporate all the  
30 pieces.

31 Lee and Julie both hoped the Solar Field would be on the next agenda. Lee said the communication  
32 from Greenbacker about why they didn't agree with the assessment was based on what they call  
33 standards for that type of facility and Lee wasn't sure he agreed with Greenbacker. Greenbacker  
34 had given them access to the website that shows how much energy it generates daily and lifetime,  
35 so Lee took a screenshot of lifetime production. Greenbacker was saying it generated 925,000  
36 kilowatts hours a year and the lifetime graph disproves that. That was the information they needed  
37 to review to counter Greenbacker's claims. Lee and Julie needed to discuss it further.

38 **Agenda Item 12, Executive Session: Personnel Matter**

39 Lee moved that they go into executive session to deal with a personnel issue and Arianna seconded  
40 the motion. The motion carried. Julie said there would be no action. Heather would join them by  
41 phone.

42 (Executive Session)

43 Lee moved and Arianna seconded a motion to leave executive session at 10:00 p.m.

**Agenda Item 13, Adjourn**

- 1
- 2 Lee moved and Peter seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. A vote was taken, and the meeting
- 3 was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

DRAFT