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**TOWN OF CHESTER  
SELECT BOARD MEETING  
January 15, 2025 Minutes**

**Board Members Present:** Lee Gustafson, Arne Jonynas, Arianna Knapp, Tim Roper, and Peter Hudkins at Town Hall.

**Staff Present:** Julie Hance, Town Manager, at Town Hall; and Susan Bailey, Recording Secretary, via Zoom.

**Visitors Present:** Shawn Cunningham of The Chester Telegraph, Aimee Parnell of SAPA, Bill Dakin, Jeff Holden, and Frank Bidwell at Town Hall; and (MK Harrelson) SAPA TV, Sharon Jonynas, Carrie Roy King, "FL", and Lora Cokolat via Zoom.

**Call to Order**

Chair Arne Jonynas called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the audience with the Pledge of Allegiance before welcoming everyone to the meeting.

**WATER/SEWER COMMISSIONERS MEETING AGENDA**

**Agenda Item 1, Citizens' Comments**

There were none.

**Agenda Item 2, Approve Water Budget**

Everything in the budget was final and 2024 actuals were included; nothing had changed in the 2025 budget since the last time the board reviewed it. They were budgeting a deficit for 2025, but it would take one more year for the increased rates to catch up. Currently, the water and sewer grants run through the regular budget because those departments don't have a separate grant fund like the general fund does. That should change, as there are some very large projects coming and having a separate grant fund is necessary. There is revenue for grant projects in water and sewer that was not yet reflected for 2024 and won't show until 2025. Water ends with a stronger number than shown. It would give a bigger, truer picture. Arne asked if there were any questions and there were none. Lee moved and Arianna seconded a motion to approve the water department budget, as presented. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

**Agenda Item 3, Approve Sewer Budget**

Sewer hadn't changed, and 2024 actuals were reflected. The same conversation about grants with water applied to sewer. Sewer ended positively because of the rate increases. As sewer projects go to construction, they will discuss repayment of the loans. It won't happen until 2027, but conversations will begin in 2025. Arne asked if there were any questions and there were none. Lee moved and Arianna seconded a motion to approve the sewer budget, as presented. The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

1 **Agenda Item 4, Adjourn**

2  
3 Lee moved to adjourn, and Tim seconded the motion. The motion carried, and the meeting was  
4 adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

5  
6 **SPECIAL SELECT BOARD MEETING AGENDA**  
7 **Following Water / Sewer Commissioner’s Meeting**

8  
9 **(Meeting called to order – 6:35 p.m. Arne noted that it was only special because of the time**  
10 **the meeting started.)**

11  
12 **Agenda Item 1, Additions or Deletions to the Agenda**

13  
14 There were none.

15  
16 **Agenda Item 2 Approval of Minutes from the Selectboard Meeting dated January 2, 2025**

17  
18 Lee moved and Arianna seconded a motion to approve the minutes of January 2, 2025. Lee noted  
19 on page 1, line 12 Cheryl LeClair’s name was misspelled. On page 2, line 24, Lee wondered if  
20 diamond was correct regarding a 16-inch diamond pipe and Jeff said it should have read diameter  
21 and not diamond. On page 10, line 10, Arianna was misspelled, and on the same page, line 15,  
22 disparaged should have been disparities. On page 6, line 44, paid for by the Trustees for  
23 clarification should read, paid for by the Trustee of Public Funds. There were no further changes  
24 and the minutes were approved, as amended.

25  
26 **Agenda Item 3, Citizen’s Comments**

27  
28 There were none.

29 **Agenda Item 4, Old Business**

30  
31 Report by Town Manager:

32  
33 Force Main Project

34 Naomi will be at the February 19<sup>th</sup> meeting to present to the board, and it will be advertised as an  
35 informational meeting for the public to participate and ask questions. It is the \$2.9 million article  
36 on the Warning. Naomi will also be at the Town Meeting during that article to answer any  
37 questions and give a more condensed presentation. The project has three stages, and the First  
38 Avenue pump station is a flood issue, so they are still exploring additional funding to subsidize it.  
39 Arne clarified that the project would be an amount not to exceed \$2.9 million. There is already a  
40 \$750,000 subsidy but the entire \$2.9 million must get approval. Arne said even though the entire  
41 town votes for it, only the water and sewer users pay for it. Peter noted that wasn’t stated in the  
42 Warning and Julie agreed and said they could discuss it when they got to that agenda item.

43  
44 Solar Panels

45 Julie said following the executive session at this meeting, if they settled on a number, on February  
46 19<sup>th</sup>, the board could discuss the importance of the project and how it could be funded.

1 Arne wanted to bring up the request made during the zoning changes about the quarry and crushing  
2 but they had a lot on their plate. He didn't want it to slip away and thought they could revisit it in  
3 March to see if there was anything they wanted to tweak. Julie said it was on for discussion at the  
4 February 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. Tim asked if Preston and Hugh had done anything, and Julie said they had  
5 discussed it but were waiting for that meeting to happen.  
6

7 Arne asked if there was any other old business, and there was none.  
8

### 9 **Agenda Item 5, Approve Minor Change to Personnel Policy**

10  
11 Clarification was needed regarding 2)c) language about holidays. Julie used the upcoming holiday  
12 as an example. Monday is a holiday, and the guys get called in to plow on Saturday and they agree  
13 that Monday, a required day off, can be counted as hours worked in the calculation of overtime  
14 given. It was past practice but wasn't in writing and they wanted to include it in the Personnel  
15 Policy. Arne asked if it had to be run by the union and it did not. Arianna asked if clarifying it  
16 wouldn't change how it was calculated to date, nor how it would be calculated going forward and  
17 Julie confirmed. Arianna moved to approve the language update to the Personnel Policy, as  
18 presented to the board by Julie. Lee seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.  
19

### 20 **Agenda Item 6, 2025 Draft General Fund Budget and Capital Budget**

21  
22 Julie said in the past, they have budgeted \$2,000 for SAPA, but they have some other things going  
23 on and are requesting an increase to \$5,000 that is not reflected in the budget draft. Aimee Parnell,  
24 of SAPA TV, spoke about their request for more money. SAPA has been providing video coverage  
25 of Chester's Selectboard meetings for 25 years. Funding for SAPA includes revenues from cable  
26 subscribers, donations to SAPA TV and the non-profit organization, and legislative funding.  
27 Starting this year, they are requesting annual support from all the towns in their service territory  
28 because of the decreased revenues from their cable subscribers and cable companies who pay a  
29 portion of the subscription rates to SAPA to carry the signal of select board meetings and school  
30 board meetings to the communities they serve. Their funding request is \$5,000, an increase of  
31 \$3,000; \$2,105 from the \$2,895 that she was aware of for the reimbursement of the equipment they  
32 purchased together to be installed in this meeting room. In 2024, for Chester, they installed new  
33 equipment and provided technical support and covered 19 select board meetings, as well as the  
34 annual Town Meeting. When Aimee calculated the amount per meeting, she was thinking of the  
35 money they received from Chester as money for that equipment. In her letter, she said it was zero  
36 dollars per meeting as payment for the meeting because it was for equipment purchased. Their  
37 direct expenses for the meeting, including the videographer who runs the cameras behind the  
38 scenes and patches it to YouTube, their cable channels, and their website, as well as the editing  
39 afterwards and the cross-posting to social media accounts cost them about \$120 in staffing. It  
40 doesn't include the indirect expenses such as their hardware technology. Last year they spent  
41 \$35,000 on a new playout server which enables them to broadcast to get the signal of their videos  
42 to the outside world. All community members, regardless of whether they subscribe to cable, can  
43 consume what SAPA produces. They have intentionally diversified to be more accessible to the  
44 community. They have YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, and their new intern is working on  
45 TikTok so they can reach younger people but aren't launching it until they know they should go  
46 ahead. They are using other sources than cable because everyone can access them and that is why

1 they're asking for additional support from other sources. Community members say they value  
2 access and are more informed and it's an important service they provide to the community. Cable  
3 revenue has decreased by 15% over the last two years. Staffing and equipment costs, like every  
4 organization, have increased. Their health insurance in the past two years has doubled. The 15%  
5 decrease means they are receiving \$36,000 less than they earned two years ago. This year, the total  
6 income for cable revenue was \$185,355. In fiscal year 21/22 it was \$222,322; the difference is  
7 equal to the salary of one of their full-time employees or an entire year of operating costs for their  
8 facility. It's a big loss to SAPA and puts them in jeopardy of being able to exist and that is why  
9 they are asking the communities they serve to help support them. They have three goals: media  
10 literacy, government transparency, and community connections. She provided the members with  
11 a report that detailed everything they do in the community, like hosting workshops in the library  
12 to teach young people how to make films, working with RBTC for a tech camp and facilitating the  
13 film making portion, and hosting the Lego Robotics Club for elementary school kids in the area in  
14 their building due to Black River being unable to host due to asbestos remediation. They train all  
15 ages and have a virtual seat at the Springfield Town Library so they can edit their work and hoped  
16 to do similar work at the Chester Library. They covered 157 school board meetings last year and  
17 just expanded to include Reading. For government transparency, they provide a platform for free  
18 speech and invite members of the community from all political stripes to share their views. Just  
19 before the election, they provided an entire day of unedited programming with all the candidates.  
20 That is important because a lot of news is filtered, or gate kept and SAPA doesn't do that. They  
21 are archivists for the community. They filmed the Chester Alumni Day Parade which had 429  
22 views on their social media. The Fall Festival reel had 125 views. The Summer Music Series had  
23 68 views, and the Fall Festival full length video had 32 views. She was able to provide statistics  
24 on how many people viewed the select board meetings. The newspapers are checking the select  
25 board meeting video so they can write it up in the newspaper, as she has received calls from them.  
26 She thanked the board for their time. Arne thought that it was interesting about YouTube that they  
27 can see the viewers and knew people who enjoyed watching it on SAPA rather than joining the  
28 meeting by Zoom and saw it as a great resource. Lee joked it was for people with insomnia and  
29 Amy responded that they have 24-hour programming and people who have insomnia could watch  
30 it. Julie said using SAPA fulfills the legal requirement of having to keep recordings of the meetings  
31 and the database for Chester to do that would be very expensive and would cost a lot more than  
32 \$5,000. Arne asked how long they keep the meetings for, and Amiee said they have all the meetings  
33 back to 2014 on their video on demand. The librarians told her the Town of Chester is required to  
34 post the SB 55 language on there and Aimee thought SAPA could assist with that by providing a  
35 link with the archive that would go back 10 years. Arne noted it was a great thing to have and said  
36 if anyone had questions, they could reach her at [Aimee@sapatv.org](mailto:Aimee@sapatv.org) and added that they have free  
37 equipment for the community to use to make a movie. It's open and free and she hoped they would  
38 use it. The board thanked Aimee for her presentation. Arne asked what the consensus of the board  
39 for SAPA's request. Julie said it was listed under Other Admin which currently showed \$2,000.  
40 Julie noted that it was expended under the Town Hall improvements. Peter thought it seemed their  
41 expenses should be voted on as an article because they were offering other services to the town,  
42 and gave an example of how visiting nurses do. Peter thought if they were looking for future  
43 money, it should be a line item for expenses, but future money should be a voted item. Julie  
44 explained they had the same conversation several years ago with the Springfield Development  
45 Corporation and decided they were an asset to the town institution and included them in the budget  
46 and wasn't only an asset for the public but to the town itself and felt the same applied to SAPA.

1 Arianna didn't want to parse out this question but wondered with the changes to the Open Meeting  
2 Law, if SAPA was fulfilling, in part, the requirements of the law which enforced the request. Julie  
3 said all public body meetings, such as the Housing Commission, Citizens Advisory Committee,  
4 and others must be recorded. SAPA doesn't cover all of them, but the equipment does, and they  
5 must store those meetings. Arianna thought if it was mandated and that's how they fulfilled the  
6 mandate, they couldn't deny the request, unless they had alternatives. Arne would rather see it as  
7 a select board discussion than a town vote so that they wouldn't risk it being voted down and then  
8 scramble to cover it, since it would be covered by the services SAPA provides. Arne thought it  
9 should still be reviewed annually but the decision was made by the select board. Arianna hoped  
10 they could scribble in the additional \$3,000 and look at it with everything else before approving  
11 it. Arne said they could, but it wouldn't change his vote because it was a service and was close to  
12 a requirement and didn't see how it would work to do it another way for less. Tim said it was  
13 fulfilling a requirement without incurring labor costs, or very minimal labor costs and included the  
14 equipment. To Tim, it was a good deal, and he would absolutely approve the \$3,000. Arianna  
15 thought since they didn't need to look at it as its own thing, they should include the \$3,000 and  
16 vote on the budget. Lee saw it adding service and value to the town with minimal cost and Tim  
17 agreed. Julie said it was a way to get people engaged and involved and she was surprised how  
18 many people watched the meetings in some format and heard from them. Peter agreed there was  
19 value but what Aimee discussed and what they could pay for a service was different than what the  
20 town would vote to provide for the rest of it. They would pencil it in for now and decide when  
21 they voted for the budget.

22  
23 Julie said short-term rental payment to Housing Trust was included in the zoning budget on page  
24 5. Tim said they were showing later in the budget transferring \$24,000 but saw \$30,000 as  
25 projected income. Julie said \$4,000 was the fee to the scraping company and there was a \$2,000  
26 buffer provided in case the expense was more. Tim didn't see where it was accounted for, and Julie  
27 explained it would show in the revenue. In capital, Julie explained \$95,000 that would be  
28 underspent from the 2024 bonds was added to the capital plan. From that \$95,000, Julie paid the  
29 last payment on the dump truck, the last payment on the 2017 highway bond, and highway's  
30 portion of the communication equipment. They were all one-time expenses and kept in line with  
31 the highway, which addressed Peter's concerns. It would reduce the amount of capital in bond  
32 transfer that had to come from the general fund to the capital plan. Julie took the ambulance  
33 payment and added it back into the ambulance budget, because it's the first payment on the  
34 ambulance. The used facility truck was added to facilities as they had agreed they didn't want to  
35 finance it. ARPA funds in the capital plan are only paying for one-time expenses which are the  
36 ambulance monitor, sprinkler system for the library, and EMS communication. Arne confirmed it  
37 was the last of the ARPA funds. Under borrowing, \$150,000 for paving sections of Flamstead, and  
38 \$374,000 for a CAT grader, as CAT underbid John Deere. Those were the two bond items. \$70,000  
39 for the police cruiser was a loan and not a bond. With all that, the increase in taxes: operational  
40 was up 4% and 2% in EMS Bond for a total of 6% so it did not change. Julie thought they were  
41 better choices, and nothing was being falsely flattened. The ice rink maintenance had been  
42 corrected because there had been a typo. Arne questioned about the paving of Green Mountain  
43 Turnpike not being included in the bond for the force main and Green Mountain Turnpike paving  
44 was removed because it wouldn't be paved in 2025 because it will be ripped up and will be paid  
45 for under that project, so they removed the paving for this year. Julie said they considered not  
46 doing any paving this year but thought it was important not to skip paving because they would pay

1 for it later so they would pave Flamstead. Arne thought Flamstead and Popple Dungeon were  
2 difficult roads for paving and didn't seem to last. Lee noted after Irene, they were hauling  
3 truckloads of gravel, and it was hard to the pavement on Popple Dungeon. Peter said they weren't  
4 paving all the layers and Lee agreed and added that running those trucks wasn't common practice.

5  
6 Tim said it jumped out at him in the draft of the Warning that the Family Center was not requesting  
7 any money this year. Julie said the Family Center didn't feel they needed to request funds this year  
8 but still wanted to give a presentation at Town Warning, so an article needed to be kept there to  
9 reserve the spot. Arianna said the overall operation of the town was up 4%, which reflects the  
10 national rate of inflation, and the total increase was 6% because it was the first year that they were  
11 making the full payment on the bond for the safety building. Julie agreed. Arne noted the majority  
12 of the 4% were salaries and insurance, so it was surprising they were able to keep it at 4% and Tim  
13 said it was impressive work. Julie said they had worked very hard at only requesting what they  
14 needed. Springfield is down to 6.8% and cut a lot of positions. Arianna said with the Family Center  
15 rescinding their \$3,000 request, it would cover the SAPA increase requested. Tim confirmed with  
16 Julie that some of the increased TAN interest would be reimbursed from FEMA, which the budget  
17 didn't reflect because they hadn't received it yet. Arne said the library increased from \$101,000 to  
18 \$115,000 but they had originally requested \$126,000 and the reasoning for the increase to  
19 \$115,000 was it would follow salaries. Peter said Matt Gorsky asked them to help, and the  
20 members said they would consider it. Arne said they were offering \$115,000 which was just shy  
21 of their salaries of \$118,000. Bill Dakin, as Chair of the Whiting Library Board of Trustees, was  
22 thankful for their consideration of \$115,000. Bill noted they revised their numbers because  
23 fundraising had increased and were now asking the board to reduce the amount by \$4,335 to  
24 \$110,665. Arianna thanked Bill for providing the P&L and congratulated them on their  
25 fundraising, which had been a big concern in the past two years, and the turnaround was  
26 remarkable. Bill said the library was running smoothly and functioning well and they have good  
27 staff and support from the community and town. Arne saw it as refreshing that they were asking  
28 for a decrease in the amount of money from the town. Bill said they were all in it together. Lee  
29 appreciated the information the library had supplied and said \$332,431.71 was a substantial  
30 investment fund and wondered if he could ask the taxpayers to increase their support of the library  
31 when the library was sitting on close to a third of a million dollars. Lee wondered what would  
32 cause the library to tap into that and if they had in the past. Bill said the investment fund had a  
33 value of \$182,293. In addition, they have a \$29,000 CD and an operating account that has  
34 \$120,000, so the investment fund was \$182,200 more or less. Starting this year, they are taking  
35 out 4.5% of the fund based on a calculation their advisor suggested, quarterly they will be taking  
36 out 4.5%. To Bill's knowledge, per the minutes, there was a time money was taken from the  
37 investment fund back when the library began providing support for health insurance. Lee was  
38 concerned they were asking the taxpayers for more money when the library was sitting on  
39 \$182,200 and wondered if they should let the library know that they appreciate the decrease in  
40 their request, but to reduce the request another \$5,000 or \$10,000. Bill pointed out their budget is  
41 more than the amount the town is funding, so the monies spent in excess of the town funding  
42 requires monies to be taken out of those accounts and they aren't just letting them grow untapped.  
43 Bill said they were continuing to review how the funds could be used and Lee appreciated that.  
44 Lee expected the town to fund some of the cost but just wanted to look out for the taxpayer and  
45 Bill said they shared that concern and would continue to review it on an ongoing basis.

46

1 Arne said they would not vote on the budget tonight, as some numbers needed to be adjusted and  
2 asked if they all agreed about what had been discussed. Arianna wanted to state on the record  
3 regarding the library that since they were asking the town for 6%, 6% seemed appropriate for the  
4 library. Arne noted that while 6% was the average, there were increases all the way to 20% and  
5 30% and there were also lower percentages. Arianna said that was a good point. Arne said it helped  
6 to look at the whole picture and every department was different. Tim noted 6% would take it to  
7 \$117,600 but Arianna had been increasing it by 6% the previous year.

8  
9 Julie was hearing yes on the SAPA request, \$110,665 on the library, and \$3,000 from the Family  
10 Center. Lee was still considering the library's request. Arne noted some of the money the library  
11 receives is encumbered and must be spent in specific ways. Julie said their fund balance was  
12 around \$300,000 but noted they were beginning to draw on their interest and were hearing the  
13 board's comments, as it was a change that had been happening. Gail is very aggressive with grants,  
14 so there were some very positive changes. Julie made it clear she wasn't defending any amount of  
15 money requested but knew they were trying to make changes. Arianna thought it was clear how  
16 much more thoughtful business planning had been this year compared to last year given the  
17 addition of information. Lee appreciated all the work by the library trustees. The members agreed  
18 that \$111,000 for the library was acceptable.

#### 19 20 **Agenda Item 7, Review Draft Town Warning**

21  
22 All the normal special interests' requests are in, but they must wait until tomorrow at 5 pm in case  
23 there are additional requests but are not expecting any. Article 2 has been modified to the total  
24 bond of \$524,000 which included \$374,000 for the grader. Article 3 is the full number for the First  
25 Avenue pump station, force main, and gravity line – the whole three-phase project. Peter thought  
26 it was important to note the whole town was not paying for it. Julie agreed and would come up  
27 with language to reflect that. Lee asked why the whole town got to vote and it was because of the  
28 bond. Julie said the enterprise funds were not recognized in statute to borrow by themselves, like  
29 the schools, so the town has the bonding authority for the enterprise funds and was the total weight  
30 of the Grand List that was collateral for the bond and why the town voted on it. It seemed odd to  
31 Lee that all the voters were obligating 600 and some people for the money. Arne noted out of the  
32 600 customers, it was likely a good portion were not voters because they were second homes and  
33 thought it was 400 or 500 who voted. Julie said the same applied to the water project, the secondary  
34 well, and the sewer treatment plant, which is why they were trying to find as many grants to offset  
35 the cost as they could. Lee thought they really needed to get the information out there so the voters  
36 understood. In February, the water and sewer bills go out and will include information about this.  
37 Naomi will attend the meeting which SAPA will broadcast. Julie hoped Chester Telegraph would  
38 write an article about it, there is social media and the town report. Tim thought it was important  
39 that the voters understand the ramifications to the entire town if it wasn't repaired. Julie agreed  
40 and it was critical infrastructure for the town. Tim said the same thing applied to the sewage  
41 treatment plant and the whole town benefited from the improvements because it makes the town  
42 more viable for business. Lee wondered if it would be better to spread it out across the tax base  
43 since the whole town benefits. Arianna wondered if there was any precedent for it being paid for  
44 by the whole town. Julie said it had been discussed in the past. Arne, as a water and sewer user,  
45 would be thrilled if the town wanted to chip in \$1 million towards it. An argument could be made  
46 that if someone's septic system failed, the town wouldn't pay to replace it. Arianna wondered if it

1 would improve life for those customers. It would since it would avoid a catastrophe. Peter noted  
2 they were replacing a 50-year pipe with a 100-year pipe. Arianna said there was no question about  
3 the value and need of the project; the question was how to communicate the project and respond.  
4 Peter said Naomi's map that had everything colored in, spoke to the condition of the system and  
5 they expected she would bring it to the presentation. Julie didn't anticipate another project of this  
6 size, except the water treatment plant which was a few years down the road. Peter said this  
7 improvement may also delay the need for the sewer treatment plant because they wouldn't be  
8 treating as much water. Julie said they were aware the project would likely not begin until the end  
9 of 2025 or beginning of 2026. Arne said other areas would be more manageable if there was a leak  
10 but not the subject area because it was in such bad shape. The first part of the project to be  
11 completed would be the force main. Article 4, which was the potential purchase of the solar field,  
12 would be discussed in executive session. Article 5 for the police department is from the floor and  
13 not warned. The establishment of the Housing Reserve Fund. Articles 7, 8, and 9 were exemptions.  
14 Lee asked if people would be available, and Julie said they had all been told to attend. Article 10  
15 would be completed once the budget number was final. Articles 11 through 22 were all based on  
16 petitions from non-profit organizations. Julie noted they were also all told to attend and there have  
17 been years that some have failed because nobody appeared on their behalf. Arne wondered if some  
18 of the requests would be better served by going to the Trustees of Public Funds because they may  
19 be more related to those monies. Tim suggested digging into it at a future meeting. It was stated  
20 that anyone can submit a petition if it is signed by 5% of the voters.

21

22 The Town Warning will be ready for Friday's meeting.

23

### 24 **Agenda Item 8, Appoint Ethics Liaison to the State Ethics Commission**

25

26 Arne stated this needed to be done by the end of the month and there was a lot of paperwork and  
27 more to it than just appointing a liaison with the state. Julie agreed. Arne said, at this point, they  
28 would be appointing a liaison to fulfill the requirement by the state and then discuss the other at a  
29 future meeting which entails training and other requirements. Tim wondered what happened if  
30 they missed the state's deadline and Julie wasn't sure. Tim asked if they would be the only town  
31 missing the deadline and Julie didn't know. Peter added that there weren't teeth in anything and  
32 that's where Tim was going. Julie didn't know if there were many teeth to it, but she would be in  
33 Montpelier the next day and speak with VLCT. Arne noted VLCT already had a model policy out  
34 stating how it should be, which was like Chester's old policy about conflict of interest. Peter said  
35 because he has an Airbnb and has stated that at a lot of meetings, he now must complete a form to  
36 accompany the minutes because he stated he had a conflict. Peter read the rules to the other  
37 members. Tim thought if there were no teeth to act for not meeting the state's deadline, there  
38 should be some at length discussion on who would best fill the role rather than appointing someone  
39 to just check a box. Julie said they could do that as they were meeting on Friday and she would be  
40 at the VLCT meeting on Thursday, so they could add it to Friday's agenda. Arne has received 3  
41 emails from the state saying the deadline was the end of the month and agreed with Tim but  
42 wouldn't mind having a placeholder to appease the state and then address it later. Tim confirmed  
43 that the selection could be changed at any time. Arianna noted that the position is often filled by  
44 town managers. Tim added that the role was also filled by select board chairs and wasn't sure  
45 either was ideal. Peter suggested checking the box and putting it off until February or March.  
46 Arianna suggested that they be rebellious and make an interim appointment. Peter thought the state



1 would hold back dollars, and Julie did not believe there was any connection, at this point, to state  
2 money but would find out on Thursday about the teeth behind them. Tim said he had read John  
3 Walter's letter to the editor about the subject which stuck with him, and they are held to a deadline  
4 that is unfunded. There was discussion about whether they should do it, and Julie said the board  
5 could draft a letter. Julie would speak with VLCT regarding the teeth behind it and would add it  
6 to Friday's agenda, along with the warning and budget. Lee said Julie should ask the VLCT what  
7 problem this ethics appointment was solving. Julie said a couple of years ago the municipalities  
8 adopted ethics rules, but the state did not. So, it started as the state adopting one for itself and then  
9 directing the towns to do the same, but the towns had already adopted theirs. Julie said anyone  
10 who volunteered for a municipality at any level had to do training yearly and now it was every 3  
11 years and was extensive training, so VLCT pushed back on it because it made it more difficult to  
12 get volunteers. Julie said the original bill stated anyone could file an ethics complaint against any  
13 municipal official for any reason anonymously, which was questionable, so then they specifically  
14 targeted town managers in the initial bill, which made it difficult and VLCT pushed against that.  
15 Julie wasn't sure where the bill landed but anyone can file a complaint anonymously, which is the  
16 reason why a lot of municipalities with town managers are appointing them as the liaison. Julie  
17 wasn't advocating for it but explained the town manager is essentially connected to all the  
18 municipal positions. Tim thought it wasn't an additional responsibility that Julie needed. Arne said  
19 the town was open and transparent so there shouldn't be complaints. Tim pointed out there was  
20 paperwork and training, and it could be used as a weapon. Peter wondered if he was using Bailey  
21 Hill Road more than most, that he needed to file an ethics report and felt the paperwork was insane.  
22 Arne pointed out the appearance of impropriety required it. Lee didn't think it was necessary, and  
23 Arne agreed they have a process in place. Arianna said the other members had swayed her to agree  
24 with them.

### 25 26 **Agenda Item 9, New Business/Next Agenda**

- 27
- 28 • On Friday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, they will meet at 9:30 a.m.
  - 29 • The ethics liaison will be discussed on Friday.
  - 30 • Peter wondered what would be at the first meeting on February 5<sup>th</sup>. Julie said a local concerns  
31 meeting was required for the scoping study for the sidewalk to the high school. The Certificate of  
32 Highway Knowledge and Class 4 Roads policy conversation would also be on the 5<sup>th</sup>.
  - 33 • Julie's review will take place at the two February meetings.
  - 34 • Jeffery Barn discussion in March.
  - 35 • The flags on Main Street have been in terrible shape and Arne wanted to discuss procedure  
36 regarding them. Julie said they were originally hung from Memorial Day to Veterans Day and  
37 taken down. Tim thought there were some easy answers, but it bothered him too and he was glad  
38 Arne raised the issue.

### 39 40 **Agenda Item 10, Executive Session: Solar Field Purchase Negotiation**

41  
42 Lee moved and Arianna seconded a motion to go into the executive session. The motion carried.

43  
44 (Executive Session entered at 8:04 p.m.)

45  
46 Arianna moved and Lee seconded a motion to exit the executive session. The motion carried.

1 (Executive Session exited at 8:26 p.m.)  
2

3 Lee moved and Tim seconded a motion to add the purchase of a solar field on town land in the  
4 amount not to exceed \$1,140,000 to the Town Warning. The motion carried.  
5

6 **Agenda Item 11, Adjourn**  
7

8 Arianna moved to adjourn, and Tim seconded the motion. The motion carried, and the meeting  
9 was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

DRAFT