

TOWN OF CHESTER  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

September 18, 2019  
Minutes

PRESENT: Arne Jonynas; Heather Chase; Lee Gustafson; Leigh Dakin; Ben Whalen;  
David Pisha

VISITORS: Shawn Cunningham; Ron Smith; Amy Mosher; Brian Mosher; Derek  
Suursoo; Sheila Garaffa; Kevin Paquet; Lisa Kaiman; Dick Jewett;  
William Lindsay; Sharon Huntley; Kelly Levy

There were no additions to the agenda. The Executive Session for this agenda was removed.

1. APPROVE MINUTES:

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to approve the minutes of the August 29, 2019 Special Selectboard meeting. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the minutes of the September 4, 2019 Selectboard meeting and Executive Session. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2019 Special Selectboard meeting. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

2. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

There were no citizen's comments.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

EMS Building: David Pisha stated that he has received large renderings of the EMS Building and floor plan. Both Julie Hance and the Fire Department will have booths at Fall Festival and will both have sets of the renderings to display. There will also be two public meetings coming up. Kevin Racyk also suggested an open house for the public to come see the building. David Pisha stated that he has received the amortization from the Bond Bank and will be incorporating those numbers into the Capital Plan. Arne Jonynas asked if there would be numbers ready for the gravel project at the time of the public meetings. David Pisha stated that all numbers will be available.

David Pisha stated that he has spoken with the State regarding the trucks parking on Route 103. Apparently, parking in a State Highway right of way is allowed. Marc Pickering from VTrans indicated that the Selectboard can write a letter requesting that

this section become a no parking zone. Leigh Dakin stated that she would like to see a letter written by the Board to VTrans. Arne Jonynas asked that the letter be drafted and put on a future agenda.

4. GENERAL FUND AUDIT REPORT:

Ron Smith from RHR Smith, the town's auditor, is present to discuss the audit results. Ron Smith stated that 2018 was the smoothest audit for the Town of Chester. He indicated that the consolidation of funds and change to NEMRC was a huge improvement for the town in 2018. Ron Smith stated that the town is in the same place as last year. There is an unrestricted fund balance of \$400,000. However, he would like to see the town have a balance of \$800,000. Unrestricted funds are funds that are available for cash flow for the town. Ron Smith indicated that this is a surplus amount that is available for use by the town. Arne Jonynas questioned if this was a true surplus as he believes that these funds are allocated to other things. Ron Smith stated that this is an accumulation of surpluses over all of Chester's history. Ben Whalen stated that it was his understanding that the surplus each year was rolled into the budget.

Ben Whalen stated that he has never seen this number in the past. Cil Mathews stated that it is on the Balance Sheet. It was agreed that David Pisha will review with Ron Smith this surplus and explain it further to the Board.

Ron Smith stated that these balances should be transferred into a Fund Balance policy to be used for a future expense.

Ron Smith stated that the Trustee of Public Funds balance is down approximately \$35,000. This not an alarming amount but should be watched as the market fluctuates.

Derek Suursoo stated that he is surprised by the surplus of \$400,000 and confirmed with Ron that this money that could be spent tomorrow. Derek Suursoo also questioned if there is a difference between a Fund Balance Policy and a Reserve Fund Policy. Ron Smith indicated that there is a big difference and that the Reserve Fund Policy comes after a General Fund Balance Policy. The General Fund Balance Policy drives the Reserve Fund Policy. Ron Smith stated that a Reserve Fund is for a specific purpose and the General Fund Balance Policy is for if something happens during the year and there is not enough money in the budget.

Bill Lindsay asked if the Reserve Fund number is going to be a number in the General Fund Budget. Ron Smith indicated that that is a discussion to be had.

Ron Smith stated that this is not the year to move the money into a Reserve Fund. He suggested that the Board wait until the large infrastructure projects are completed. He also stated that he wants this number to be double the \$400,000. Ron Smith also stated that he would be happy to run a workshop for the Board to explain Balance Sheets and the surpluses.

5. RESERVE FUND POLICY:

Arne Jonynas provided the history of the Reserve Fund Policy. He explained that this was voted at Town Meeting but the terms were left to be discussed.

Ron Smith stated that the \$400,000 could be used to start the Reserve Fund. There was discussion regarding the relationship between Reserve Funds and Fund Balance Policies. The Board agreed to move this item to the future after further discussions with Ron Smith.

6. SPEED LIMIT ON HIGH STREET:

David Pisha stated that Sheila Garaffa approached him regarding the excessive speed on High Street and they would like the speed limit lowered to 25 mph. Ms. Garaffa stated that there are many kids that walk and ride bikes on High Street and the speed is just too fast. She further stated that the stop sign at the intersection of High Street and Dodge Road is not obeyed.

Leigh Dakin stated that she was also surprised to see that River Street is posted at 35 mph. She feels that this is also too fast for the back roads.

Lee Gustafson asked if there is any data relative to the speeds on High Street. He indicated that actual speed vs presumed speed are not the same. Lee Gustafson also asked if there are regulations related to a Selectboard changing a speed limit on a town road. He stated that he would like to see the portable speed limit sign set up on High Street. Leigh Dakin stated that she would also like to know a traffic count.

Arne Jonynas recapped that the town will collect speed data on High Street. In addition, the Board will research the process relative to changing speed limits on town roads. Ben Whalen also stated that he would like the Police Chief to be in touch with Ms. Garaffa as a measure of community policing. The Board also suggested posting a Dead End sign on the road as well as Children Playing sign.

7. THOMPSON BRIDGE DISCUSSION:

Arne Jonynas stated that there is new information that has been received relative to the cost of repairing Palmer Bridge. The cost for Cold River Bridges to do a permanent repair to the bridge is \$373,650.00 which is significantly less than \$1.2 million.

Richard Jewett asked what work is going to be done before winter. David Pisha stated that Cold River Bridges is going to install 13 new floor beams under the bridge. Arne Jonynas stated that a structural engineer has confirmed this temporary work. This temporary work has been approved and will be beginning soon. Shawn Cunningham and Lee Gustafson asked David Pisha to find out if the permanent bridge could be constructed now. It was discussed that the repair of \$88,000 will allow the bridge to be moved and used as a temporary bridge during the final construction.

Heather Chase expressed her concern about increased traffic going past the Mosher's house. However, she also expressed concern about only one access to the Palmer Road property. She does not think that it is safe to have only one access to a property. Heather Chase stated that she would prefer to have both the Palmer Bridge and the right of way across the Mosher's to access the property.

The Board discussed the alternative options presented by the State. Lee Gustafson and Arne Jonynas suggested proceeding with Alternative 4, which does not include Palmer Bridge. They both indicated that if condemnation is needed in the future, then the town can proceed when it might be needed. Heather Chase expressed concerns relative to safety such as farm equipment on Route 103.

Brian Mosher stated that after Lisa Kaiman purchased the Goodrich property, she asked the Mosher's to drive her tractor across their property. They authorized that on a temporary basis she could. However, she then asked for a right of way. He also stated that tractors drive on Route 103 all the time and the Board should not be concerned about this argument.

Ben Whalen stated that he feels that the Board should be making this decision now and not kicking it down the road for a future fight. If condemnation is going to happen, he would prefer to have it included as part of the State's project and not be paid for by the taxpayers.

Amy Mosher read a letter into the record which is attached to these minutes. She also made mention that the tractors drive to the WAWEE store at the corner of Route 10 every day along Route 103. Amy Mosher also stated that the farmer that hays her field drives his tractor from Smokeshire Road, down Route 103 to her property.

Dick Jewett stated that visibility coming off Palmer Bridge is not good because the State won't let the trees be cut back. He also expressed his agreement about keeping Palmer Bridge and questioned if the State will agree to only replacing two bridges. The Board confirmed that this would be alternative 4.

Arne Jonynas expressed his opinion in support of alternative 4. He stated that he feels that the bar for condemnation is very high and that there is a way to avoid it. Heather Chase expressed her support of safety over cost. Lee Gustafson stated that he would like to see if the town can receive special permission to cut the vegetation around Palmer Bridge. He also stated that he is not just concerned about cost and safety, he is also concerned about the statement that condemnation makes to the town.

Lisa Kaiman stated that she is concerned that her farm is being blamed for the problem that is before them. She stated that the three bridges have been neglected by the town for decades.

Leigh Dakin stated that the bridges need repair and the siting on Route 103 needs to be improved. These should be the focuses for this project.

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to proceed with alternative 4. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed with Leigh Dakin and Heather Chase voting in the negative.

Lisa Kaiman stated that option 4 will require the largest portion of land be taken from her. The Board stated that the road layout will be decided on during the design phase.

8. REVIEW EMS PROJECT COSTS:

Arne Jonynas stated that the Board needs to review the project costs and determine which options they will be including in the project.

Lee Gustafson explained that there are numbers for four different options. Combination one includes the welding/washing bay and is in the amount of \$4,722,094.00. This does not include the sprinkler or the venting system for the welding bay.

Combination two includes the welding/washing bay and hood vent and is in the amount of \$4,728,594.00.

Combination three includes the welding/washing bay, hood vent, sprinkler system in the amount of \$4,777,194.00.

Combination four includes all the options shown, excluding the 3" siding, which is \$4,796,048.00.

Lee Gustafson noted that the committee felt that the washing/welding bay and sprinkler system were important, as well as the hood vent. Also, the thickness of the new siding would be the 2" which is sufficient insulation for this building. It was also discussed that sealing the floor and the hoist crane could be added later. Paving around the Town Garage could also be done at a later time by the town. Heather Chase stated that she feels that the project should include what is actually needed at this time.

Ben Whalen questioned the welding bay. Lee Gustafson noted that the welding bay would be an enclosed space that would provide fire safety and separation from the public. In addition, the vent would help remove the fumes from the building. Ben Whalen stated that he is in favor of adding the welding/wash bay, hood vent and sprinkler system. Other Board members agreed.

A motion was made by Leigh Dakin to approve the Town Warning for a bond vote authorizing the amount of \$4,777,194.00 for the construction of a new emergency services building as well as renovations to the Public Works facility to be held on November 5, 2019. Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed.

9. SIGN BOND DOCUMENTS:

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to approve the Resolution Certificate relative to a Bond for the construction of a new a new emergency services building as well as renovations to the Public Works facility in the amount of \$4,777,194.00. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the Declaration of Official Intent relative to a Bond for the construction of a new a new emergency services building as well as renovations to the Public Works facility in the amount of \$4,777,194.00. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed.

David Pisha reviewed the upcoming informational meeting dates.

10. TOWN MANAGER SEARCH:

Arne Jonynas stated that the Board needs to decide the process of selecting the town manager. The Board agreed to have 2 members of the Selectboard, 2 employees and 3 community members. Heather Chase and Arne Jonynas stated that they would be willing to be on the committee. The Board discussed advertising for the community members. Heather Chase suggested making sure that the committee provides regular updates to the Selectboard during this process.

The Selectboard also agreed to utilize the services of VLCT for this process. Once the committee is formed, the committee can review the list of services needed.

Heather Chase will be the point of contact with VLCT.

Heather Chase stated that she would like to delegate the job of reviewing job descriptions to David Pisha and Julie Hance.

11. NEXT AGENDA/NEW BUSINESS:

The Selectboard did not discuss this item.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION;

This item was removed from the agenda.

13. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to adjourn. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Julie Hance  
Secretary of the Select Board

Ben Whalen  
Clerk of the Selectboard

To: The Chester Selectboard

Date: September, 18, 2019

**RE: Bridge Dis-investment Alternative 4**

Thank you all for allowing time to gather more information and not making a decision at the last meeting.

Brian and I are here tonight to ask the Chester Selectboard to choose Alternative 4 as the preferred alternative for the Thompson Bridge project.

We support Alternative 4 because it is feasible and prudent and does not require the use of a 4(f) resource our home. Also Alternative 4 would not require eminent domain.

Alternative 4 would combine Jewett and Thompson Road Bridges into one new bridge.

This Alternative would reduce 2 bridges into 1 bridge.

Brian and I and our two sons Everett and Eben are owners and residents of the Historic Jewett Farm Complex. Everett and Eben wanted to be here tonight but were unable to attend because of an out of town soccer game. I have a poem from Everett about the farm I would like to submit for the record and give to each of you.

We believe it is in our best interest to protect and maintain the resource now and in perpetuity from a use that would undoubtedly create cumulative adverse impacts to the historic home and farm.

We believe as land owners and stewards of this 4(f) resource that it's vital to protect the integrity, aesthetic beauty, feeling, design, style, workmanship, and setting of the farm. All of these represent intrinsic qualities the farm has provided over the last 200 plus years.

We have worked hard to be good stewards of our home. We have vested countless hours and energy to maintain and improve the aesthetic beauty and integrity of the farm and will continue to do so.

We fully understand and can visualize vividly how a use would threaten the integrity of the 4(f) resource and result in cumulative adverse impacts. For that reason we believe strongly in protecting the 4(f) resource our home from the use proposed in Alternative 5.

A memo in the Selectboard packet notes that Johnathan Griffin of VTTrans asked that the board be reminded that "safety is a primary factor as well, specifically farm equipment on Route 103."

Regarding farm equipment: We all understand that Vermont is a rural state. There are agricultural fields that are sometimes unconnected. We share the roads with bicyclists and

tractors. Farmers drive tractors on main highways out of necessity. They have every right to do so and the rules of the road are there to protect them as much as the vehicles. We have respect for farmers and tractors on the highways.

Lisa Kaiman owns the WAWEE store on the corner of Rt. 10 and VT103. Her tractors have used VT 103 to get to the WAWEE store for years.

It is not our responsibility to provide a Right of Way for Lisa Kaiman/AMIK LLC to connect the commercial farm she now owns to the north of us. AMIK LLC bought the property in March 2018 knowing it would need to drive a tractor on VT 103 to connect the properties.

The safety of farm equipment on VT103 does not constitute a need for eminent domain.

How the large commercial farm to the north will evolve is completely unknown. We have no intention to be the only ingress and egress/entrance and exit to the commercial agricultural enterprise to the north.

The farm complex to the north needs the existing Palmer Road and bridge 28 to provide access.

**I ask the Selectboard to choose Alternative 4 which would consolidate Jewett and Thompson Bridge into one new bridge.**

This action would result in the best decision for everyone involved.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Amy Mosher  
118 Jewett Rd.  
Chester VT 05143



Poem by Everett Mosher

Our farm is the place I call home  
Here, I will never feel alone  
The gardens flourish with life  
A private escape from any strife  
Playing sports and games outside  
With a smile on my face, extra wide  
Smelling the glorious Vermont air  
A soft breeze ruffles through my hair  
Listening to the sound of songbirds  
Flying through life, undisturbed  
Watching the stars at night  
And knowing everything's gonna be alright  
At times, our farm is the most peaceful place to be  
A place of wonders for you and me