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**TOWN OF CHESTER
SELECT BOARD MEETING
November 20, 2024 Minutes**

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

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

Visitors Present: Preston Bristow, Hugh Quinn, Dan Batchelder, Dick Jewett, Jessica Krust, Lynn Smith, Matt McCarthy, Joe Carl, Steve Vertefuelle, Paul Bidgood, Lauren Fierman, Frank Bidwell, Bill Dakin, Erin Ladd, Lora Cokolat, Jason Rasmussen of MARC, Shawn Cunningham of The Chester Telegraph at Town Hall; and SAPA TV, Matthew Gorsky, Caroline Morgan, John Velit, Robert Nied, Evan Parks, Lora Cokolat (signed on after she left Town Hall), and Donna McNeill Hudkins via Zoom.

Call to Order

Chair Arne Jonynas called the meeting to order at 6:30 with the Pledge of Allegiance, welcomed everyone, and asked them to sign the attendance sheet.

Agenda Item 1, Additions or Deletions to the Agenda

There were none.

Agenda Item 2 Approval of Minutes from the Selectboard Meeting dated November 6, 2024

Lee moved and Tim seconded a motion to approve the November 6, 2024, minutes. Peter thanked Sue for the minutes. The motion carried and minutes were approved, as written.

Agenda Item 3, Citizen's Comments

There were none.

Agenda Item 4, Old Business

Report by Town Manager:

Donated Carport

The carport was installed at the Public Safety Building, for which they were very appreciative and thanked them for their 100% donation of their very generous gift honoring their wife and brother.

Ambulance

The new ambulance arrived and is operational. The transfer service had their first transfer

1 yesterday between hospitals and two are scheduled for tomorrow. Phone calls are being received
2 and it will prove to be a revenue stream. Tim said it was fantastic.

3
4 Wayfinding Signage

5 There are some up and more to be installed and Julie anticipated the final signage to be installed
6 in the Spring.

7
8 Grant

9 The town was awarded the Implementation Energy Grant for just under \$500,000 with no match
10 required. It will fund a lot of energy upgrades and improvements for municipal buildings, including
11 Town Hall, Whiting Library, and the Academy Building. Julie will meet with Steve, the library,
12 and the Academy Building, about the work to be done, which will likely start in January. Tim
13 asked if they already had quotes and Julie said they submitted them with their application so they
14 should begin the work soon. Arne asked Julie how it would work, and she said there would be
15 conversations. They are limited in what they can do with the Academy Building because it has a
16 historic preservation easement, and the heat pumps will go where permitted. Most require lower-
17 mounted units, which is what Bart Energy had provided quotes for. There are a lot of contingencies
18 in the grant so things can be moved. Arne said it was great and will allow the building to be used.
19 Tim thought it was a long time coming. Julie pointed out this would be done without local tax
20 money.

21
22 Arne asked if there was any old business and there was none.

23
24 **Agenda Item 5, Approval of Use of Town Roads for Snowmobile Club**

25
26 Arne entertained a motion to grant the Chester Snowmobile Club permission to use: Smokeshire
27 Road past the fourth bridge 150 yards to the snowmobile bridge on the left; Blue Hill Road 150
28 yards from Kengeter's field over the bridge to Vail's field; 100' of Ethan Allen Road; all of
29 Williams Road; Rolling Acres from cul-de-sac at far end, 600 yards to where the trail turns right;
30 and the town turnaround across from Old Forge Road, 50'-70'. Tim moved and Lee seconded the
31 motion. Arne asked if there was any discussion, noted it was housekeeping, and is done annually.
32 Dick Jewett of the Snowmobile Club had counted the bridges, and said it was the fifth and not the
33 fourth bridge on Smokeshire Road from Cavendish. Tim amended the motion to the fifth bridge
34 and Lee seconded the amendment. Paul Bidgood asked if it was the complete list of roads the
35 snowmobiles could use, and Peter responded that unplowed roads in Vermont were automatically
36 snowmobile roads. Paul asked if they could amend the motion concerning his road. Arne said it
37 was discussed a couple of meetings prior, and they were working with the town attorney who will
38 issue a statement. Julie spoke with the attorney today and he would reach out early next week.

39
40 Paul Bidgood spoke of a document that discontinued Town Highway 136 and at a board meeting
41 in 1997, the road researcher for ancient roads' documentation transcribed the document. There was
42 a 1916 map that showed the discontinuance of the town highway. The document also showed in
43 1932 the discontinuation of the northern section of the Town Highway 136. Paul believed that both
44 the northern and southern sections of Town Highway 136 had been discontinued. Paul said the
45 highway had been added back to the map in 2002. In 1996, he opposed the Chester Snowmobile
46 Club going through his property. The Chester Snowmobile Club and the Cavendish Snow Ladies

1 relocated the trail to the northern section of Town Highway 136. Paul said they knew it wasn't a
2 town highway and that's why they tried to bypass it by trespassing on his neighbor's property. In
3 July 1996, Paul sent a letter to the Town of Chester asking if there were any town roads in the area
4 and they responded no. May 21, 1997, the Select Board Chair got the Cavendish Board to state the
5 road on the Cavendish side of the line went all the way to the town line. Two weeks later, the
6 Chairman came to the Select Board and explained their residents in Cavendish objected to the
7 Snowmobile Club using the road that ran from Bailey Hill Road from Cavendish to Smokeshire
8 Road in Chester. Paul read a document regarding that. The next day the Chester Town Manager
9 sent a letter to the Cavendish Board. Paul read that letter. Paul noted the minutes indicated the
10 meeting was 53 minutes and didn't feel that there was enough time to take everything into
11 consideration. Things sat still for a while and in 2003 when the issue was raised again and the trial
12 court determined that the Town of Chester colluded with the Town of Cavendish to extinguish the
13 rights to the road. In 2009, an ancient road specialist appeared before the House Committee in
14 Montpelier had concerns that towns or Select Board members may have agendas. Paul said the
15 road researcher had direct knowledge of the 1905 and 1932 discontinuances and was not correctly
16 shown on the 2010 Chester Highway Map. Paul read that a citizen was not precluded from
17 challenging this. Paul said the road researcher was a former Selectman and didn't know how
18 closely tied they were. Paul said that the collusion between Chester and Cavendish had benefited
19 VAST. Paul felt that the property owners had to spend a lot of money protecting their property
20 because of the snowmobile trail but believed the facts were on his side. Arne said he let Paul slide
21 while he spoke, but the road Paul was referring to wasn't part of the roads on the agenda and it
22 would appear on an upcoming agenda. Arne said they had gone through the documentation Paul
23 provided and there would be a decision made. Paul said he's 67 years old and will have to stop the
24 use of that road. Arne told him this meeting wasn't the place for it, and it wasn't on the agenda
25 and Paul had been granted leeway to speak. Arne noted Paul's side of the story was one thing but
26 there was a lot more to it and the members and the town attorney had reviewed it and a decision
27 would be coming. Paul said he didn't want to get accosted or arrested when he stopped
28 snowmobiles coming from Cavendish to Chester and asked the Snowmobile Club to tell their
29 members.

30
31 Arne asked if there was any further discussion on the motion. There was none, a vote was taken,
32 and the motion carried unanimously.

33
34 Peter told Dick he missed the stone culvert at the top of Wymans Falls and noted it had been
35 replaced this year, as well as a chain across the road for the Class 4 road. Peter thought Dick had
36 a problem with the map. Arne told Peter that the motion had passed and if he wanted to speak with
37 Dick or the Snowmobile Club, he could do it later.

38 39 **Agenda Item 6, Library Budget Discussion**

40
41 Bill Dakin, Library Board Chair, said the director, Gail Zachariah, was present and some board
42 members, including Lora Cokolat, Jessie Krust, and online were Donna McNeill-Hudkins and Matt
43 Gorsky. Lora and Gail gave the budget presentation. Lora, the current treasurer of the library,
44 talked about the proposed budget and the things they had done. According to the library value
45 calculator, the community saved \$207,045 this year. The current director has secured significant
46 grants to bring the Whiting Library into the 21st century and retain qualified staff, and be

1 competitive. In 2023, the Working Group on the Status of Libraries in Vermont published a report
2 on the compensation of Public Libraries. The Director and Youth Services Librarian meet the
3 Vermont Rural Basic Needs Wage while the Library Assistant meets the Vermont Livable Wage.
4 They are asking Chester to help cover the full cost of the personnel budget, including payroll taxes
5 and other expenses. In the past, there have been times when the town covered the personnel budget
6 for the library. They estimate the cost comes to \$50 per Chester resident, which includes the cost
7 of the facility. Neighboring libraries, Springfield and Rockingham, cost about \$70 per resident.
8 They didn't increase the budget for the next fiscal year by slightly cutting the cost for books and
9 materials and hoped to make up for it with grants. Chester covering personnel would allow them
10 to focus on fundraising, donations, grant writing, expenses, materials, equipment, technology, and
11 administrative costs. Revenue comes from Chester, Andover, fundraising, donations, book sales,
12 and grants. The fundraising and donations are affected by what is going on with the economy and
13 environment, such as the flood of 2023. Their average shortage is about \$20,000. Donations and
14 grants are often specifically for library collections, programs, and other initiatives, but not
15 personnel costs. Lora highlighted the great things they had done. They received a grant from the
16 National Library of Medicine to replace their consumer health section focusing on an aging
17 population. They have received a grant to make the library ADA compliant. They want to redesign
18 the community room downstairs. Another grant assisted with expanding their seed library and
19 obtained additional gardening tools, equipment for canning, dehydrating and other things that can
20 be checked out for a period. They also purchased a shed with the grant money to house these items
21 and have added books to the gardening collection. They have a new streaming service, Video Plus,
22 for patrons to view movies and television shows for free by using their library card. The collection
23 includes award-winning films, British television, documentaries, and foreign films. For children,
24 they purchased Wonder Books which are audio books. They were recently awarded the Vermont
25 Early Childhood Fund that will enable them to become an official Family Place library, which
26 focuses on learning for children 0 to 3 years. It will provide new age-appropriate furniture toys,
27 puzzles, and blocks and staff will receive appropriate training. Lora provided a handout detailing
28 the grants, including the Vermont Historical Society 250th Anniversary Grant and the Public
29 Library Association Digital Literacy Workshop Incentive Grant. They are asking Chester to
30 increase their support by 19.16% for a total of \$120,356 to have competent staff to keep the library
31 running without any interruptions. They should be compensated for their knowledge and expertise.

32
33 Gail said they are asking for an increase from Andover, too. In 2023, the previous board chair
34 came and spoke to the Select Board about their increasing personnel costs and about a need starting
35 in 2020 to make the wages fair. To have a balanced budget, without asking for increased help with
36 personnel costs, they would have to not purchase any materials or have any programs. A modern
37 American library has programs to engage and build a healthy community. Whiting Library is doing
38 that, and they want it to be sustainable and resilient. Gail asked if they had questions. Lee said they
39 discussed the investment account last year and the year before and why it wasn't being used. Lee
40 said they were asking the taxpayers to provide funding for the library but not using what was in
41 their investment account. Gail said there was \$5,000 in the budget that adds that. Lee asked if there
42 was an itemization of the investment fund because they were asking for a lot of money. To Lee, it
43 was a significant increase and would be helpful to know. As of the end of October, it was \$179,323
44 in the fund and it fluctuates. Gail noted that if they withdrew \$30,000 from it annually, it wouldn't
45 last long. Lee understood the value of an investment account and why they have it for rainy days
46 and as a town, they want to invest in the library as a resource. Arne noted the rate increase was

1 half a penny per taxpayer. Lora thought the budget was more robust and realistic. Arne understood
2 they have different views, including philosophical ones, about the library but noted that they don't
3 expect any of the other town departments to make money and be self-funded. Arne thought the
4 library was an extremely important part of the community and a bargain for the services offered.
5 Arne agreed with Lee that they had to do due diligence with respect to the budget, but believed the
6 increase would put them more in line with the other town departments with respect to personnel.
7 Lee pointed out that the library board hired their staff and not the town. Gail agreed but said
8 historically, the librarians were underpaid for work done and had to engage their entire families to
9 help get the work done. The board came up with policy and procedure always requiring two people
10 in the library, so it increased the cost of personnel. Tim saw less in the budget for salaries this year
11 than last. Gail said that was the thriftiness of the librarians so when someone left, they replaced
12 them with less hours. From 2020 and 2021, there were big increases in costs. Last year, they had
13 a lot of success with donations, but it's hard to build a budget reliant on fundraising when it
14 fluctuates so much. It's also difficult to budget on grants when they are unsure of the amount. Lee
15 saw the issue as philosophical. The town was being asked for money but had no control over how
16 it was spent or who was hired. Lee appreciated and respected them asking for the funds, but it
17 seemed like they were asking the town to pay for personnel costs when they had no say. Lee agreed
18 with Arne that the library was wonderful and wouldn't necessarily vote against a particular budget
19 but wanted to share his view. Gail said that was how most Vermont libraries are structured. Arne
20 said they discussed charters before and whether there was a better way to do it. Arne said although
21 the town gives them money, the library is still controlled by the citizens of the town. Gail said the
22 trustees are elected by the same voters as the Select Board. Julie asked Gail if anyone was going
23 to take advantage of the retirement program that she fought so hard to get for them. Gail said she
24 was not, and there was only one other employee who was eligible. Julie pointed out that if they
25 were not, the line item could be removed from the budget. Gail thought they should leave it in so
26 that if someone left, it would be available as a choice. Arne asked about the amounts budgeted for
27 non-residents and Gail said they want the rates based on close to what they're paying. Most towns
28 don't want so supplement paying for non-residents. They're increasing the non-resident fee by
29 January 1st. They got a new computer last year, and she wasn't sure how many non-residents they
30 had until they renewed. Gail said they were a bargain because it cost \$70 to get a non-resident card
31 from Springfield and Rockingham. Arne asked if Andover was paying per resident or per usage.
32 Gail thought if they were paying per resident, it would likely be much more and were paying close
33 to what it would cost for each of their current library cardholders. Arne said if there were any
34 concerns, now was the time to raise them, otherwise, they would be looking at the budget and
35 deciding. Gail said they could work together more for programs and books. Lee wasn't discounting
36 their value, but it was \$120,000 on the taxpayer but he understood the value they brought to the
37 community. Arne asked if any of the audience wanted to comment and there were none. Arne
38 thanked them for coming and noted that showing up in force was proof of their dedication. Tim
39 thanked them for their work.

40

41

Agenda Item 7, Update on Act 181 – Regional Planning Commission

42

43 Jason Rasmussen said Act 181 was impactful and wanted them to be aware of some of the impacts.
44 Jason said they would be working on it over the next two years. Act 181, also called House Bill
45 687 and referred to as the Act 250 Bill, is huge. The sister bill from a year earlier, called the Home
46 Act, had a lot of impact on what town zoning should do. Jason thought what Planning had worked

1 on and been adopted by the town followed these laws. Act 181 requires all Regional Planning
2 Commissions to update the regional plan. There are housing targets that need to be included and
3 addressed by the town plan. They should have them by February, and need to revisit their future
4 land use sections in the plan which has implications for Chester. They have Village Center maps
5 and are consistent with what Chester has. They are in a transition where they no longer need to go
6 back to the state to renew their designation for the Village Center. Once their regional plan is in
7 place two years from now, they will map it out with Chester, and they will receive automatic
8 designation. They will work closely with the Select Board and Planning Commission to make sure
9 they get the maps right. They will also look at the areas surrounding the Village Center and there
10 are different terminologies they have options for but will look at it as it relates to the Neighborhood
11 Development Area Designation which provides interesting benefits. Related to it, there are Act
12 250 exemptions built into the law. Jason said there were 4 different tiers: 1a, 1b, 2, and 3. The
13 town will have a choice. The way the map is being created in concert with the town was Tier 1b
14 for Chester, which would receive Act 250 exemptions if they chose to do it. Jason said housing
15 projects within boundaries of up to 50 units on 10 acres or less would have exemptions from Act
16 250. They hope by streamlining the process there will be housing created. Tier 2 is just Act 250
17 status. Jason said they want to work closely with the town mapping and crafting a plan. They will
18 hear more from Jason and Erin of MARC. Lee asked for the Montpelier explanation of why this
19 was being done. Lee thought it sounded great but wanted to know what they were trying to
20 accomplish as a state. Jason said Lee would need to ask the legislators. Jason's understanding was
21 they were trying to address housing. They're looking at local zoning as well as the Act 250 piece.
22 It makes it easier for developers to get through the process.

23
24 Tim wondered what the hoops were to qualify for Tier 1b. Jason said they needed municipal water
25 and sewer or adequate soil-based lot sizing. They need zoning and subdivision and the capacity to
26 administer them, which Chester has. The question was how far they could go away from the village
27 with infrastructure. Jason thought they were in a good place and could make a strong case for it.
28 Tim said that it could be huge for Chester. Jason had spoken with Julie, and they are looking to
29 start earlier and not wait until next December. Arne thought for the rural areas, the message was
30 basically hands off. Jason said the balance was more housing and protection of rural spaces. They
31 still need to determine what Tier 3 is. Jason thought there would be more Act 250 reviews in the
32 outlying areas. Jason said they would work with the Planning Commission and come back to the
33 Select Board through the process. Tim said planning is often underappreciated and asked what
34 they are trying to fix which is the opposite of planning if you wait until something is broken. They
35 want to plan, and it made sense to him to develop the areas served by water and sewer. Arne
36 thanked Jason and Erin for their time and attendance.

37
38 **Agenda Item 8, Housing Commission Update & Presentation**
39

40 Joe Karl, of the Housing Commission, was proud to be on a great team who has been working
41 together for a year. Most of the people on the Commission were present. They've worked to
42 identify the housing needs for Chester and the region and primarily the need is for senior and
43 workforce housing. They've identified properties and property owners who are interested in
44 working with the Commission to develop their properties and are working with the SE Group on
45 the feasibility of town land for neighborhood development. The property south of the high school
46 is a prime piece of real estate which could meet their goals. They've met with Springfield Regional

1 Development Corporation and Vermont League of Cities and Towns to obtain guidance on their
2 next steps. The next steps are developing a housing trust fund to assist with projects creating
3 private and public partnerships without going to the tax base. The trust is established to receive
4 ongoing sources of funding to support the preservation and production of housing and increase
5 opportunities for individuals to access affordable homes. Establishing a fund requires voter
6 approval with the same process as establishing a reserve fund. Joe said the fund must be established
7 before the Commission can move forward with any projects. The fund will provide capital subsidy
8 for housing developments, accessory dwelling unit creation, use of publicly owned land for
9 housing, bringing vacant lots into code compliance, and permitting for housing projects, which has
10 been a hesitation for some to develop land. The trust can also be used to bring municipal water and
11 sewer to lots for development and to purchase property. The fund will help them take the next
12 steps to accomplish their goals. If the Select Board approves bringing the housing trust fund to the
13 voters in March, the next steps will be to identify sources of revenue for the fund, the method of
14 appropriating money to and from the fund, establish an ordinance outlining eligible activities,
15 requirements to receive money, how applications will be evaluated, and who will administer the
16 projects. They will discuss the boundaries with the town's attorney. They are considering interest
17 earned from loans from the economic development fund, sale of vacant town land, and other towns
18 have been successful in implementing a local options tax. A local option tax on rooms and meals
19 would apply to the short-term rental market, which is done in other communities. A local option
20 tax on retail sales and alcohol is also an option but the Commission doesn't feel it's currently a
21 good one. Tax stabilization agreements would be another option. Joe said they couldn't move
22 forward without this fund and were asking the board to put it before the voters in March. Tim
23 wondered what precluded the Commission from recommending the local option tax on alcohol
24 sales. Joe said they were thinking baby steps. Julie said it affected the tourism industry. Tim asked
25 if they could start a fund without money. Julie said they could and their second article for the voters
26 would be the local option tax for rooms and meals if they decided to fund it with that. The other
27 options didn't require voter approval. It would also make them legitimate force if someone had
28 money they wanted to bequeath. Julie said a donation to a municipality is tax deductible. Arne
29 thought having something set up would help a developer through the process, so they didn't have
30 to fight the government. Joe said the Committee agreed with that sentiment. Julie added that some
31 of the grant programs require it. Julie thought tax stabilization would need voter approval. Peter
32 said if they didn't do it now, they had to wait another year. Tim added that they could have a
33 special election. Jason said the sooner they can make a process for the developer, the better. Lee
34 questioned state permits and Preston said he informs applicants when he is aware. Julie said when
35 she was the ZA, they always pointed out the disclosure at the bottom about contacting the state.
36 Jason said the best bet was to go to Preston, but ANR has a permit navigator tool on their website.
37 Jason said Erin is becoming their housing person and they're working on some guidance that they
38 hope will be helpful. Joe said one of their roles is to roll the carpet out and they want to use their
39 combined knowledge to help. The Commission will need legal advice to make sure they're not
40 stepping out of their scope and the fund will help pay for that counsel. Preston noted they can only
41 pay appraised value for a property and will need money to pay for the appraisal. Low-income
42 housing can be built by Windham and Windsor Housing Trust or someone like them as there are
43 a lot of subsidies. High-end housing is making money and everything in the middle doesn't pencil
44 it out. It comes down to what town incentives they can provide, and Jason was glad the
45 Commission came up with it. Joe said every Vermont town is going through this and Chester is a
46 year or two ahead of other towns by having this affordable housing committee and will be prepared

1 to receive funds when they're available and ahead of the others. Tim was impressed they had
2 gotten this far. Joe thanked him on behalf of the committee. Lee thought it was a great idea. Arne
3 said the easy part was establishing it and the Committee had to do the hard work. Tim asked when
4 they would have to decide, and it was January. If they were willing to put it on the ballot, the
5 Housing Commission would start selling it to the community. Arne said people involved become
6 part of it as opposed to voting for something they didn't know anything about. Julie spoke with
7 Arianna who is in favor of it, as well. Shawn Cunningham asked if the tax percentage was 1% for
8 meals and rooms and the possible income, and Jason said meals would be about \$30,000 annually
9 for Chester with the 1% tax.

10
11 Tim moved and Lee seconded a motion to include an article on the ballot for the 2025 Town
12 Meeting to establish the trust fund. A vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

13 14 **Agenda Item 9, Draft Budget Review – Recreation and Facilities**

15
16 Julie noted the budget for the Recreation Department was up from last year, just a little under
17 \$2,000 primarily due to lifeguard certifications and insurance. Matt McCarthy of the Recreation
18 Department said for the size of Chester, they have the best facilities in the area between Cobleigh
19 and the Pinnacle with the upgrades they've done in the past 14 years. It's a busy place. His goal is
20 to have a big project every year: refurbishing basketball courts, tennis courts, and doing pickleball
21 courts. It keeps growing and the facility is amazing. Next year there are a few projects: the baby
22 pool and possibly a splash park. The baby pool and skate park need some work. Last year they
23 only had 3 full-time lifeguards. They can be certified at 14 but can't work as a lifeguard until
24 they're 15, so Matt gives them little jobs at the desk and will be lifeguards when they turn 15. They
25 rarely close due to the lack of lifeguards. Matt said it's open Tuesday through Sunday with
26 maintenance on Monday. Arne asked if they could do their own lifeguard certification. Matt has
27 looked into it. Edgar May pays someone to do those things, so Chester sends their lifeguards there.
28 Chester could find someone to do the certification and save some money. Tim appreciates
29 everything about the Rec Department and noted most people have raised their kids there. Matt
30 added they want to add more adult activities. They have Zumba every Saturday morning at Town
31 Hall. They get GMHS every Saturday morning. Matt said the elementary school has also been very
32 accommodating. The relationship with the high school has gotten better over the years. Matt tries
33 to stay within 80% of his budget. Peter said years ago, they decided to go from part-time to full-
34 time for the Rec Department because part-time wasn't working, and Matt had been there a long
35 time and done wonderful things for the town. Tim asked about the windfall with camp. Matt said
36 Rick Porcello did a camp with them this year which was a huge draw. They had some of the best
37 coaches in the Northeast at the camp and they couldn't just charge \$25 to pay these people. Matt
38 noted they made a lot of money and hoped they would continue it. They had kids from Springfield
39 to Bennington attend the softball/baseball camp. Arne asked how they got the word out and Matt
40 said he knows a lot of people because his kids are in sports. Word of mouth, Facebook, and the
41 town website helped get the word out. Knowing someone from MLB was at the camp spread like
42 wildfire. Arne asked if there were any questions and there were none.

43
44 For facilities, Matt said the pool and skate park need maintenance work and \$5,000 was a long-
45 term band-aid and would give it maybe 10 more years. It is useable but needs work. Steve
46 Vertefuelle said the asphalt shrinks and the cracks grow like a driveway. Northeast Skate Park

1 could refurbish it, and it would last years but wasn't perfect. \$3,500 was a small amount for a
2 safety issue. The pool needs some cement work. The pickleball fence was the bigger one under
3 facility repair. The pickleball court isn't fenced in which is more of a nuisance. Aesthetically,
4 fencing would make it look much nicer, and the park would look nicer. A four-foot fence – 2
5 pickleball courts side by side frees up the tennis court which also is used. Arne asked if he had
6 quotes for the fence and he had received some. Steve wanted to see Knox Boxes on the town
7 buildings to access them with one key. For the fire department, ceiling outlets were installed over
8 the lockers and benches when the Emergency Services Building was built. They want three
9 commercial fans to blow down on people to help with the humidity and get air circulation. The
10 CO detectors were 3 years old when they were installed and are at the end of their life. They want
11 to do cabling in the emergency operations center and a snowblower for maintenance. Julie was
12 moving the \$3,000 from Emergency Services to General Facilities as the snowblower would be
13 used for all facilities and not just Emergency Services. Tim asked about landscaping. Steve noted
14 the building was designed; it included landscaping that didn't make the budget. They want to put
15 tomato plants in. Tim offered to be involved in the discussion. Peter asked if there was a Knox
16 Box policy and there isn't currently. Julie suggested that if commercial properties wanted to
17 purchase a box for their property, so the fire department could gain access if there was ever an
18 issue, and if it extended beyond the town buildings, they would need a policy. Steve, who is in the
19 fire department, said sometimes they must wait for someone with a key to a building to arrive,
20 unless it's a real emergency. The boxes would give access to all the public safety departments.
21 Steve wants to paint some of the buildings. Julie said they need to install a new sprinkler system
22 at the library, and it would cost \$60,000. The new energy grant will cover the cost of replacing the
23 insulation in the attic at the library. Steve said an air charged head that if it trips, opens it up top
24 and they must be tested every 10 years. Steve thought they were tested at \$4,000 or \$5,000 and if
25 they didn't pass, you had to replace the bulbs. They are trying to have a more efficient system.
26 Steve said if they could keep the system wet all the time, that would be perfect. Peter asked if they
27 would be insulating above the rafters and Steve said they would. Steve said insulation had been
28 moved around when electrical work was done. Lee questioned the library amount included and
29 Julie said that was the town's share. The cupola on top of the Academy Building needs work in
30 the next year or two and Julie is looking for grants to cover it. The humidifier installed last year at
31 the Academy Building made a big difference. Steve needs a new truck, and the floor is rusted so
32 significantly that his foot went through it. He must keep to in-town streets due to it being rear-
33 wheel drive. It won't pass state inspection because of deterioration. Julie said they were looking
34 at used trucks for around \$30,000 that are 4-wheel drive and possibly with a utility bed.

35
36 Julie noted the Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant opened and they are 50/50. They are
37 changing the ask and instead of doing extensive work to the pool house this year, they want to
38 repair the roof and renovate the interior, getting them 5 or 8 years and allow time for a more
39 thoughtful community process what they want for long-term use like a community center. They're
40 trying to keep the budget as slim and lean this year as possible. They want a splash park, and many
41 municipalities have installed them. Matt said the grant would include the splash park and repairs
42 to the pool house. Matt contacted a company that installed them in Bennington and some in New
43 Hampshire. They designed one for Chester and Phase 1 would be \$150,000 and Phase 2 would be
44 \$150,000. \$300,000 seemed too much. Adding some pieces that would be fun for the kids rather
45 than Phase 2 so it would be about \$200,000 total. If they recirculated the water, the system could
46 run \$35,000 to \$40,000 and requires a 15,000 gallon fiberglass reservoir. The baby pool pump

1 wouldn't be big enough to pump the water. Matt is leaning towards using the water over. Julie said
2 the big question is if the board has an appetite for it, she will apply. The grant pre-applications are
3 due mid-December and if invited to apply, they are due early February. It wouldn't get installed
4 until 2026. If the board isn't interested, she isn't going to put the time into it. Peter asked if they
5 could revisit it after they discussed the capital plan. If there's an interest and she is invited to apply,
6 they can discuss it in January. Matt said they have discussed repairing the pool house which would
7 fall under the grant. Given the condition of the pool house and foundation, putting a lot of money
8 into the pool house may be a waste of money. Julie said if the board didn't want to move forward,
9 the repairs for the roof are not enough money for the grant and would just add the expenses to the
10 general fund. The repairs would give them another 5 to 8 years to look at the bigger project. The
11 board consensus was not to direct Julie to apply for the grant at this time. They will pull together
12 the cost to repair the pool house.

13
14 Arne asked about the transfer station cost of \$35,000 and wondered if all the towns paid or if it
15 was only Chester paying. Julie said Chester entered a deal with the Transfer Station at least 20
16 years ago before she worked there. The purpose was for Chester residents to access and utilize the
17 transfer station. One other town pays, and Chester pays the most. They recognized a deficit and
18 implemented the sticker system. Julie will circle back and there was a conversation that was
19 needed. Chester residents pay the same for their sticker as other towns, but Chester also pays
20 \$35,000. There is no residency requirement to purchase a sticker.

21 22 **Agenda Item 10, Request for Economic Development Funds**

23
24 Julie said there has been a group bringing more culture to Chester and attendance at Upstairs at
25 Town Hall has been phenomenal. Electrical improvements are needed upstairs for events. It was
26 presented to the board as two phases. Phase 1 is the panel box over the balcony and outlets running
27 down both sides of the walls. Phase 2 is bringing three-phase power and single phase onto the
28 stage and a panel box as well. There's a chance some of the money could come from the energy
29 grant. They would fund as much as they could through that project. The whole project is \$31,000.
30 They're proposing it comes from Economic Development Funds. The work will be done in-house,
31 which will save a lot of money. Lee wondered why three phase and Julie said it was being brought
32 in for the stage and performers. Robert Nied said the electrical improvements would support sound
33 and lighting systems permanently installed on the stage area which draw a lot of power. Arne
34 thought phase three power was serious stuff. Peter questioned whether they had three phase power
35 now. Julie said the three-phase power would also serve other purposes, including a generator. Tim
36 said Green Mountain Power would charge them to feed three-phase. Lee didn't think it made sense
37 and would be very expensive. Julie said Arianna would have a lot to contribute so they should
38 postpone it to the next meeting because she was heavily involved in the conversation upstairs. Julie
39 would get answers from Steve as to why three-phase power was needed. Peter said they would be
40 on a demand meter which would set the rate.

41
42 Whether the upgrade was three-phase or not, Arne noted they were running extension cords, and
43 it was a safety issue and they've gone to the trouble of upgrading the Town Hall. Tim wondered if
44 they needed an engineer. Peter suggested they just do Phase 1 and hear from Arianna and talk
45 about the rest. They decided to wait until the next meeting to discuss the entire project as the Phase
46 1 work couldn't be done now anyway.

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

2
3 Jim will draft a response from the board and Julie will share with the board.

4
5 Arne asked if they wanted to wait until after the budget to have the Class 4 Road Policy discussion.

6
7 Tim asked about the canopy trees planting and wanted to make sure it was on Julie's radar.

8
9 **Agenda Item 12, Adjourn**

10
11 Lee moved to adjourn, and Tim seconded the motion. The motion carried, and the meeting was
12 adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

13
14 **WATER/SEWER COMMISSIONERS MEETING AGENDA**

15 **November 20, 2024**

16 Following Select Board Meeting

17
18 **Agenda Item 1, Citizens' Comments**

19
20 There were none.

21
22 **Agenda Item 2, Water Meter Request**

23
24 Julie said the \$100,000 quote they approved was the antenna part that connected to the register
25 and did not include the registers. If they wanted to change out the register, it was another \$48,000.
26 Julie said they went back and listened to the meeting and she and Jeff spoke with the salesman,
27 and he felt he was clear with the additional price. They can do the project without the registers
28 but it's not as neat and clean. Tim said it was exactly what they talked about at the meeting. Tim
29 wondered if they could give them a break. Julie said she thought \$48,000 was at a break. It also
30 did not include the large meters and there were only 4 that really need to be replaced. Julie said
31 they could get another quote. Lee understood there was a lot of thought and work done back and
32 forth with the vendor but looked at it as extortion and thought to send a message to them, they
33 should get another quote. Julie watched the recording and thought it was very clear. They have
34 dealt with Stiles for years and never had issues, but things change. Julie suggested sending the
35 video clip to the boss. She would do that and get a quote from another vendor.

36
37 **Agenda Item 3, Adjourn**

38
39 Tim moved to adjourn, and Lee seconded the motion. The motion carried, and the meeting was
40 adjourned at 9:42 p.m.