

1 **TOWN OF CHESTER**  
2 **SELECTBOARD MEETING**  
3 **October 18, 2023, Minutes**

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

6 **Staff Present:** Julie Hance, Town Manager, and Cathy Hasbrouck, Lister, at Town Hall; Preston  
7 Bristow, Zoning Administrator and Town Planner, and Susan Bailey, Recording Secretary, via  
8 Zoom.

9 **Visitors Present:** Mike Randzio, Adam Woodell, Tom Williams, Mary Jane Miles, Bill Lindsay,  
10 and Carol Theodore at Town Hall; and SAPA TV, Richard Poston, Kathy Poston, Tim Roper, Nick  
11 Boke, Matthew Gorsky, Melanie, Joy Slaughter, Jim Goodfellow, Susan Goodfellow, Jim, Jerene,  
12 Carol Theodore, and Chester Telegraph via Zoom.

13  
14 **Call to Order**

15  
16 Vice Chair Lee Gustafson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the pledge of allegiance.  
17 He welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked those in attendance to sign the sign-in sheet.

18  
19 **Agenda Item 1, Hearing to Issue Health Order 624 Potash Brook Road**

20  
21 Lee said the reason for issuing the order was as follows:

- 22 1. Lack of evidence of a working septic system.
- 23 2. No noticeable source of potable water.
- 24 3. Loose household trash not properly disposed of.
- 25 4. Evidence of trash burning.
- 26 5. Trash on embankment and stream.
- 27 6. Trash on neighboring properties originating from this property.
- 28 7. An exposed septic cover.

29  
30 Mike Randzio, the Health Officer, would speak to these. Lee swore in anyone who wished to  
31 offer testimony.

32  
33 Mike Randzio said earlier in May he was notified of a potential health hazard of a failed or  
34 improperly installed septic system at 624 Potash Brook Road. After an initial site visit, there were  
35 many concerns: trash everywhere, food products attracting animals, and hypodermic needles by  
36 the side of the road. He was unable to locate a septic system and the one thing that could be potable  
37 water was exposed and had floating vermin in it.

38  
39 Mike presented the following exhibits:

- 40 A. Service of process on September 28, 2023.
- 41 B. Administrator's Deed noting the date Ashley Griffin took possession of the property on  
42 September 20, 2011.
- 43 C. Lister's Card noting the acreage of .33 and water and sewer being noted below average.
- 44 D. Alternative sewage disposal system approved for the property.

- 1 E. A letter from the previous town manager, Susan Spaulding, discussing the septic system.
- 2 F. Two aqua checks from both the upper and lower river.
- 3 G. Letters to the Selectboard regarding septic concerns.
- 4 H. A separate letter regarding the septic.
- 5 I. A synopsis of the Selectboard minutes from 2001.
- 6 J. A letter from the Agency of Natural Resources regarding an application for a subdivision
- 7 permit saying that they would need to obtain a water supply and wastewater disposal permit
- 8 from the State.
- 9 K. Another letter from Susan Spaulding addressing some concerns about the septic.
- 10 L. A zoning permit for a dwelling on that residence.
- 11 M. A zoning application.
- 12 N. Mike's memo, as well as a statement about a phone call Mike had with Mr. Griffin.
- 13 O. A sworn statement from Jim Tornquist regarding his knowledge of the septic and vermin
- 14 floating in the potable water source.
- 15 P. Emails between Preston, as well as neighbors of Mr. Griffin noting on May 25<sup>th</sup> was when
- 16 Mike was first notified of an issue there.
- 17 Q. Two photos of the residence.
- 18 R. Photos of all the trash piled on and around the property.
- 19 S. Photo of the burn piles showing where you can see plastics and electronics and other
- 20 materials.
- 21 T. Two photos of the hypodermic needles they found on the property.
- 22 U. Photo of the improper storage of a car battery they found.
- 23 V. Photo of the uncovered of what they believe to be the potable water source.
- 24 W. Photos of trash in the river.

25  
26 Lee entertained a motion to accept the exhibits as presented by Officer Randzio and Heather moved  
27 and Peter seconded said motion. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

28  
29 Lee wanted to give Ashley Griffin an opportunity to speak and Julie noted that he had come in to  
30 speak with her today and Chief Williams and Officer Randzio were both present. Mr. Griffin didn't  
31 think he would attend and thought he may have a liaison but wasn't sure. Julie did not believe  
32 anyone was in attendance to speak on his behalf at this meeting and did not expect he would attend  
33 as large crowds made him nervous and he didn't think it would be a good setting for him. She  
34 noted they had a good conversation when he came in and spoke with them and thought they made  
35 it very clear what the issues were and what was necessary to resolve them. Julie thought he  
36 understood and let him know if the board chose to issue a health order tonight, it would be in  
37 writing, and he would receive notice via certified mail or by personal service by one of the officers.

38  
39 Lee opened the floor up to anyone who wanted to speak to the health order and/or the exhibits. He  
40 asked if anyone spoke, to keep it short if there was any new information.

41  
42 Adam Woodell, a detective with the Chester Police Department, spoke about his observations of  
43 the property. He didn't have the exact dates but remembered snow on the ground when they  
44 executed a search warrant, related to an investigation of a burglary, to search for stolen property.  
45 While there, he observed piles of trash outside the residence and what appeared to be human feces  
46 outside. On the floor, in front of a pellet stove, there was partially burned ash and pellets. The sink

1 was full of dirty dishes. The bathroom was filled with Super Nintendo games which showed it  
2 wasn't used for washing hands or water. He couldn't recall his specific observations of the toilet,  
3 but it wasn't the cleanest toilet and didn't recall seeing any water in it. Peter asked if anyone tested  
4 what was in the syringes and Detective Woodell said he did not.

5  
6 Chief Tom Williams has been at Mr. Griffin's residence numerous times for a variety of reasons.  
7 Chief Williams testified that he had seen some of the items in the pictures presented into evidence  
8 on his numerous visits to the residence, specifically lots of trash which existed on every side of the  
9 house in different quantities, piles, and different types of debris. Anything from plastic to burned  
10 plastic, to clothing and looked like a junkyard outside. Outside, in front of the house, were human  
11 feces, although he didn't test it, and was not aware of Mr. Griffin having a pet that could leave  
12 something that large. Outside around the house there were multiple bags of trash that almost looked  
13 like it was insulating the bottom of the house that was open without a foundation. He witnessed  
14 what he believed was his potable water source with the cover open and one of the times he visited,  
15 there was an animal floating in it. Because he was at the house for something else, he didn't pay  
16 attention to the animal floating in the water but did notice it. He has spoken to Mr. Griffin about it  
17 and told him he may get sick, and the water source would be contaminated. Mr. Griffin didn't say  
18 he saw the animal. The animal may have been a chipmunk. The chief noted the toilet was either  
19 full of garbage or feces that were backed up and recalled telling himself they weren't using that.  
20 He said out back there were one or two areas with burned items and debris in the river. He saw a  
21 large pile of syringes towards the beginning of the driveway. They did not test them.

22  
23 Lee asked if there were any other questions from the board and there were not.

24  
25 Lee swore in Mary Jane Miles of Potash Road who offered testimony. She lives on the road and  
26 passes by the house numerous times a day. She also does Green Up Day annually on the road. Two  
27 years ago, she called Julie to file a complaint because there was trash in his yard rolling into the  
28 brook and she was concerned about the environmental hazard. He had a pile of pellets in the bags  
29 and those bags were in the river and they collected them and pulled them out. It has been happening  
30 for years and with the house lying on the river and the recent flooding, the amount of property that  
31 used to be there is far less and the river is closer to the door and all the trash is going into the river.  
32 She was concerned about the environmental safety. She was concerned about not knowing where  
33 the septic was because from what she had read, the town had provided a tank, and it was not  
34 installed properly and there was some jerry rigging of it and a leach field and there wasn't a state  
35 permit for it. She said this had been going on for years.

36  
37 Lee thanked everyone who participated and said they would have a deliberative session at the end  
38 of the meeting.

39  
40 Lee swore in Carol Theodore who wanted to add her concerns. Her property is at the river where  
41 the Potash Brook dumps into it. When they were flooded in July, all the water from the Potash  
42 Brook went onto their land and the fact that there is regularly trash up there is a concern as she has  
43 grandchildren who play on the land and go into the river. She said it is an environmental issue.

44  
45 Lee asked if anyone else wanted to add anything and they did not.

1 Lee asked for a motion to close the hearing. Heather moved and Peter seconded to close the  
2 hearing. There was no discussion. A vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

3  
4 **Agenda Item 2, Additions or Deletions to the Agenda**

5  
6 Lee asked if anything needed to be added or removed and it did not.

7  
8 **Agenda Item 3, Approve Minutes from the September 20, 2023 Selectboard Meeting**

9 Heather moved and Arianna seconded a motion to approve the September 20<sup>th</sup> minutes. There were  
10 no changes. A vote was taken, and the minutes were approved, as written.

11 **Agenda Item 4, Citizens Comments/Answers from Previous Meeting**

12 Mr. Morales, Public Information Officer, with the Small Business Administration, came to the  
13 meeting for multiple reasons. They are still in the field doing interviews and he was glad the media  
14 was present at the meeting because they try to reach as many people as possible and the people  
15 affected. They don't only assist businesses, but also homeowners and non-profit organizations.  
16 The deadline to apply with the SBA is October 31<sup>st</sup>. That is the second extension and he thought  
17 it would be the last extension granted. FEMA's deadline is the same date. All of it was related to  
18 the floods between July 7<sup>th</sup> and July 21<sup>st</sup>. If someone suffered damage before or after those dates,  
19 they don't qualify and cannot apply. He had multiple fliers with him, which he presented to the  
20 board members. They are doing the most board meetings they can because they understand they  
21 are a melting pot across the United States and some people in Vermont from different cities, towns,  
22 or counties, may be living there. He has Rutland, Windham, Windsor, and he has worked in  
23 Washington County, and Montpelier and has seen everything. They visit states in the south and  
24 north with hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods. He is from Puerto Rico and knows about disasters  
25 and that's why they chose him to speak. He knew his accent sounded different as he's not from  
26 Vermont. They visit because people get discouraged with the SBA and he doesn't only distribute  
27 fliers but explains and brings analysis of how people can take advantage of the programs and the  
28 differences between SBA, USDA, and FEMA. They have their research partner and he explained  
29 that. He also distributed a USDA flier which has a part for rural development, farmers, and public  
30 assistance. They also have funds for business repairs and homeowner repairs, loans, and grants.  
31 FEMA also has public assistance for roads, bridges, and grants for homeowners or renters. They  
32 don't have funds for businesses, but generally, SBA always recommends homeowners and  
33 businesses register with FEMA always. He said businesses need to register with FEMA because  
34 the SBA needs that registration number, but FEMA refers them to the SBA and that was important  
35 to know. For homeowners and renters, when FEMA denies someone, they refer them to SBA and  
36 people get discouraged because they are low interest loans from the federal government. The  
37 money comes from the taxes, the same as the money for FEMA. He always tells them even if they  
38 don't qualify or want it, to complete the procedure and they don't have to accept it at the end of  
39 the day, but they have nothing to lose. If they are denied by FEMA and then are denied by the  
40 SBA, SBA may refer them back to FEMA who may give them all the other disaster assistance,  
41 like grants. He knows it is a lot of procedures, but the federal agencies requires so much because  
42 of things in the past. For financial verification, they want to know if survivors can pay a loan so  
43 sometimes, they give all kinds of resources if they are denied by SBA too. Some people use the  
44 declaration letter from SBA and if they are not satisfied with the funds received from FEMA, they  
45 can use the declaration letter to attach to the FEMA letter in hopes of receiving more help, but it

1 is not guaranteed. Other people use the funds while waiting for insurance. The SBA has a one-year  
2 deferment with lower interest rates. The purpose is so people can rebuild quicker and faster because  
3 they are staying with friends or family. It is a long-term recovery. They can choose the term of  
4 repayment between 7 and 30 years and he has seen payments as little as \$20.00. He always  
5 recommends register with FEMA and SBA and on the same day apply with USDA and if you have  
6 insurance too, to claim that. The SBA has BRCs (Business Recovery Center) and DRCs (Disaster  
7 Recovery Center) are from FEMA but SBA works there too. They have a DRC in Ludlow on the  
8 main street, and they recommend people go there to apply instead of doing it online. The 800  
9 number on the flyer can answer questions and provide dates for the centers because they are always  
10 moving or closing depending on the number of visits, so it's important to know. They can provide  
11 status of applications. He provided a flyer for the Small Business Development Center, which has  
12 business advisors and is more for businesses, and they have research partners for women and  
13 veterans. They know about marketing, business plans, and are a good resource for businesses. All  
14 the counties have business advisors. The business advisor in Springfield is very helpful for  
15 Windsor County and her contact information and name can be found on the website,  
16 <https://www.sba.gov/local-assistance> where people can find the closest office or center for  
17 research partners in all of Vermont or the United States. He also had a flyer for how to prepare for  
18 a natural disaster, among the fliers he had with him. He closed by saying their programs are for  
19 physical damage and infrastructure, inventory, and equipment for homeowners, businesses, and  
20 non-profit organizations, and economic damages for businesses. The deadline of October 31<sup>st</sup> is  
21 for physical damage but the deadline for economic damages is April 15, 2024, which covers  
22 operating expenses and payroll to keep businesses operating. The other program is for property  
23 damage for clothing, furniture, and for cars. He offered to answer any questions. Lee thanked Mr.  
24 Morales and asked how they would contact FEMA online and he said by visiting  
25 <https://www.fema.gov/>.

## 26 **Agenda Item 5, Old Business**

27  
28 Report given by the Town Manager, Julie Hance:

### 29 Library Staff Benefits

30 The subcommittee meeting to look at the staff's benefits is scheduled for tomorrow. Julie, Arianna,  
31 and Heather will meet with two of the trustees at the library to start a discussion.  
32  
33

### 34 Wayfinding Project

35 It is well underway. They had their first kickoff meeting and sign fabrication will begin soon. They  
36 plan to do installation when the ground thaws first thing in the spring to complete the project. Lee  
37 asked if they had any cooperation from the railroad for Depot Street. Julie said they had not, and  
38 she had reached out to her contact with the state. At this point, she would look at altering the  
39 project so the rail would not be involved. She will update the board when they decide.  
40

### 41 Academy Work

42 Julie will be working with John Clark, Carla Westine, and Arianna and anyone else who is  
43 interested in being part of the discussion. They will begin discussions about the restoration and  
44 long-term purpose of the Academy Building. It is housed primarily by the Historical Society and  
45 the intent was for them to remain there. Julie thought there may be space in the building for other  
46 things, which the Historical Society is open to. Julie said anyone who is interested in being part of

1 the discussion should reach out to her.

2  
3 Municipal Energy Grant

4 It is a three-phase grant program and in the first round, municipalities were able to receive \$4,000  
5 which could be used for energy meetings or ADA assessments. They opted to have an ADA  
6 assessment done for both the Library and Academy Building. They have both come back,  
7 surprisingly, with minimal things necessary to make them fully ADA accessible. The other thing  
8 they identified was if they want the Academy open year-round and fully used, ADA accessibility  
9 to the second floor is necessary. They were able to find an easy way to do it with a code compliant  
10 lift in the building. Phase two is where they will come in and do energy audits. They have been  
11 approved for three energy audits, which will include the Library, the Academy Building, and Town  
12 Hall. The work will be scheduled in the next few weeks. All this work builds up to phase three  
13 which is funding. Each municipality is eligible to apply for up to \$500,000 with no match that can  
14 be used to implement. 20% of the money can be used for ADA projects that were identified in the  
15 assessment and the rest can be used for addressing needs identified in the energy audits. Julie  
16 anticipated most of the money would be used between the Library and Academy Building. There  
17 may be things at Town Hall that show up in the audit. There are two rounds of library funds that  
18 they are still writing the grant guidance on, and both are for capital improvements to municipal  
19 libraries, so Julie is waiting to see what they will allow so they can capitalize on all three grants,  
20 which are waiting to be released.

21  
22 Citizen Advisory Committee

23 Peter attended the last meeting. They are getting their feet under them and coming up with some  
24 great ideas. They will be releasing a community survey in the next couple of weeks and will attend  
25 the November 15<sup>th</sup> Selectboard meeting to provide an update and speak about things they are doing  
26 and initiatives they would like to take on.

27  
28 Flood Recovery

29 Town-wide, they are close to 90% to 95% at this point, with the only projects remaining, which  
30 are large projects, and are culvert upsizing and debris removal. They have 18 months to complete  
31 them and will work on them over the next year. The first projects have been submitted for  
32 reimbursement and she hoped their turnaround would be quick, as it was during Irene. Julie  
33 expected the same this time. Without culvert upsizing, they are about \$1.1 million in damages.

34  
35 Disaster Response

36 They have been speaking internally about disaster response as a community and about things they  
37 can do to improve their response. They don't do well at communicating with the public so they are  
38 exploring things they can do to make improvements. Julie said they would present at the next  
39 meeting and discuss some of their initiatives they will work on to make sure the board is  
40 comfortable with the direction they are heading.

41  
42 Donation

43 As Julie had discussed before, they had a very large donation given to the Public Safety Building.  
44 A gentleman in town, in memory of his wife and brother, has donated a very large wooden and  
45 metal carport structure that will cover all the cruisers at the Public Safety Building. It is about a  
46 \$35,000 donation and they will build it. It will go before the Development Review Board on

1 November 2<sup>nd</sup> to receive permitting. The nice thing about it is when the cruisers are parked there  
2 during the winter months, they will not need to sit and idle. It will produce savings and have  
3 positive environmental impacts.

#### 4 Municipal Technical Assistance

5 This is a relatively new program the governor opened last year. It was initially designed for the  
6 small towns, like Baltimore and Andover, for assistance in grant writing and community projects,  
7 and primarily federal grants. The idea behind it was that small communities don't have access to  
8 federal funds because the grants are difficult to write and manage. A pot of money allocated for  
9 that has not been spent so they have opened it to the next tier of municipalities who have been  
10 impacted by the flood and Chester is eligible. Julie doesn't usually reach out for municipal grant  
11 help and is often the one helping but she wanted to take them up on their offer if the board agreed.  
12 She has 9 grants due by January 15<sup>th</sup>, so she wanted them to check the box that they were okay  
13 with it. There is no financial commitment from Chester. Lee and Arianna thought it sounded great.  
14 Julie would use it for a federal grant coming up. The Vermont Outdoor Economic Collaborative  
15 Grants had opened, and they have never had a project for it, but she had been speaking with Matt  
16 McCarthy and Steve and thought it would be great to use it for a master plan, much like the Village  
17 Center master plan that could be implemented and not one that sits on a shelf, for recreation in  
18 Chester. It would include trails, community center discussion, mountain biking trails, river walks,  
19 and how it looked for Chester as a community, and would be very community driven, much like  
20 the Village Center master plan. They would bring in a consultant who would guide it and create a  
21 plan for recreation and a plan that bridges recreation and economic growth of the town. It is a big  
22 thing in the state since COVID. She would proceed down that path unless someone had strong  
23 objections and the application would come before the board in December. Lee and Peter, both said  
24 it sounded good. Peter said it pulled everything together.

25  
26  
27 Bill Lindsay wanted an update on the solar. Julie said communication moved at a snail's pace,  
28 slower than she had ever seen. It literally took 3 weeks to receive a response to emails. Their  
29 appraisal came in very close to Chester's appraisal. Her email was whether they could discuss and  
30 negotiate the numbers. Arne knew a gentleman in town who had done this for a living and Julie  
31 was seeking his help developing the ROI and the math behind it. Lee will be a part of the  
32 conversation and how they determine the financial part of it and their return on it. Heather asked  
33 Julie if it could be included on a November agenda for discussion. Bill Lindsay wondered if they  
34 could invite them to a meeting and reverse the pressure that was applied when they first sold the  
35 system. Lee said the company that installed the system sold it and it was two separate companies.  
36 The company that built it can't get information from the current owners either, so it just wasn't  
37 Chester. Julie didn't think the current owners were super excited to sell it to them either.

#### 38 **Agenda Item 6, Short Term Rental; continued discussion re next steps**

39  
40  
41 It was an opportunity to discuss what they had from the previous meeting. Arne, who was absent,  
42 told Lee he wanted to be part of the discussion. Lee asked for anything they wanted to discuss.  
43 Peter wanted more data, which Preston had. Preston shared a registration update. Preston said  
44 Grancicus shares monthly scrubbing reports, and they were following 68 properties. Only 32 of  
45 them had registered, which was disappointing. He noted they send a first letter and give them 30  
46 days to respond. There were 15 first letters that had gone out which had not reached the 30-day

1 period. For those who didn't respond, they sent out 21 second letters which were warning letters  
2 telling them they were in violation and giving them another 30 days to reply and if they don't, they  
3 will receive a notice of violation. Preston said it was still somewhat surprising that out of the  
4 registrations received thus far, a third were hosted. He thought the more stubborn people who had  
5 not yet replied were likely unhosted. Heather thought the joint meeting went well.

6  
7 Mary Jane Miles asked why the permits were only good until May of 2024 and asked if the fee  
8 was for one year or a half year. Preston said they decided, for administrative reasons, to do it every  
9 April. The ordinance went into effect, so they felt they were getting their money's worth. Mary  
10 Jane asked if it was a year from when you registered and Preston said no, because it was too  
11 complicated to do it that way.

12  
13 Julie noted that short-term rentals would be included in the next agenda.

### 14 **Agenda Item 7, Municipal Planning Grant Approval**

15 Julie is writing a municipal planning grant to hire a consultant who will come in and do a feasibility  
16 study and implantation plan to consider the potential development of town land where the gravel  
17 pit and tanker are. It would look at that property in addition to some of the school land to consider  
18 the pros and cons of potentially developing the area for some level of housing. The reason that  
19 section was chosen was it seemed the most competitive because it's 100% town owned, easily  
20 accessible to town water and sewer, and both parcels of land are public lands, as the school land  
21 is also public land. If they receive funding, the Housing Commission is who would select and  
22 work with a consultant to develop a plan and make connections. It would be designed as an  
23 implementation plan giving guidance. It would look at things like access and topography and  
24 identify ways housing could be done there. It is an early step one. Peter asked if Julie had spoken  
25 with the high school and Julie said she had a message with Lauren and she would have an answer  
26 before the application was submitted. Peter thought it would be excellent to do both parcels  
27 together and Julie agreed. Peter offered to speak to the school board to incentivize it and Julie  
28 suggested they begin with the Superintendent, as she didn't want to circumvent her. Lee asked  
29 who owned the property the high school is on, and Julie said the high school does, or in other  
30 words, the taxpayers. Lee asked if the grant would identify who owns what and Julie said  
31 absolutely. Julie pointed out it wasn't committing the high school to anything and only considering  
32 available options. Julie said the best access to the town land is through the school's land. Peter said  
33 the only curse for that property is Act 250. Julie noted all they talk about is housing so she would  
34 not expect that Act 250 would cause an issue.

35 Lee asked if anyone had concerns about Julie proceeding with the application.

36 Susan Goodfellow said she had a comment from earlier, but it took her a while to figure out how  
37 to raise her hand on Zoom. They attended the Planning Board meeting the other night and said it  
38 is terrific all the work they are doing. One thought she had was regarding parking because it was  
39 mentioned that reducing the amount of parking was being considered. She wondered if the impact  
40 of Airbnb would be evaluated once they decided how much it would be allowed in town to make  
41 sure there was adequate parking.

42 Back to the municipal planning grant, Lee asked if there were any concerns with Julie moving  
43 forward and the Board had none. They signed the related document.

44



1 **Agenda Item 8, Sign Wastewater Loan Documents**

2 Julie said they are eligible to receive and have been approved through the grant for another \$24,000  
3 to accomplish the camera work that is needed. It is at a 50% subsidy, so the repayment would be  
4 \$12,000 of it and would all be lumped into the loan they had signed. Peter asked if they had  
5 developed a map yet. Julie hadn't seen the document but said Naomi was waiting for all the camera  
6 work. Julie was sure something had been developed but she hadn't seen anything yet but could ask  
7 and connect with the members if they wished. Both Peter and Lee wanted to see that information.  
8 Julie would ask for what she had to date. Peter hoped it included the work they did on the water  
9 because the digital part was helpful.

10 Peter moved and Arianna seconded a motion to authorize Lee as Chair to sign a loan agreement  
11 with the Vermont State Revolving Fund for \$102,100. A vote was taken, and the motion carried  
12 unanimously. Lee signed the document.

13 Peter moved and Arianna seconded a motion for the resolution and certificate of general obligation  
14 from the Vermont Clean Water State Revolving Fund and the General Obligation note for  
15 \$102,100. An oral vote was not taken, but the three members present signed.

16 **Agenda Item 9, Financial Review: Q3**

17 They are holding well. A couple of departments are over but, for the most part, they are at 75% to  
18 80% combined for the municipal budget. The ambulance department is over, but that was  
19 anticipated because they hired another person. They are finding the increased revenue is helping.  
20 They will meet the benchmark and hopefully exceed now that they can bill at the advanced rate.  
21 A lot of conversations are taking place about how that department can do the most for the  
22 community while keeping it financially feasible and reasonable for the town. Prices are increasing  
23 dramatically. There is a group advocating at the congressional level. The Medicare reimbursement  
24 rate has not changed since the 80s. Costs are increasing but the Medicare reimbursement rate has  
25 not increased since 1982. There is a group that will testify in Congress soon trying to get the  
26 Medicare reimbursement rates increased. It won't happen overnight, but the conversations need to  
27 happen because it's killing ambulance services not being able to get reimbursed fully and is really  
28 starting to show now that costs are rising considerably. There are groups having discussions  
29 regionally. The conversation up north is very different than the conversation in the southern part  
30 of the state, which is different than that in the mid part of the state. No answers, but lots of  
31 conversation and an understanding that they need to be creative and it's an expensive service that  
32 is needed. All of Chester's police officers are certified first responders so they can make all their  
33 calls now, except when it's a paramedic intercept. They are being creative internally to get them  
34 covered. Their temporary full-time person, Kate Martins, who they have until May is an ambulance  
35 staff currently enrolled in the aide program. She is Mike's second at the station in terms of  
36 coverage. They now have full-time coverage 7 days per week with those staff. Having her until  
37 May provides time for internal conversations about what is the next best step. They are doing a lot  
38 of community classes with CPR, AED training, Stop the Bleed, and one on one with seniors getting  
39 them hooked up for Life Alert, and those types of things. They have a presence in the community  
40 and people are appreciative. They are starting to have conversations at the next level working with  
41 the hospital on other things they can do and that hopefully will bring in some potential funding.

42 Julie said all departments are looking good and a silver lining of the flood would be that any  
43 expense related to the flood has been pulled out of the general fund and is sitting in a flood fund  
44 like was done for Irene. It is a separate account, so it doesn't hit the general fund. The general fund

1 is showing they have 3 months of highway labor. It will get reimbursed under flood expense which  
2 will help. They are looking good now. Peter said flood expenses for sewer and water didn't appear  
3 to be out. Julie said that water and sewer only had 3 weeks that was designated to flood recovery.  
4 Julie said under the flood fund set up, there are categories for highway, water, and one for sewer.  
5 Peter said those were the two departments with lots hanging over them and Julie agreed. Lee asked  
6 if any of Julie's time or administrative staff time would go into it. Julie said they have an  
7 application called Cat-Z and she keeps track on a spreadsheet of her time directly spent with FEMA  
8 and they are very critical of it. On the Cat-Z, you can apply for up to 5% of your total flood costs.  
9 For \$1,000,000, they could potentially receive \$50,000 of Julie's time reimbursed. Julie said after  
10 Irene, FEMA did the project developments, and they now must do them in FEMA's portal. It is  
11 more time consuming but it's all time they can receive reimbursement for. The other reason for  
12 pulling the expenses out is they will cross years and would mess '23 and '24 budgets up.

13 **Agenda Item 10, Liquor License: Pizza Stone 3<sup>rd</sup> Class**

14 Julie noted that the board doesn't sign the new licenses and only votes on their approval. Heather  
15 moved and Peter seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion was approved  
16 unanimously.

17 **Agenda Item 11, Errors & Omissions; Listers**

18 There were two changes, which were both acreage changes. One is going from a value of \$0 to a  
19 value of \$44,000, which was a good addition and the other was going from \$151,500 to \$145,900,  
20 so a slight decrease. The members signed. Peter said they should give a big thanks to Cathy. Julie  
21 said that Cathy was a huge addition to their team on all levels.

22 **Agenda Item 12, New Business/Next Agenda**

23 For the November 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, they have traffic ordinance, disaster response initiative, budget,  
24 public safety, development, loan documents, water/sewer rates increase, short-term rentals, and  
25 the Andover assessment. Lee asked if anyone had anything to add to that agenda. Julie mentioned  
26 on the budget, much like they had done the year before, each of the four meetings, a different  
27 department head for the town will attend and talk about the year and their anticipations for the  
28 coming year and a draft of their budget. It will provide an opportunity for discussion. Lee asked if  
29 they wanted to add solar to the agenda and he said it would probably be closer to the 15<sup>th</sup>. Heather  
30 wasn't asking for it to be on specifically but wanted it on as soon as they had the information to  
31 get an update. Julie said including it in the agenda gave her a target date.

32 **Agenda Item 13, Deliberative Session re: Health Order**

33 Peter moved to go into deliberative session and invited Mike Randzio and Julie Hance and Heather  
34 seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

35 Julie would put those on Zoom in the waiting room so Arianna could join the executive session.

36 (The Board entered deliberative session at 7:53 p.m.)

37 Heather moved and Peter seconded a motion to exit deliberative session at 8:10 p.m. The motion  
38 carried.

39 (The Board exited deliberative session at 8:10 p.m.)

40

**Agenda Item 13, Adjourn**

- 1
- 2 Peter moved and Arianna seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion carried, and the meeting was
- 3 adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

DRAFT