

TOWN OF CHESTER  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

January 16, 2019  
Minutes

PRESENT: Arne Jonynas; Heather Chase; Ben Whalen; Dan Cote; Lee Gustafson;  
David Pisha

VISITORS: Julie Hance, Shawn Cunningham; Matt Wilson; Frank Bidwell; Jason  
Keener; Claudio Veliz; Lynn Russell; William Lindsay; Mary Bittner;  
Jane Davis; Lillian Willis; Graham Kennedy; Darcy Noble; Derek  
Suursoo; Charles Giurtino; Ed Grossman; Barre Pinske; Jean Hancock

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairman Jonynas.

WATER & SEWER COMMISSIONERS MEETING

1. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

There were no citizen's comments.

2. APPROVE WATER & SEWER DRAFT BUDGET:

A motion was made by Heather Chase to approve the 2019 Water Department Budget.  
Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Dan Cote to approve the 2019 Sewer Department Budget.  
Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed.

3. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to Adjourn. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The  
motion passed.

SPECIAL SELECTBOARD MEETING

The meeting started at 6:35 p.m. There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

1. APPROVE MINUTES:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the minutes of the January 2, 2019  
Selectboard meeting. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2019 Special Selectboard meeting. Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed.

2. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

Claudio Veliz asked if there were any remaining questions regarding the remaining invoice for the Feasibility Study. This invoice was submitted in November 2018. The work was completed early in 2018 but was not submitted until after the project had closed out. Arne Jonynas stated that he has no questions and does not feel that there should be extensive discussion because this is not an agenda item. He indicated that they would speak with the Town Manager about this. Claudio Veliz stated that all other invoices have been paid timely, but this one has not. Arne Jonynas stated that they will look into this matter.

3. POPPLE DUNGEON BRIDGE:

Jason Keener was present from VHB to discuss some changes to the bridge project. A power point presentation was given which is attached to these minutes. Jason Keener stated that the project is funded through the Municipal Assistance Bureau totaling \$600,000 with a 20% match.

Jason Keener stated that the span has increased to a 45' span which needs a pre-cast structure verses cast in place. The request brings the project to \$955,000. He stated that he is here to discuss some changes that could be made to the project. These include using spread footings vs. pile driven footings. In addition, there is the possibility of closing the road instead of a temporary bridge.

Jason Keener stated that ideal circumstances would be pile driven footings. However, this is more expensive. He stated that the borings indicate dense glacier tills that will cause a problem for pile driven footings. Risks to driving the piles include meeting a refusal which does not allow the piles to be driven. There could also be damage to the piles which can get expensive. Lee Gustafson questioned and confirmed that the piles provide both vertical and horizontal support. Jason Keener stated that the piles need to be driven 60 feet below stream bed. He also stated that pile driving is the preferred alternative because it provides the highest level of protection against scour. However, they are more expensive. Vtrans has recommended that if the pile driving is preferred, there is pre-drilling that would be done to determine if there are refusals. This does come at a cost. Jason Keener stated that Graham Kennedy has indicated that he prefers pile driven footings as well.

An alternative to pile driving would be to install spread footings. These would be installed 6 feet below the stream bed. This depth would help prevent scour. A 3' diameter stone would be used to support the stream bank and stream bed. Jason Keener also stated that a 17' culvert is being replaced with a 45' bridge. This will prevent plugging of the opening which should reduce scour as well. The difference in the price is approximately \$130,000. Lee questioned the schedule. Jason Kenner noted that the pile

driving is faster. With a driven pile substructure, the road would be closed 21 days. Cast in place spread footings would be approximately 28 days. Jason Keener indicated that both options have the same life span which is approximately 75 years.

Jason Keener stated that increase in cost is due to the need to predrill for the piles as well as the additional 5 feet. This increase in length is due the hydraulic study requiring a larger opening. This also includes the placement of a temporary bridge so that there is no road closure.

Heather Chase asked David Pisha to speak with Windham and Londonderry regarding mutual aid and how long of a response they would have. Graham Kennedy stated that Dan Cook gave his opinion that it would be easier and quicker for Chester to respond via Howard Hill Road. Matt Wilson agreed. Ben Whalen noted that this is a 30 minute response time. The Board also agreed that they need to confirm total project cost to include the engineering costs. Shawn Cunningham questioned the timing of the project. Jason Keener stated that they are pushing for 2019 construction.

Graham Kennedy stated that the town completed Peck Bridge for a few hundred thousand less then this is being estimated before. He stated that Peck Bridge was 90 feet, single span, with pile driven footings, higher stem walls and was \$655,000. Jason Keener stated that the cost of this bridge is much higher than was anticipated.

Heather Chase stated that she would like to go with the cheapest option but wants to make an informed decision. She also stated that she would like the reports from Fire and Ambulance to be written. Lee Gustafson stated that he would like the paving schedule for Route 11 so that there is not too much construction at one time.

Graham Kennedy stated that the driven piles are preferred, but they are not worth the extra money at this time. The Board agreed that they are comfortable with spread footings to save the money. The spread footings are now 6 foot below stream bed vs the historical 3 foot. The bridges are now designed to be bank full width as well.

#### 4. ASSET MANAGEMENT GRANT APPLICATION:

Julie Hance requested permission to submit an application for the Asset Management Grant which has just opened up. There is additional money that needs to be spent and the timeline for submittal is very quick. Julie Hance stated that the grant is 100% funding with no match required from the town. The money would be used to complete and inventory and surveyed location map of the hydrant system. This will include GPS locations for the infrastructure. The project will also include creating a Capital financing plan for the water system infrastructure. Jeff has been looking for money to create a digital database with gps coordinates for the water/sewer lines, hydrants, hookups, service lines, etc. This would be a way to get that started and would cost no money to the town.

The Selectboard signed the Grant Application for submission.

5. REVIEW DRAFT 2019 TOWN WARNING:

The Board reviewed the Town Warning. Arne Jonynas read the articles that the Board needs to address.

Article 6: Julie Hance explained that the Board should firm up the policy so that it is available to answer questions. However, it cannot be approved until after the article is voted. William Lindsay asked the Board to review special funds that the town is holding. He is concerned about the town holding a potential \$750,000. Derek Suursoo asked for confirmation that the article could be amended from the floor. Julie Hance confirmed. He also expressed his concern about the potential size of the fund. Heather Chase stated that the auditors have suggested the creation of a Reserve Fund for several years and the industry standard is holding 3 months of the budget. She stated that she is fine with reducing the amount, but she does want the Fund established. Derek Suursoo stated that he is concerned about the auditors giving advice and then auditing. David Pisha stated that the auditors did not set up our financial system, it was set up by NEMRC and the town.

Lee Gustafson questioned the special appropriations and where that money shows. David Pisha explained that the amounts are added to the budget and raised through the taxes. The Board asked Julie Hance to determine a value for the Gassetts Grange exemption which is article 9.

William Lindsay asked for clarification of the paving article. It was clarified that the paving for Green Mountain Turnpike is only for the already paved portion.

6. REVIEW RESERVE FUND POLICY:

The Board discussed the Reserve Fund Policy. Julie Hance reminded the Board that they are not approving this Policy at this time. The Board agreed to change the last paragraph to read that the Fund “can” be instead of “will” be funded to 50%. Heather Chase also suggested that the policy state “up to 50%”. Ben Whalen asked if the Board can add language that when the fund exceeds the 25%, a portion be given back to the taxpayers.

Lee Gustafson stated that he would prefer to see a limit less than 25%. He also questioned if the small funds with balances can be moved into the reserve fund. Lee Gustafson suggested that the fund be set at 10%. Discussion ensued regarding the philosophy behind the Reserve Fund Policy. There should be language added allowing other ways to appropriate money to this fund. Derek Suursoo mentioned the retained FEMA funding which could be transferred into the Reserve Fund.

Julie Hance will rework the policy to address the issues raised this evening.

7. APPROVE GENERAL FUND BUDGET:

David Pisha stated that he has added the \$6,000 requested for Landscaping. The budget now shows an increase of \$49,767.23.

Matt Wilson stated that money was taken out of the uniform line in the Fire Department. He stated that this money is not paying for Class A uniforms. This line is paying for the garments that go underneath the turnout gear. He indicated that this line was decreased in previous years and he would like it to be increased again. The polo shirts are worn when the firefighters attend trainings. Each firefighter is given 2 polo shirts per year and there are 22 members. Matt Wilson stated that his budget has been dropped dramatically this year.

Heather Chase stated that she understands that these are hard decisions to live with. She stated that the Board will be going to the voters soon for a new building and she would like this budget as low as possible. Arne Jonynas stated that the Fire Department is also receiving a large amount of money through the Capital Budget as well. Matt Wilson stated that he agrees with the Board's position but was surprised that there was an additional \$7,500 taken as well. He asked that \$1,000 be added back to the uniform line.

Ben Whalen stated that the Capital Plan is showing no emergency equipment being funded starting in 2020. David Pisha stated that there was discussion relative to this not being paid out of capital, but in the budget instead. Arne Jonynas stated this was part of one conversation but was not a Board decision. He further stated that there needs to be conversation further about what items belong in the Capital Plan and what items do not.

The Board discussed the Capital Plan. David Pisha stated that 2019 will show a deficit situation. However, he is confident that this will be underspent so should balance. David Pisha also noted that the General Fund contribution hits its peak in 2023 but then declines after that. The same situation applies to the Public Works Transfer.

Arne Jonynas stated that the Board is going to need to review replacement/purchasing schedules in the future. He expressed his concerns regarding the future of the Capital Plan and Bond Plan.

Derek Suursoo stated that he has met with David Pisha and reviewed the Capital Plan and Bond Plan and feels that they are accurate. He gave his opinion that if the town continues with this Plan there will be a potential 8 cent rise over the next 5 years.

Ben Whalen questioned the \$40,000 for the pickup in Capital. He stated that he thought the Board approved \$35,000. David Pisha stated that this is for a second pickup truck. Ben Whalen stated that he is okay with the 2019 Capital Plan but is not agreement with the future years.

A motion was made by Heather Chase to approve a budget in the amount of \$3,087,586.86 to be collected for 2019 taxes. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed with Dan Cote voting in the negative.

8. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA:

The next meeting has been scheduled for January 18 at 3:00 p.m. to sign the Warning.

David Pisha stated that People's Bank would like to come present to the Board at a future meeting. The Board agreed to have them come to the February 20 meeting.

Lee Gustafson stated that the Contract for the new building should be on the February 6 agenda.

Arne Jonynas asked for an update on the gravel project. David Pisha stated that there was a meeting with Jim Goss and Naomi Johnson to discuss the boundaries of the project. Arne Jonynas asked that this be an agenda item for the next meeting.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to enter Executive Session to discuss the purchase of a town right of way to the land off of Route 103. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

The Board entered Executive Session at 8:45 p.m.

A motion was made by Heather Chase to exit Executive Session at 9:01 p.m. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

10. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to adjourn. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Julie Hance  
Secretary of the Select Board

Ben Whalen  
Clerk of the Selectboard