

TOWN OF CHESTER
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

March 2, 2016
Minutes

PRESENT: John DeBenedetti; Heather Chase; Arne Jonynas; Ben Whalen; Dan Cote; David Pisha

VISITORS: Julie Hance; Shawn Cunningham; Cynthia Prairie; Rick Paterno; Robert Pelletier; Harry Goodell; Jack Cable; Donna Allen; Robert Miller; Frank Bidwell; Derek Suursoo; Wanda Purdy; Gary King; Kelly Arrison; Marilyn Mahusky; Claudio Veliz; David Nanfeldt; Suzy Forlie; Troy Rietta

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by David Pisha.

1. SELECTBOARD ORGANIZATION:

David Pisha accepted nominations for Chairman. Dan Cote nominated John DeBenedetti as Chairman. Seconded by Heather Chase. The nomination passed.

John DeBenedetti welcomed the new members of the Board, Ben Whalen and Dan Cote. He thanked Tom Bock and William Lindsay for their years of service.

John DeBenedetti then accepted nominations for Vice Chairman. Heather Chase nominated Arne Jonynas as Vice Chairman. Ben Whalen seconded. The nomination passed.

John DeBenedetti then accepted nominations for Secretary to the Selectboard. Ben Whalen nominated Heather Chase as Clerk to the Selectboard. The nomination passed.

A motion was made by Arne Jonynas to accept the Roberts Rules for Small Boards. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed.

There were no additions to the Agenda. Item 13 was deleted from the agenda.

2. APPROVE MINUTES:

February 17, 2016:

A motion was made by Heather Chase to approve the February 17, 2016 minutes of the Chester Selectboard meeting. Seconded by Arne Jonynas. The motion passed.

3. APPROVE MINUTES:

February 17, 2016:

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to approve the February 17, 2016 minutes of the Chester Water/Sewer Commissioners meeting. Seconded by Arne Jonynas. The motion passed.

4. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

Jack Cable stated that he is resigning his position as Town Auditor. There needs to be 3 Auditors for the town. Therefore, there will need to be one Auditor appointed. Heather Chase thanked him for his years of service.

Jack Cable stated that he was upset by the discussions at Town Meeting for small amounts of money for the Rod & Gun Club and the Softball Field. He also stated that he would like to have the list of delinquent tax payers published in the Town Report.

Marilyn Mahusky questioned the process for the collection of delinquent taxes. David Pisha explained the process and policy used by the town. Dan Cote stated that he would like to see the delinquent tax list. Ben Whalen stated that he does not want to see shame brought onto the back tax payers.

Suzy Forlie questioned when the conditions assessment for town hall will be done. David Pisha stated that Tom Keefe will be doing the assessment in April.

Frank Bidwel asked that the Old Business list be made available for the public at the meetings.

Gary King commended the Recreation Department for this year's Winter Carnival. He stated that he would like to see the Winter Carnival promoted and expanded in future years.

5. OLD BUSINESS:

Master Plan: David Pisha stated that the grant was approved. Public dialogue and focus groups will be created with the help of a consultant. This will hopefully take place throughout the summer. Julie explained the next steps to the process which include receiving the Grant Agreement, preparing the Request for Proposal and soliciting bids.

Clean Water Act: David Pisha gave an overview of the local roads meeting relating to the dirt road erosion. He stated that road compaction is an important element to achieving the desired goals.

Water Project: David Pisha explained that the town is now working with ACT 250 on obtaining the permitting for the tank location. This will be forthcoming soon.

Yosemite Fire Station: David Pisha stated that the fire vehicles at Yosemite are in the process of being assessed. Frank Bidwell questioned if the Yosemite Fire House is up for sale. The general consensus is that it is. It was clarified that the contents are owned between the Yosemite Engine

Company and the Town. Discussion ensued. Harry Goodell stated that the Chester Historical Society owns the building but does not want it. Frank Bidwell questioned what is going to happen with this building. John DeBenedetti stated that the question should be asked of the Historical Society. Discussion ensued further as to the possibility of it being given to the town. Harry Goodell stated that this is a matter before the Executive Board of the Historical Society. Ben Whalen requested that a member of the Historical Society come to the next meeting to discuss their intention with the building.

Solar Farm: David Pisha stated that the Selectboard has been provided with a chart showing the solar farm revenues to date. He also stated that the rent check should be received shortly.

Arne Jonynas questioned if the railroad insurance issue has been resolved. David Pisha stated that he will follow up with VLCT.

6. APPOINTMENTS OF TOWN OFFICES:

John DeBenedetti read the List of Appointments to be made. A motion was made by Heather Chase to appoint the members of the list as read. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

The list of appointments are attached to these minutes.

A letter was received from Sarah Purdy for the position of Lister. It was read into the record by John DeBenedetti.

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to appoint Sarah Purdy to the Lister Board for a term of one year. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

7. PAPER OF RECORD:

John DeBenedetti stated that it is time to appoint the Newspaper of Record. John DeBenedetti disclosed that his business does do advertising with the Vermont Journal and he does framing for the business. There were no objections to his remaining on the board for this discussion.

Ben Whalen questioned how many people the Chester Telegraph reaches. Shawn Cunningham stated that it is page-views, which is 700 – 900 per day. John DeBenedetti questioned if there is a traffic report for the website. Shawn Cunningham confirmed that this information is available and explained the process.

David Pisha stated that he received a letter from VLCT who provided an opinion that the newspaper of record should not be online only. Heather Chase stated that she believes that we are in a transition period where online advertising would provide more coverage to the younger generation. Shawn Cunningham stated that they have been invited to bid for the paper of record in other communities as well as school districts. He further stated that the Secretary of State advised him that there is no definition for “newspaper”. Therefore there are no other requirements other than circulation in the county of advertisement. Shawn Cunningham further presented the increase in computer usage throughout the country.

Robert Miller from the Vermont Journal stated that the statute states that the advertisement has to be printed on newsprint and generally circulated. He further stated that the State of Vermont does not recognize online newspapers. Robert Miller stated that there are advertisements on the Vermont Journal's website. Arne Jonynas commented that he was not able to find the advertisements online. Discussion ensued.

Robert Miller stated that the State of Vermont does not recognize online advertisements as legal notice. Therefore, these notices would not satisfy the legal requirements. Marilyn Mahusky stated that she would prefer online advertising for the town and stated that the school boards may be using the Chester Telegraph for their advertising as well. John DeBenedetti expressed his concerns regarding online business taking over local jobs.

Derek Suursoo stated that he would prefer to receive his information in print. He stated that he would be careful about the legal requirements since there is an opinion from an attorney. Shawn Cunningham stated that he has opinions from attorneys stating that there is no problem with this. He said that the conservative approach is costing the taxpayers more money. He stated that he is coming to the town offering to save them money. Shawn Cunningham further stated that Newsbank has offered to archive their paper.

Marilyn Mahusky encouraged the board to table the discussion to gather more information. Heather Chase stated that the other question is how many people are being reached. Ben Whalen expressed his concern about going against an attorney's opinion. Robert Miller stated that he has been told that the newspapers can be backed up.

Frank Bidwell stated that he appreciates the ability to follow up on local business while he is away. Kelly Arrison stated that there are two competing businesses and that there is not enough information for the board to make a decision.

Rick Paterno stated that an attorney's opinion is not meaningful. He would like to see the precedent that has been set. Robert Miller stated that he wants the town to follow the laws set by the State of Vermont.

A motion was made by Dan Cote to postpone this meeting until May 4, 2016. Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed.

8. FIRST CLASS LIQUOR LICENSE APPROVAL:

The Selectboard signed the First Class Liquor License for the American Legion Post 67.

9. SECOND CLASS LIQUOR LICENSE APPROVAL:

The Selectboard signed the Second Class Liquor License for Lisai's Market.

The Selectboard signed the Second Class Liquor License for the Jiffy Mart.

10. OUTSIDE CONSUMPTION PERMIT:

The Selectboard signed the Outside Consumption Permit for the American Legion Post 67.

11. ENTERTAINMENT LICENSE:

The Selectboard signed the Entertainment License for the American Legion Post 67.

12. ROAD & GUN CLUB REQUEST:

John DeBenedetti recused himself from this discussion as he is a member of the Rod & Gun Club.

Julie Hance explained the application process along with the town's roles and responsibilities. Following discussion, it was agreed the Julie Hance will work with the Rod & Gun Club to determine estimates and what the in-kind match requirement would be. They will come back to the Selectboard to gain further approval.

Heather Chase stated her support of the application and further expressed that she would like to see better cooperation with the Rod & Gun Club in allowing Chester residents to use the property. Bob Pelletier stated that they will be working on this at their next meeting.

13. SANDRI REQUEST:

This item was removed from the agenda by request of Sandri.

14. CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY DISCUSSION:

John DeBenedetti questioned if the Board wanted to move forward with general discussion on this item since there are two members who received their packet this afternoon. The Board moved forward with general discussion at this point. Heather Chase suggested that perhaps a presentation be done by VLCT. John DeBenedetti stated that he would like to have VLCT do a refresher on the Open Meetings Law.

Frank Bidwell stated that he spent some time reviewing other towns. He stated that Springfield and Bellows Falls both adopted the VLCT model policy.

Discussion ensued regarding getting VLCT to come to Chester to discuss Open Meeting Laws, Conflict of Interest Policy and the Purchasing Policy. David Pisha will find out the length of the meeting that would be required.

15/ NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA:

Dan Cote asked how town lands can be used by the public and for what types of events. Julie Hance will provide a copy of the Lease for the Historical Society.

John DeBenedetti stated that there is a Selectboard's Institute on March 12. The Board was instructed to let Julie Hance know if anyone wants to attend and she will sign them up.

The Selectboard agreed that their meetings will be held on the first and third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

16. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Heather Chase to adjourn. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

Julie Hance
Secretary of the Select Board

Heather Chase
Clerk of the Select Board

The SAPA-TV recording of this meeting is hereby made a part of the permanent minute record of this meeting.