

TOWN OF CHESTER
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

July 6, 2016
Minutes

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

VISITORS: Julie Hance; Frank Kelley; Tom Hildreth; Wanda Purdy; Neil Allen; William Lindsay; Marilyn Mahusky; Kelly Arrison; Cil Mathews; Rick Paterno; Deb Aldreich; Shawn Cunningham

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by John DeBenedetti.

There were no deletions or additions to this agenda.

1. APPROVE MINUTES:

June 15, 2016:

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to approve the June 15, 2016 minutes of the Chester Selectboard meeting as amended. Seconded by Arne Jonynas. The motion passed.

Page 5, Chester Tree Inventory, should be spelled Schadler

Page 3, 2nd paragraph, add "went" and "the title"

Page 4, Dan Cote's vote was inaudible

Page 2, Old Business, Line 3, should read "been saved."

Visitors: Add Jim Carroll and Steve Sykes

June 17, 2016

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

Dan Cote was not present

Arne Jonynas was listed twice

2. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

There were no citizens' comments.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

Water Tank/Submission Line: David Pisha noted that this is an agenda item for this evening.

Master Plan: David Pisha noted that this is an agenda item for this meeting. He is recommending that the town hire SE Group.

Yosemite Fire House: David Pisha stated that Jim Carroll has provided a status memo. He will be reporting more details at an upcoming meeting in the near future.

Quarry Road: David Pisha stated that the Public Hearing for the discontinuance of a portion of Quarry Road is scheduled for July 20, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

Dan Cote thanked Arne Jonynas for insisting on pursuing the legal aspect of the Yosemite Fire House.

4. VAST REQUEST:

Dick Jewett was present to represent the Chester Snowmobile Club. He explained that the request is to repair the decking of a bridge that is $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile south of the Cavendish line, on the road that goes from Cavendish to Smokeshire. He clarified that the bridge is not being removed, on being repaired.

A motion was made by Dan Cote to authorize the Town Manager to sign the Landowner Agreement for Snowmobile Bridges. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed.

5. CHESTER 250TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION:

Frank Kelley and Tom Hildreth were present to provide an update on the planning for the Chester 250th celebration. Tom Hildreth stated that the historical banners are now in place with the final four being installed today. He stated that on Thursday, July 14, 2016 Gypsy Reel will be playing at the Academy Building lawn in the evening. Also, the astronomy group will be providing a presentation on Thursday night. On Friday, July 15 from 7:00 – 10:00 at town hall there will be a Rails Around Chester presentation with guest speakers from the railroad.

Tom Hildreth stated that on Saturday, July 16, there will be events at the Pinnacle. There will be activities also held down at the Chester Festival Fields. In addition, he stated that there will be fireworks Saturday evening. Frank Kelley stated that the fireworks committee is in need of another \$2400.00 to complete their fundraising. On Sunday, July 17 there will be presentations made by the Chester Historical Society as well as cemetery tours.

Frank Kelley stated that a recommendation was made to establish a time capsule for Chester. A suggestion was made to possibly put the time capsule in the town tomb. Frank Kelley thanked all of the committee members for their work.

There will also be a monument dedication on Saturday, July 16 at 3:00 pm at the Chester train depot. David Pisha is working with public works to set up the monument.

William Lindsay asked when and if the town will be updating the date on the entrance signs into Chester. David Pisha will contact someone to do an overlay for now.

6. 2015 TOWN AUDIT:

Ron Smith was present from R.H. Smith to discuss the 2015 town audit. He summarized the financial condition of the town and stated that the town is in a good financial position.

Ron Smith suggested that the town adopt a Fund Balance Policy. This identifies surplus on a monthly or quarterly basis which can be applied to other contingencies. Ron Smith further indicated that the water and sewer funds are finally operating in the black and a Fund Balance Policy should be adopted for these funds as well. He suggested that the town find a policy and make it their own and indicated his willingness to help with this. Ron Smith stated that he has seen growth in the town with the projects that the town has undertaken. He explained that the town should also look at private issuance competitively in addition to the bond banks.

John DeBenedetti questioned how the delinquencies fit into the picture. Ron Smith stated that the delinquencies are around \$446,000 at the end of 2015. He stated that this hurts cash flow. Dan Cote questioned the comparison ratio of this outstanding debt. Ron Smith stated that this should not be compared to the private world. This is where the fund balance policy would become helpful.

Arne Jonynas questioned how there can be surplus when we need to take a TAN note. Ron Smith explained cash flow and having real money in the bank. David Pisha stated that this will require a change in how surpluses are handled come budget season and not rolling them forward to offset taxes.

Marilyn Mahusky stated that the schools roll their funds into a capital plan. This has allowed the school to use capital funds to repair the roof and not have to borrow funds.

Ron Smith discussed the accounting method that the town uses which is a cash basis. He recommends that the town switch to accrual accounting. This will require some internal changes. The town currently uses Quickbooks which is not a governmental accounting system and is very labor intensive. Ron Smith also discussed that the town has 30 bank accounts which are no longer needed. These could be simplified down. David Pisha explained the review process that has taken place on how to make improvements.

John DeBenedetti discussed the past conversations regarding changing to accrual. He questioned the need to change the town's fiscal year. Ron Smith stated that this will not be necessary.

Ron Smith stated that the town is also looking at changing to the NEMRC Fund Accounting software. He encouraged the town to make this change. John DeBenedetti questioned the costs. Ron Smith stated that there will be a savings on future audits as well as time for staff. Cil Mathews and Debbie Aldrich stated that the cost is \$17,180.00 which includes \$10,000 for training. John DeBenedetti stated that he would like to see this as a separate agenda item. Debbie Aldrich will put together a packet for the next meeting.

Ron Smith also suggested that the town make deposits more frequently. He explained that the process of trying to follow a deposit is very cumbersome. Deposits need to be made more than once per week.

7. SET TAX RATE:

The residential education rate has been set at 1.2611 and non- residential has been set at 1.3248. John DeBenedetti reviewed the calculations for the municipal tax rate. The municipal rate comes out to 0.6888 with a local agreement rate of 0.0046.

A motion was made by Arne Jonynas to set the Residential Tax Rate at 1.9545 and the Non-residential Tax Rate at 2.0182. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed.

The municipal rate is unchanged. The non-residential school rate is down 0.0541 and the residential rate which is down 0.0583.

Arne Jonynas questioned the local agreement rate. Wanda Purdy stated that there are 16 veterans and the local agreement rate raises the education portion of those exemptions.

Dan Cote requested that Selectmen be changed to Selectboard going forward. The board agreed.

8. TAX MAP MAINTENANCE CONTRACT:

John DeBenedetti stated that the Tax Map Maintenance Contract is signed every year. He noted that the cost is \$2300.00 which is up \$100.00 over last year. The Board discussed that this be shopped around in the future.

A motion was made by Arne Jonynas to sign the 2017 Tax Map Maintenance Agreement. Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed.

9. AWARD WATER TANK & TRANSMISSION LINE CONTRACTS:

David Pisha explained that the new water main along Route 103 is being installed and is going smoothly. The awards are ready to be made for the Transmission Line and the Water Tank. The contracts will not be signed until the ACT 250 process is complete which is anticipated to be in 6 to 8 weeks. The contractor for the tank project is DN Tanks and the contractor for the transmission line project will be Haluch Water Contracting, Inc.

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to award the Water Transmission Main project to Haluch Water Contracting, Inc. in the amount of \$375,210 contingent upon ACT 20 approval. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to award the water storage tank project to DN Tanks of Wakefield MA in the amount of \$1,146,400 contingent upon ACT 250 approval. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

10. MASTER PLAN CONSULTANT:

David Pisha stated that he is recommending SE Group to be hired as the consultant for the Master Plan. He stated that there were 9 proposals received. The proposals were reviewed by Richard Amore, Jackie Cassino, Jason Rasmussen, David Pisha and Julie Hance independently as well as a group. David Pisha stated that he followed up on references. Communities that have used them have been very pleased with the product that they have received.

Julie Hance explained her reasoning for selecting SE Group. She stated that they will begin their work in Chester with an education of true economic thinking and how that looks. She further discussed their outreach approaches which are vast and many.

There was a consensus of the Board to move forward with SE Group and prepare a contract for approval.

11. DRB APPOINTMENTS:

A motion was made by Dan Cote to appoint Harry Goodell and Phil Perlah to the DRB for a 3 year term and Frank Bidwell as an alternate. Seconded by Arne Jonynas. The motion passed.

12. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA:

Arne Jonynas mentioned the single access roads and stated that due to the Quarry Road discussion, this might be a good time to start talking about these roads.

Arne Jonynas reminded the Board that the conservancy will be here next week to discuss Rainbow Rock

David Pisha stated that the individual from the Grafton Windfarm Project would like to come present what this will mean for Chester. The Board agreed to have this at their first meeting in August.

Dan Cote stated that he would like Bob Flint to be part of our monthly meetings. He would like for him to present at the first meeting of each month or at least every other month. Dan Cote stated that he will make this proposal at the next meeting.

Ben Whalen paid his condolences to Graham Kennedy for the loss of his wife.

The Selectboard agreed that the following will be on the next agenda: NEMRC proposal, Financial Update, Quarry Road Public Hearing, executive session for David Pisha's contract review.

John DeBenedetti stated that the Open Meeting Law update needs to be scheduled. A recommendation was made that this could be coordinated with other towns.

Debbie Aldrich stated that she sent the Selectboard a list of individuals for Public Service Awards. These should be presented at an upcoming Selectboard meeting.

William Lindsay asked that Yosemite Fire House be on the next agenda.

13. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Dan Cote to adjourn. Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:13 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.