

TOWN OF CHESTER
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

August 3, 2016
Minutes

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

VISITORS: Julie Hance; Erron Carey; Frank Bidwell; Jeff Holden; Shawn Cunningham; Ken Barrett; Shirley Barrett; Dan Potter; Deb Aldich; Marilyn Mahusky; Kelly Arrison; Justin Savage; Maureen Savage; Bill Dakin; Rick Paterno; Jennifer Jones; Daniel Cook; Ruthie Douglas; Thomas Bock; Bill Lindsay; Bob Flint

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

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

1. APPROVE MINUTES:

July 20, 2016:

A motion was made by Dan Cote to approve the July 20, 2016 minutes of the Chester Selectboard meeting and Executive Session meeting record as amended. Seconded by Arne Jonynas. The motion passed.

Page 3, Old Business, correct spelling of Bob Flint.

Page 4, Section 5, add "most likely be willing"

2. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

Frank Bidwell spoke regarding the Grafton Wind Project. He expressed concerns regarding the impact on Route 11 and potential road width increase as well as pole height increase. He asked the Board to look into this matter and see its impact. David Pisha stated that he has made contact with the State and is waiting to hear back. Heather Chase asked that this be added to Old Business. Arne Jonynas stated that has been given contact information from the TAC group that he will pass along to David Pisha.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

Master Plan: David Pisha stated that this is on the agenda.

Water/Sewer: David Pisha stated that negotiations are still being worked out with Fish and Wildlife.

Yosemite Fire Station: David Pisha stated the additional title work has been completed. He also stated that there were no heirs found at this time. Ben Whalen questioned when Jim Carroll

would be visiting again with an update. David Pisha stated that Jim has more research to do and then will be expecting to update the Board.

Entrance signs into Chester. David Pisha stated that Graham has made a temporary change to the existing entrance signs.

Open Meeting Law Presentation: David Pisha stated that Garrett Baxter can come on August 24, 2016 to present the Open Meeting Law discussion. The time still needs to be confirmed. Ben Whalen will not be available that day but is okay with not being in attendance. The Board confirmed that 6:30 p.m. on August 24 would work.

Monument for Academy Building: John DeBenedetti questioned the status of the historic marker for the Academy Building. David Pisha stated that Hugh Henry is writing the narrative. He has heard from others who are interested in participating in the narrative. David Pisha confirmed that the Board will reviewing the narrative prior to sending it in.

4. VERMONT PUBLIC SERVICE AWARDS:

Deborah Aldrich and John DeBenedetti made presentations to the following individuals for their service to the community of at least 20 years.

Matt Wilson – 20 years, Fire Department

Ruth Douglas – 23 years, Justice of the Peace

Laurie Cloud – 23 years, Ambulance

Jeff Holden – 25 years, Ambulance and Fire Department

Robert McAllister – 25 years, Fire Department

Dan Cook – 26 years, Ambulance

Eric Richardson – 26 years, Fire Department and Ambulance

Wanda Purdy – 27 years, Lister

Pat Jewell – 28 years, Fire Department

Deborah Aldrich – 32 years, Town Clerk/Asst. Town Clerk

Erron Carey – 34 years – Trustee of Public Funds, Budget Committee, Union School Board and Town School Board

Tom Bock – 35 years – Selectboard, Planning Commission, Budget Committee, Justice of the Peace

Richard Cloud – 35 years – Emergency Services

Ken Barrett – 35 years – Cemetery Sexton and Justice of the Peace

5. CLEAN WATER COMMITTEE:

Dan Potter was present from Regional Planning Commission to explain the Clean Water Act and the Clean Water Advisory Committee. He stated that the State is taking a more active role in managing Agricultural runoff. The town will not be heavily involved in this area unless the town wants to have zoning authority over small farms. Dan Potter also discussed the new state permit that will be required for storm water runoff on land over 3 acres. This permit has not been completely developed at this time. Storm water from roads will be the largest impact to

municipalities. The State is developing the municipal roads general permit to be finalized in 2018 and become effective between 2018 and 2021. The town will then have 10 years to come into compliance. The town will have to develop a plan for their roads. The State is also enhancing the funding programs to assist with implementation. Dan Potter explained that river corridors and flood plain regulations are being encouraged for adoption by municipalities. Wetland Management and Forest Lands Management will not have a large impact to towns. More for loggers and developers impacting wetlands.

Dan Potter stated that they are looking for representatives from each town to serve on an advisory committee. Their role will be to bring information back to the towns. They will also be involved with planning project prioritization. The committee would start by meeting monthly in Ascutney. The details of time and future meetings would be determined at the first meeting.

Arne Jonynas questioned the source of this funding which is Federal funding from the EPA. The majority of the issues originate in the Lake Champlain Basin but the State is going with an all-in approach.

Julie Hance expressed an interest in sitting on this Committee. Heather Chase stated that she would be willing to be an alternate.

A motion was made by Dan Cote to appoint Julie Hance as the representative to the Regional Planning Commissions' Clean Water Advisory Committee. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Dan Cote to appoint Heather Chase as alternate representative to the Regional Planning Commissions' Clean Water Advisory Committee. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed.

6. BOB FLINT PRESENTATION:

Bob Flint was present from Springfield Regional Development Corporation. He discussed his role in the region and with the town. He stated that they are working with 11 clients in Chester. He also participates with the Chester Economic Development Committee and helps David Pisha and Julie Hance when needed. Bob Flint also stated that he will be involved in the master plan process.

Bob Flint stated that a business climate survey was recently completed of the area and work force study. The business climate survey showed that most businesses who provided input were intending to be stable or grow. However, Bob Flint indicated that there are concerns regarding the local and regional business climate. He stated that 45% of businesses are satisfied and 37% are not satisfied. There are serious concerns regarding the state's business climate and there is only one incentive program from the state which is not positive. There is an issue of not finding the work force. Bob Flint stated that the industry growing the most is the education and health services by over 27%. These are not revenue generating businesses. The growth in professional and business services has declined significantly. Managers are having to come from over an

hour away. The work force is lacking skill, both professional and management. Bob Flint further added that there are socio-economic issues.

Bob Flint stated that the Vermont Futures Project is an effort of the Chamber. They have held several meetings around the State. The result with a study on the gap in the work force needed. A gap of over 10,000 jobs in the state is the projected trend. He stated that the website is vtfuturesproject.org which will provide more detailed information. David Pisha reviewed an article he read recently along this same trend.

Marilyn Mahusky questioned why there would be a growing number of educational jobs since the number of kids in schools is decreasing. Bob Flint noted that this also includes the health care and education in one lump sum.

Bob Flint discussed career awareness. There have been studies done on adverse childhood experiences which has a strong impact on the work force. The encouragement is to get young families back into Vermont and to plant the seed in the youth.

Bob Flint stated that the Chester Master Plan can help with this as Chester is a great place to live and work. Chester is a walkable community with great internet access and services.

Arne Jonynas questioned where businesses go to advertise their jobs. Bob Flint noted that there is advertisement at all levels. Businesses call the Tech Center and area schools searching for people interested. A career fair is being scheduled for Chester Andover Elementary School. Marilyn Mahusky questioned what the schools can do to help with this. Bob Flint stated that there is a gap between the high schools and the Tech Center. The Tech Center does not tend to attract the higher achieving kids. David Pisha questioned how the kids get the knowledge that these jobs are available. Discussion ensued. Bill Dakin discussed an initiative that the Chester Economic Development Committee and the Springfield Regional Development Committee are working on with the local elementary schools.

Discussion ensued regarding the potential growth of Chester and where the community is at and where it is going.

John DeBenedetti questioned the funding efforts that have been accomplished in Chester by Springfield Regional Development Corporation. Bob Flint noted that the FEMA funding has ended. He stated that he has helped Drews with their new addition and there is a business in town that is receiving assistance with training efforts.

Heather Chase questioned how often Bob Flint would be willing to attend. The Board and Bob Flint agreed that quarterly would be good.

7. SE GROUP CONTRACT REVIEW AND APPROVAL:

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to authorize the Town Manager to sign the contact with SE Group for the Village Center Master Plan. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

Dan Cote stated that he would like to make sure that there is sufficient community outreach. All agreed.

8. CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY:

Heather Chase stated that she would like to review the employee conflict of interest policy as well. She would like to remove “perfectly” from the definition of bias. Heather Chase stated that she would like to have Garrett Baxter review what is being considered. John DeBenedetti stated that he would like to add that participation on multiple boards should not be allowed. Specifically the Selectboard, Planning Commission and Development Review Board. This would not include committees. Following discussion, the Board agreed. Kelly Arrison and Marilyn Mahusky stated their agreement with this concept. Julie Hance will craft language adding this recommendation. It was discussed that the Exception clause will cover concerns expressed by board members regarding what happens if there is insufficient membership to meet quorums.

Ben Whalen expressed concerns regarding Article 5 (b). He feels that 5(a) covers it and that (b) is not necessary. Dan Cote agrees that this should be removed. Discussion ensued. The Board agreed to add the words “...financially benefits...” to 5(b).

9. SET WATER RATES:

David Pisha recommended that the equivalent unit rate be increased by \$2.00 per equivalent Unit, increasing from \$44.00 to \$46.00.

Heather Chase asked to see a chart outlining the schedule of increases.

William Lindsay expressed his concerns regarding the method of billing. He stated that the town needs to establish a commercial water rate. He would also like the bills to show the billing rate. David Pisha explained the history of the equivalent unit and that it is based on demand on the system. He also stated that there is no way for the town to determine a water rate based on revenue. Discussion ensued.

Julie Hance stated that changing the way the bill reads will require reprogramming from NEMRC. She will look into this.

The Board agreed that the rate increase will take place at the next meeting and that it should be a meeting of the Water Commissioners.

10. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA:

The Selectboard agreed to have Finances with an update on street lights, the water rate increase and information regarding wind farms on the next agenda.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A motion was made by Heather Chase to enter into executive session for the purpose of performing the annual review of the town manager. Seconded by Arne Jonynas. The motion passed. The board entered Executive Session at 9:28 p.m.

A motion was made by Arne Jonynas to exit Executive Session at 10:54 p.m. Seconded by John DeBenedetti. The motion passed. There was no action taken.

12. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Arne Jonynas to adjourn. Seconded by John DeBenedetti. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 10:55 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.