

TOWN OF CHESTER  
SELECTBOARD MEETING

August 2, 2017  
Minutes

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

VISITORS: Julie Hance; Sandra Vincent; Georgia Ethier; Shawn Cunningham;  
Claudio Veliz; Sam Schneski; Robert Buchan

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

There were no deletions or additions to the agenda.

1. APPROVE MINUTES:

July 5, 2017:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the minutes from the July 5, 2017 Selectboard meeting. Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed.

July 19, 2017:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the minutes from the July 19, 2017 Selectboard meeting. Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed.

2. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

There were no citizen's comments.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

Master Plan: David Pisha stated that the next meeting will be scheduled soon. Julie Hance will let everybody know the date.

Water: David Pisha stated that Jeff Holden has indicated that the painting of the old tank has been completed. The installation of the new tank is coming along well. The completion of the new system should help to increase the town's insurance rating.

Yosemite: David Pisha stated that he is waiting to hear back from Jim Carroll. He has heard that the deed has been signed.

Sidewalks: David Pisha stated that the work on the sidewalks is coming to an end. There is some touch up work to be done which will take place in the next week.

Lee Gustafson stated that there is a typo on a date on the Old Business report.

Lee Gustafson stated that he has heard from the owners of the Hardware Store that the sidewalk project dragging out has hurt their business. He questioned if there is a way for the town to intervene in the future to make sure that projects run smoother.

Dan Cote questioned if the speed limit signs are up. David Pisha stated that we have not heard from the State and are moving forward with putting them on our own property. We are also waiting on Green Mountain Power for the electrical hook ups. David Pisha will check with the Police Chief on the status of this. Heather Chase stated that she has not seen the portable out in several weeks. Arne Jonynas stated that he would like to make sure that the placement of the signs does not conflict with the Master Plan.

Dan Cote stated that he asked some time ago to meet with the Planning Commission regarding the comments made during the UDB Public Hearings. He passed out a list of comments that were made. He wants to make sure that the concerns of the citizens are being considered. David Pisha explained the steps being taken to conduct a zoning audit which will help with this process. He also explained the steps being taken to provide education for board members.

4. TOWN FOREST HARVEST PLAN:

Sam Schneski, the town's forester was present to discuss the Harvest Plan. He indicated that there are white pine, red pine and spruce that need to be removed based on shallow soils and limited regeneration. He recommended that the pine needs to be removed. The spruce would just be thinned out. Arne Jonynas questioned the location of the stands. Sam Schneski identified the locations on a map in reference to Reservoir Road. The spruce plantation is 21 acres, the white and red pine plantation is about 28 acres.

Sam Schneski stated that he would mark the trees to be removed for the logger. He indicated that this project would not be out to bid for a lump sum bid because of the red rot in the pine. He explained that the interior of the tree is unknown when there is red rot. He is recommending a mill scale system of payment. Where the wood is sold would be the choice of the logger. Sam Schneski stated that he is intending on marking the trees this season and schedule a timber showing. The bid goes out to all of the loggers within the region that is on the State list. The logger selected is up to the town – it does not have to be the highest bidder. Lee Gustafson stated that he would like to also make the selection based on where the lumber is being sent. Sam Schneski stated that he is not sure if the logger can state this far in advance where they are sending the lumber but it is possible to have the discussion and have the preference for using local known.

Arne Jonynas stated that, as a Conservation Committee member, he is wondering if there is anything that can be done to help with the views from the Butternut Trail. Sam Schneski stated that he would be happy to walk with Arne and identify these locations.

The Board agreed to follow the forestry plan and continue with the logging.

5. SOUTHEAST VERMONT TRANSIT:

Randy Shoemaker from Southeast Vermont Transit (the Current) was present to provide an update on the happenings at the Current. The Power Point presentation is attached to these minutes. The items highlighted in yellow are available to Chester residents.

Dan Cote questioned the Board as to how to determine the needs of the community in this area. Arne Jonynas stated that the Transportation Advisory Committee from Regional Planning does discuss this every year. He will reach out to them.

6. EMS BUILDING FEASIBILITY STUDY:

Claudio Veliz and Robert Buchan were present to provide an update on the Feasibility Study. He stated that they still need to finish up with the Police Department and a few department heads on the survey work. The garage property survey is almost completed. The graphics will begin next week and the baseline text is already underway. Claudio Veliz feels that data gathering should be completed in the next couple of weeks. He further indicated that they are anticipating substantial completion around the end of the month.

Robert Buchan stated that he is working on the permitting and environmental aspect of the project. He stated that to date there have been no pitfalls or major constraints.

Claudio Veliz stated that the project is slightly behind, but is not a concern. Dan Cote stated that he would like to see something more substantial at a future meeting. Lee Gustafson stated that he would like to see the Table of Contents. Claudio Veliz stated that he can provide that information this week. The goal is to provide a final report in mid-September.

7. APPROVAL OF ZONING AUDIT:

David Pisha stated that the town is looking to perform a zoning audit. Julie Hance explained that there is a need to relook at the foundation of the existing zoning bylaws. In order to accomplish this, the town will need to hire a consultant to perform an audit of the existing bylaws. They will look at the Master Plan and all town planning documents during this process. There will also be several community events during this audit time.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve \$10,000 to conduct a zoning audit. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

8. APPROVAL OF WAYFINDING PROPOSAL:

Julie Hance explained that she is looking for approval to move forward with the development of a wayfinding plan for Chester. This is the next step in developing and installing signage for the town. The Wayfinding Plan will identify the key types of signs

that will be used and the locations where they will be placed. The proposal is in 2 phases to allow for budgeting of the total project.

The Selectboard asked Julie Hance to see if SE Group will come down on their price at all. They also asked Julie Hance to obtain a cost range of signs from Claudio Veliz. This will be discussed again at the next meeting.

9. SIX MONTH FINANCIAL UPDATE:

David Pisha reported that the town is operating consistently with last year. There has been a large decrease in outstanding delinquent taxes. Expenses have been spread out into individual departments so compared to prior years looks different. It is also difficult to compare year to year because the town changed from cash to accrual. Health care costs are down even though we have more employees this year. David has begun communication with the insurance consultant for 2018 insurance costs.

The Board agreed that it is impossible to compare the cash system to the accrual system. Lee Gustafson questioned the sewer comparison interest line. David Pisha explained his reporting process and that it is not based entirely on the budget line item. Lee Gustafson questioned the size of the solar field which is 500 kw. He stated that there are formulas that can be used to determine the energy that the field should be producing based on its size. He will do this and report back.

David Pisha stated that water is up primarily due to rate increases. Water is doing well in terms of labor and benefits. Sewer has flat revenues but there have been no rate increases. There also have not been many fines.

10. BEGIN SELECTBOARD VISIONING PROCESS:

The Selectboard worked through a visioning process identifying generalized items that they would like the town to focus on over the next several years.

The concepts presented were as follows:

- Maintain the current level of service to town employees
- Prioritize infrastructure – keep maintaining and improving where necessary
  - Creation of micro parks
- Safety
  - Control speeds better
- Preserving historic assets and leveraging them
- Consider Quality of Life, i.e. recreation opportunities
  - Support the family
  - Community bonding and cohesion
  - Bike path to high School
  - Church Street loop
- Signage

- Increase the number of events in town – more festival type events.  
Perhaps create staffing position to cover this
  - Potential property acquisition for holding events
- Community preservation – bringing people to Chester and keeping them here
  - Create more rental units appropriate for families
  - Housing units for the older generation that are in town
- Economic Development Plan
  - Support local businesses
  - Market new businesses
- Make necessary changes to zoning

11. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA:

It was agreed that the board would like an update from the Police Chief on the status of speed signs. David Pisha will also talk with the Chief about increasing the CORE detail. Ben Whalen also requested stats on the policy canine.

The wayfinding proposal will also be on the agenda as well the continuation of the visioning process.

The board stated that they would like for Jeff Holden to provide an update at the next meeting.

The board would like to have a discussion about what to do with the solid waste money. Arne Jonynas would like a history of the Tropical Storm Irene money and how much is possibly available.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION; Town Manager review:

This item was moved to the next meeting.

13. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Dan Cote to adjourn. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:51p.m.

Julie Hance  
Secretary of the Select Board

Ben Whalen  
Clerk of the Select Board