

TOWN OF CHESTER
POPPLE DUNGEON LOCAL CONCERNS PUBLIC MEETING

December 6, 2017
Minutes

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

VISITORS: Shawn Cunningham; Ruth Zezza; Aaron Guyette; Jason Keener; Julie Hance; William Lindsay; Frank Bidwell; Linda Crowson; Larry Benelli; Patricia Benelli; Lyza Gardner; Tory Denis; Derek Suursoo; Ruthanne Batchelder

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

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

1. GATHER INPUT ON THE LARGE CULVERT REPLACEMENT:

Aaron Guyette and Jason Keener from VHB were present to gather input from local citizens regarding the replacement of a large culvert on Popple Dungeon Road. A copy of the Power Point presentation is attached to these minutes.

Discussion ensued regarding the length of time for construction. The range could be from 1 month to a full construction season depending on the chosen structure. Ben Whalen expressed concerns regarding emergency services and the length of the detour. Jason Keener also explained the difference between an accelerated bridge and a regularly constructed bridge.

Penny Benelli questioned the timing of the project. The anticipated construction date will be in 2019. Julie Hance explained the funding and that additional funding has been applied for. Discussed ensued.

Heather Chase stated that she would like to make sure that when the alternatives are presented, that the life span of each structure be presented as well.

Penny Benelli questioned the cause of the current culvert damage. The engineers noted that this has been deterioration over time due to several flooding events and high water in the spring.

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING

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1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2017
Selectboard meeting as amended. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed.

Dan Cote should be removed from the “present” list

2. CITIZEN’S COMMENTS:

Frank Bidwell discussed the position of Zoning Administrator and the time that is needed
to do the job. David Pisha stated that the Zoning Administrator now has an assistant and
the hours for both positions have been increased and are included in the budget.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

Master Plan: David Pisha stated that the Steering Committee will be holding their final
official meeting for the Master Plan on December 12. They will be discussing their
future as a committee with the Board at a future meeting.

Water/Sewer: David Pisha stated that the controls at the Well are still needing
completion. The rest of the project is nearing completion.

Feasibility Study: David Pisha stated that Claudio Veliz will be making a presentation at
the next meeting. The consultant urged the State of Vermont to come visit the site which
has been done. The result is that there will be a requirement for a 50 foot buffer and the
sand pile will need to be moved. Lee Gustafson questioned if there is any option for
appealing for the State’s decision? David Pisha will find out if this is possible.

Signage: David Pisha stated that Claudio Veliz is finalizing the proposed new signage
for the town. Samples will be posted downstairs and allow for public comment.

Yosemite: David Pisha stated that the notices have been advertised. So far there have been no responses.

Assessor: David Pisha stated that a part time lister has been hired. She comes with a substantial background is on the job.

Salvage Yard Ordinance: David Pisha stated that Jim Goss is working on a Salvage Yard Ordinance and should be coming soon.

Arne Jonynas questioned the status of the Brookside Cemetery. David Pisha explained that the town is considering a design competition for the expansion project.

Arne Jonynas questioned the status of the budget committee research. Julie Hance has not had the time to research this. She stated that she will make sure this gets done.

Arne Jonynas questioned the status of moving the cell tower. David Pisha stated that he was told that there is no money budgeted for removing the tower. He will continue to work towards pushing this project forward. Arne Jonynas suggested that VELCO should have some responsibility on this.

4. CHESTER SNOWMOBILE CLUB REQUEST:

A request was made by the Chester Snowmobile Club to use sections of various roads in Chester for the trails. The sections of road are:

- After the 5th bridge on Smokeshire Road north-west to the new snowmobile bridge
- Marcs' Drive from Bonneville's to the far end of the road
- Blue Hill Road for one hundred yards to cross the bridge
- Ethan Allen Road for one hundred yards along road to Mal function junction
- About 200 feet of Nudist Camp Road at the intersection of Williams Road
- All of Williams Road
- Cemetery Road

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to allow the Chester Snowmobile Club to use the roads identified. Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed.

5. STOODLEY ROAD NAME CHANGE:

Meghan Currier currently owns property on Stoodley Road. She is requesting that the name be changed to Fern Brook Road. Julie Hance explained that she has notified the other property owners on Stoodley Road to allow them an opportunity to speak on this issue.

Arne Jonynas questioned the history of Stoodley Road. The Board discussed the need to provide advertisement in the community to gather history on the road. The request was to change the name to Fern Brook Lane.

6. REVIEW GENERAL FUND BUDGET:

David Pisha reviewed the budget. Revenues have not changed since the last time. He stated that the benefits lines have been adjusted to reflect a better picture throughout the departments. David Pisha stated that has not yet determined if a full-time person is needed in ambulance. There is some foundational research being done. This position is budgeted. The public works surplus is in at \$96,000 as of November 30. This number is still likely to change. David Pisha stated that all transfers have been made at this time. He also stated that the Library is anticipating speaking with the Selectboard at the next meeting to provide an update. There have not been any other changes to the budget. David Pisha stated that he is working with Ron Smith on determining the General Fund Surplus for 2017. This is different this year due to the change from cash to accrual.

Arne Jonynas questioned the amount that expenses have increased. David Pisha stated that if you start in 2009, the expense trend has increased approximately 1.5%. Arne Jonynas stated that he would like to see exactly what items are causing the increase in the budget.

Arne Jonynas noted that the SRDC contribution has been included in the budget and has been increased the amount to \$10,000.00. The Board discussed the Fire Department payroll line. The fire department employees prefer to have their check issued at the end of the year. Outstanding payroll is monitored to make sure that it stays on track. Arne Jonynas questioned the equipment maintenance line in the Fire Department budget. Ben Whalen stated that in previous years equipment maintenance has been paid for out of the equipment line. The new category is specific to repairs on equipment. It was noted that there is a separate line for vehicle maintenance and if this is double budgeted.

Derek Suursoo stated that it was his understanding that the 2017 numbers would be actual, not budgeted. In addition, David Pisha will speak with Ron about how to show the Solid Waste income and which year to allocate it to.

Derek Suursoo questioned the allocation of the medical expenses. David Pisha indicated that it is broken down by the actual expenses within each budget. Discussion ensued about what this information is revealing to the public about each employee's health care cost. The Board discussed the concept of taking the total expense, dividing by the number of employees and allocating to each department the total of their number of employees.

Discussed ensued regarding the new accrual method. Derek Suursoo questioned how the delinquent tax balance will be reported.

Bill Lindsay questioned the ambulance billing expense line. This expense is due to the cost of changing over to a new ambulance billing program. This is a one-time expense.

7. REVIEW CAPITAL & BOND PLANS DRAFT BUDGET:

David Pisha reviewed the Capital Plan and Bond Plans. Lee Gustafson questioned the purchase process for the replacement of dump trucks and cruisers. David Pisha explained that each cruiser is replaced every 4 years. The dump trucks are replaced on a 5-year rotation. Frank Bidwell mentioned Fleet Management practices. He stated that he is looking for data to support the practices that are being used and he can't find any. Arne Jonynas stated that the town relies heavily on the experience of its department heads. He further stated that there may not be data to support why we do things, but there is also no data to support changing the system. The system in place works very well for the town. Dan Cote suggested that Graham Kennedy come explain more of the process that is used. Lee Gustafson questioned the data that is being requested and whether there is a cost benefit to having a department head spend time gathering this information.

David Pisha stated that he has summarized the outstanding bonds to date. The 2018 bond will include the compaction roller, sidewalk plow and school street parklet.

Arne Jonynas questioned showing the payments of the required match for the new sidewalk project. David Pisha stated that he will make a footnote on the Capital Plan as a place holder that these payments are coming up.

Dan Cote discussed the compaction roller. He questioned if the maintenance has been figured and if they can be rented as an alternative. There is a vehicle maintenance line in the public works budget. David Pisha will look at this line and provide a history of increase to this specific line.

Derek Suursoo stated that he is very pleased with the budget, capital and bond plan package that has been presented.

8. NEW BUSINESS:

Heather Chase suggested that the Selectboard meeting be moved from January 3 to a more realistic date for the bookkeeper. The Board will review at their next meeting.

David Pisha stated that Karen Horn from VLCT reached out to him to suggest that Selectboard's invite their legislators to a meeting to provide an update about what is coming up. Tom Bock indicated that he is willing to attend on December 20. The League may send down a liason to attend as well. The Selectboard agreed that this would be a good idea.

Lee Gustafson mentioned the letter received relating to a large blue trash bin. He suggested that this would not be the responsibility of the Board and that the property

owner should contact her neighbor directly. The Board agreed that this is a management issue, not a governance issue.

Lee Gustafson questioned why Scullin Street is a town road. Discussion ensued regarding this process. Derek Suursoo suggested that the Board make a decision one way or another. These criteria needs to be identified ahead of time prior to discussing each road.

9. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to adjourn. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Julie Hance
Secretary of the Select Board

Ben Whalen
Clerk of the Select Board