

TOWN OF CHESTER
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

September 20, 2017
Minutes

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

VISITORS: Shawn Cunningham; Debbie Aldrich; Jeff Holden; Steve Sykes; Ron
Smith; Julie Hance; Cil Mathews; Julia Purdy

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairman Jonynas. He then asked every one to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Heather Chase to approve the minute of the September 6, 2017 Selectboard meeting as amended. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

Remove Dan Cote from Present list

Page 3, Section 7, Change to say that there would be no camping permitted

Page 6, change to say that the owners are operating a salvage business

2. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

Julie Hance stated that Frank Bidwell asked her to present his letter under Citizen's comments. It was agreed that the Selectboard would review the letters and would discuss at the next meeting. Lee Gustafson asked that it be an agenda item at the next meeting.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

Master Plan: David Pisha stated that SE Group will be at the next meeting at 6:30 p.m. to present the final Master Plan document.

Water Tank: David Pisha stated that the water project is 75% complete. The connecting line is still be worked on.

Feasibility Study: Claudio Veliz presented a Table of Content for the Feasibility Study. He stated that he is approaching the final phase of the study. They will now be reviewing comparable projects such as the Castleton project. He stated that they expect the review draft to be available approximately 2 weeks after the third party items have been

completed such as environmental review. Claudio Veliz stated that they would like to solicit any public comment at this time. He also stated that this may be the time to assemble a committee for this project. He is anticipating a mid-October release depending on the third party work. Claudio Veliz also stated that several people seem to be under the impression that he is designing the building. He clarified that this is not the case. They are assessing the needs of the departments and potential locations for design/construction. The Board discussed the presentation of the final document. It was agreed to wait until the project is complete and schedule a special meeting after that.

Assessor Position: David Pisha stated that Tom Marsh from Windsor has begun the advertising of the assessor position.

Salvage Yard Ordinance: David Pisha stated that he spoke with Jim Carroll. Attorney Carroll recommended another attorney. David Pisha also called VLCT regarding their model ordinances. They have supplied him sample ordinances and statutes. This will be a future agenda item.

Yosemite Fire House: David Pisha stated that Jim Carroll has filed the paperwork with the State. Ben Whalen asked David Pisha to find out the timeline from this point forward and get an estimated deadline.

Amsden Hill Road: Ben Whalen stated that he has heard that the landlord is beginning the cleanup of the property. David Pisha stated that he spoke with the landlord. The tenant is gone and the land owners are trying to determine the best path forward.

Old Business List: Ben Whalen requested that the Old Business List be added to the computers that the Selectboard will be receiving. Discussion ensued regarding how the laptops will work.

NEFF: Heather Chase stated that she has had a couple of questions regarding a potential wind farm. David Pisha will follow up with NEFF. Arne Jonynas questioned the status of the public event. David Pisha indicated that the plans are coming together.

4. 2016 AUDIT REVIEW:

Ron Smith was present from RHR Smith, the town's auditing firm. He stated that the financial condition of the town has improved from 2015 to 2016. This is due to the General Fund cash flow and favorable revenues coming into the town. Water and Sewer funding improved in 2016 as well. Ron Smith stated that he would like to see some capital reserve built into the water/sewer funds. He would also like to see the capital reserve for the town increased.

Ron Smith commented that there is a lot of money that has been invested in town infrastructure over the past year. He also stated that the change-over in the accounting system was monumental for the town and has made a huge impact.

Ron Smith stated that there are no critical findings in the audit. The management letter recommends some talking points, but nothing critical.

Cil Mathews commented that there were 21 companies, there is now only 1. There are now only 4 checkbooks. Ron Smith stated that this makes the auditing job much smoother.

Dan Cote asked the best way to approach the capital reserve fund. Ron Smith stated that the target number is 10% of depreciation. He indicated to start where you can and increase towards the 10%. The three areas that most need the reserve are roads and water and sewer (these being equal shares).

Heather Chase discussed the bond program that David Pisha has implemented for the town. She questioned a healthy threshold. Ron Smith stated that there is no benchmark to determine healthiness. He indicated that municipalities will have a greater debt ratio and emphasized that government should not be compared to the individual. Ron Smith stated that he is in favor of long term debt financing long term needs. Don't be afraid of debt. He also stated that there is no other way for a government to fund needs other than raising property taxes. Ron Smith stated firmly that the town is in a good position with its debt and not to be afraid of accumulating debt as long as it is managed with good interest rates.

Ron Smith stated that he will be happy to come back when the document is finalized if the board needs it.

Dan Cote asked David Pisha to extend a sincere thank you to Debbie Aldrich and Cil Mathews for their diligent work on the change over of the computer software.

5. FLAG POLE:

Jeff Holden was present representing the American Legion and the placement of a new flag pole. He commented that he has reviewed potential locations for the new flag pole. It appears that the spot next to the stop sign, on town property, appears to be the best location for the flag pole. The pole will be approximately 30 feet in height and will be lit. The Legion is willing to pay for the pole and flag.

The consensus of the Board was to allow the new pole. They thanked Jeff Holden and the American Legion for their donation.

6. APPROVE MUNICIPAL PLANNING GRANT:

Julie Hance stated that she is looking to apply for the Municipal Planning Grant to fund the rewrite of the Unified Development Bylaws. This project will follow the zoning audit that is being conducted now and will implement those recommendations.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to sign the Municipal Planning Grant Resolution. Seconded by Ben Whalen. The motion passed.

7. VLCT DELEGATE:

Heather Chase stated that she is willing to be the town's delegate for the Town Fair.

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to designate Heather Chase as the voting delegate for Chester at the 2017 Annual Business Meeting. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

8. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA:

The Visioning Summary was presented and will be on the next agenda.

The letters from Frank Bidwell will be on the next agenda as well as the Salvage Yard Ordinance.

There will be another executive session at the next meeting to finalize David's review.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION; INTERVIEWS:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to enter executive session for the purposes of conducting interviews for the Planning Commission and Development Review Board. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

The Board entered Executive Session at 7:42 p.m.

A motion was made by Heather Chase to exit Executive Session at 9:05 p.m. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed. There was no action taken.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION; SANDRI:

A motion was made by Heather Chase to find premature general public knowledge of contract negotiations regarding the potential sale of town property would place the Town of Chester at a substantial disadvantage in any further negotiations. And, to enter into executive session, pursuant to 1 V.S.A. §313(a) for the purposes of discussing contract negotiations regarding the terms of a potential sale of town real estate. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

The Board entered Executive Session at 9:06 p.m.

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to exit Executive Session at 9:34 p.m. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

11. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Heather Chase to adjourn. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Julie Hance
Secretary of the Select Board

Heather Chase
Clerk of the Select Board