

TOWN OF CHESTER  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

September 21, 2016  
Minutes

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

VISITORS: Julie Hance; Troy Rietta; Frank Bidwell; Steven Davis; Lee Whiting;  
Wendy Harrison; RoseAnn Grimes; Bruce Whitney; Shawn Cunningham;  
Tory Spater; Doug Somerville; John Holme

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:

September 7, 2016:

A motion was made by Heather Chase to approve the September 7, 2016 minutes of the Chester Selectboard meeting and Executive Session meeting record as amended.

Seconded by Arne Jonynas. The motion passed.

Page 6, change community member to Evan Parks

2. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

Troy Rietta was present from the Chester Rod & Gun Club. He informed the Board that they are offering the residents of Chester free use of the Rod & Gun Club from the third Saturday in October through December 31 of each year.

Frank Bidwell stated that he would like to develop an old business database using Microsoft Access with no cost to the town. John DeBenedetti stated that he had no objections as long as it is in coordination with David Pisha.

Frank Bidwell questioned the status of the Jeffrey Barn and what the town is preparing to do with this building. David Pisha stated that this building is part of the town's inventory of buildings. Frank Bidwell suggested that the town establish a committee to manage the historic buildings in town. Discussion ensued regarding the development of a Capital Plan for buildings and structures. A suggestion was made that the committee would help the Town Manager and Julie Hance with managing historic buildings.

Frank Bidwell questioned the number of Budget Committee members that are allowed. John DeBenedetti stated there are 8 allowed and there are currently 0 active members.

Frank Bidwell questioned the voting of the Selectboard and how it is represented in the minutes. Julie Hance clarified that the vote is unanimous unless otherwise stated.

Lee Whiting requested use of The Green in front of the Town Hall by the Chester Snowmobile Club. Discussion ensued. The Board gave a general consensus that this would likely be allowed. Lee Whiting stated that he will come back before the Board when they have more information.

Steven Davis discussed signage. He stated that a request has been made many times for signage directing traffic towards The Green. Steve Davis also stated that there is a terrific Pinnacle that very few individuals know about. Julie Hance and David Pisha stated that the Master Plan will bring this together and provide an overall plan.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

Website: David Pisha stated that the new website has launched. There is a survey online for people to complete and provide their input.

Water/Sewer: David Pisha stated that Naomi Johnson has filed paperwork with ACT 250. There will be a site visit soon.

Yosemite Fire Station: David Pisha stated that Jim Carroll has convinced VLCT to insure the Yosemite Fire House. The insurance will begin October 1. Frank Bidwell questioned how much longer it will be before a decision is made regarding the building. David Pisha responded that it could be several more months.

Forestry Plan: Arne Jonynas stated that the town forestry plan provides recommendations to the town. He questioned if the town has looked at these recommendations for work to be done. David Pisha stated that he will look at the Plan.

Water Project: Heather Chase questioned the engineering update/breakdown from Naomi Johnson. David Pisha stated that he will get this from her.

Traffic: Dan Cote stated that he has sent information to David Pisha regarding traffic management. He requested that this be an item on the Old Business list. He insisted that this item be reviewed and managed.

Emergency Services Building: John DeBenedetti stated that he has not gone to Castleton. Ben Whalen asked David Pisha to follow up with Castleton regarding copies of the plans. David Pisha will coordinate a meeting for Heather Chase and John DeBenedetti.

Conflict of Interest Policy: Julie Hance stated that Garrett Baxter is reviewing and this should be on an agenda in October.

4. WINDHAM WINDSOR HOUSING TRUST:

John Holme introduced Wendy Harrison from the Windham Windsor Housing Trust. She introduced the speakers that are in attendance with her; Bruce Whitney and RoseAnn Grimes.

There was a Power Point Presentation describing their services. A copy is attached to these minutes.

Doug Somerville questioned the area that the applicants come from. Wendy noted that they are typically local to the community. They tend to have been in the area for a long period of time, 5 to 10 years.

Mr. Whitney stated in his presentation that there is a financial literacy class being offered at Green Mountain Union High School upon request of the students.

Wendy requested that the Town add a link to the Windham Windsor Housing Trust on the new website.

Tory Spater questioned if there is any new housing development pending in Chester. Wendy noted that there is nothing pending in Chester at this time. John DeBenedetti questioned how the affordable rents are determined. Wendy stated that they are determined based on a HUD formula.

5. INFORMATION BOOTH REQUEST:

Tory Spater thanked the Highway Department and David Pisha for moving the hearse to the Hearse House.

Tory Spater was present on behalf of CEDC regarding the information booth. She stated that they have made many improvements to the Information Booth. She stated that having this bathroom in the downtown area has been a great asset and has been heavily used. Improvement work was done, managing the opening and closing of the information has been managed by the businesses on The Green, and they have pumped the holding tank twice this year. They are asking the town to contribute \$300.00 towards the final pumping and to consider this a budget item for next year.

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to pay for the last pumping of the Information Booth and to review this as a budget item for next year. Seconded by Dan Cote. The motion passed.

Arne Jonynas questioned the ownership of the Information Booth. It was noted that it is owned by the Okemo Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce. They own the building and pay the taxes. The CEDC maintains the building and runs it. The town is able to advertise in the Information Booth as well.

6. HISTORIC PRESERVATION GRANT APPROVAL:

Julie Hance was present to request permission to apply for a Historic Preservation Grant for repair of the Academy Building windows. Discussion ensued.

A motion was made by Dan Cote to authorize Julie Hance to apply for the Historic Preservation Grant for the Academy Building for a maximum of \$40,000.00. Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed.

7. DISCUSS POSSIBLE MODIFICATIONS IN FINANCIAL REPORTING::

David Pisha stated that NEMRC is working on the Chart of Accounts for the town. He explained that there will be many benefits to the program change. He also indicated that the reporting will change with the switch to an accrual method of accounting. John DeBenedetti questioned the cost of the change. David Pisha stated that half is paid this year and half, approximately \$9,000 is paid next year.

David Pisha also stated that he has spoken with Heather Chase who suggested that the financial reviews be done quarterly instead of monthly. Heather Chase stated that she would rather review this level of detail on a quarterly basis and have an abbreviated report monthly. David Pisha stated that during the budget season there would be numbers distributed at each meeting. Dan Cote agreed with this change. He stated that David Pisha has the expertise to manage the accounting which he has done well over the past several years. Arne Jonynas noted that there is still the opportunity to ask questions and scrutinize if there are questions. John DeBenedetti stated that he has no objection to a quarterly review but that he still wants a full packet each month. Heather Chase suggested that the meeting each quarter should be dedicated to financials with not much else.

8. FINANCIAL UPDATES:

General Fund: David Pisha stated that taxes are ahead of last year as of the end of August. We have collected \$19,000 more than last year. Revenues are up for now but will likely settle as we get farther along in the year. Expenses are flat with last year. Budget to Actual shows that revenues are ahead, other income is up which is the school refund. Expenses are up due to transfers being up. Balance Sheet shows that cash is up and due from water is up due to the contract for the water project. This will be requisitioned this month. Totall equity is substantially ahead. John DeBenedetti questioned if there is a way to put the amount of the budget in the revenue side of the P&L. David Pisha indicated that he will look into this. David Pisha noted that the NEMRC invoice has not been paid yet. Ambulance was requested to be broken down showing the full time person salary separate. John DeBenedetti questioned the equipment line for the Fire Department and wants clarification on what is included in this line and what is in the bond. John DeBenedetti asked David Pisha to match up the recreation numbers.

Water: David Pisha stated that water is ahead of last year in both fees and delinquency collections. He stated that the increase in expenses is due to the water project. This should be reconciled this month.

Sewer: David Pisha stated that sewer is slightly behind on fees. Total income is up, fines and other income is down. Expenses are relatively flat.

Delinquent Accounts: David Pisha handed out a revised delinquent report. He stated that year to year is relatively flat.

Ambulance: David Pisha stated that the ambulance is still maintaining the 100% response to all dispatched calls.

Solar Statement: David Pisha stated that the town's income from the solar project is currently at \$12,645.00. He stated that the final number that counts will be at the completion of one year.

Funds activity: John DeBenedetti requested that the CDF Fund name be changed. David Pisha will follow up with People's Bank regarding the breakdown of their fees. Dan Cote stated that he really wants to know what the fees are and where they are coming from so that he can figure out a net revenue amount.

Frank Bidwell asked if there could be a power point presentation showing the financials at the Selectboard meeting. The Board agreed.

9. TREE INVENTORY:

Arne Jonynas stated that the tree inventory was received. This is an inventory of just the village center area. He felt that the priorities to be reviewed are the recommendations. He suggested looking at the Tree Warden position and seeing if this could be added to his duties. Julie Hance will pull the statute regarding this position. David Pisha noted that this will have a financial implication and this should be reviewed during budget season. John DeBenedetti suggested also discussing this with the town forester. Arne Jonynas will have a conversation with Joe Epler regarding this inventory.

10. NEW BUSINESS FOR NEXT AGENDA:

Heather Chase requested an update on Town Hall.

Arne Jonynas stated that he has heard from citizens regarding the police officer that left. David Pisha stated that he will find out how much information can be revealed and will let the Board know.

It was agreed to add historical building committee to the next agenda.

Ben Whalen and Heather Chase stated that they would like an update on the Jeffrey Barn as well as some history. It was agreed that this does not need to be an agenda item.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION – TOWN MANAGER REVIEW:

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 Ben Whalen. The motion passed. The board entered Executive Session at 9:21 p.m.

A motion was made by Ben Whalen to exit Executive Session at 10:27 p.m. Seconded by Arne Jonynas. The motion passed. There was no action taken.

12. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by John DeBenedetti to adjourn. Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 10:27 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.