

Chester Board of Selectmen/Water Commissioners/Zoning Board of Appeals

Minutes

December 18, 2017

1. Chairman Baldasaro opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. Clerk Senecal absent.

Attendees at the meeting B. Dale, the Foleys, Collector MA Pease, J. Murray, J. Forgue. Stephanie Bodendorf, K. Engwer, G. Watters.

2. Minutes from 12/11/17 were signed. Warrants were signed.
3. John Murray: Reported that they got the International back, still having some issues with it. No one seems to be able to figure out what's wrong. Will just try to use it and see what happens. John B. stated as we weren't the only town with the same truck having issues. Hopes the class action suit will have some results. The 550 is running well, new sander on, Insurance adjuster coming tomorrow to look at damaged sander. Barbara asked if we do any "scraping" on the roads. John explained we do "some", but not to dirt roads due to the damage it can do. John B. noted that the Supply & Repair account was pretty depleted, and John M. will have to watch what he buys. However, once the insurance company reimburses for new sander that will bolster the account some.
4. Jason Forgue: Jason informed the board that he, Stephanie Bodendorf and Kathy Engwer were willing to volunteer to be on the long dormant "recreation committee". Barbara moved the appointments, John B. seconded. Unanimous
They have ideas they would like to implement at the ball field, and some other places, now that they know they have about \$7,500 available to them. John B. suggested they bring in a list, some sort of plans and costs and go from there. There was discussion about the locks on the fence that apparently were installed by CSX. Don't know why. Pat will follow up with why. As far as anyone knows, the ballfield belongs to the town. They would like to build a shed, with power if possible, and make it a multiuse field. May need to use a tractor. Would like to add more members Pat will advertise on website and in Country Journal.
5. Greg Harrison: Mr. Harrison was in to report what he feels was a mistake in the Title 5 inspection of his property on Rt. 20 that was done when he purchased it. Had documentation relating to two different inspections, 2008 and 2012 and then another issue that occurred in April of 2016. Mr. Harrison feels something is wrong. He was advised to leave copies of all of his documents and the Board will look into it. In addition, Mr. Harrison had submitted his name to fill the vacancy on the BOH, but has now withdrawn his name due to an unpleasant experience during his interview with the BOH. John B. felt there were two issues here. 1. The system confusion and 2. The vacancy on the board. The BOH is coming in on Jan. 22 for a Dept. Head meeting at 6:30. John B. suggested that Mr. Harrison come to that meeting.

6. Treasurer/Town Clerk. John B. asked the Treasurer how her reconciling was coming along. Cheryl reported that out of the last 3 accounts she had to do, one was done and she has prepared a spreadsheet that the auditors could use for the other two. She still needs to figure out how to handle it, but the information is all there. Also she needs to balance with CMELD. The auditors have been notified that they can come back as the information they required has been done. Pat already called, but will double check their availability. There are still a couple of retirement issues that Cheryl is working on and needs to contact whomever can give her the history of what happened.

At this time the Town Clerk joined the meeting. She asked the BOS why she was here. John B. explained that the board felt there was an undercurrent or failed communication between the two offices. Sue K. responded that it was not a communication problem but a systematic problem, due to the lack of availability of the Treasurer. She thought the problem had been solved with the installation of a lockbox, but that never happened. The Board and Sue K. went over the issue at some length. Barb then asked Cheryl about her last minute absence at last week's meeting. Cheryl responded that she had a lot going on that no one knew about. Barb asked that next time she let them know earlier if she wasn't going to show up. She suggested using email since it's so easy to send and respond. John B. suggested that this is a much bigger problem given the part time hours and elected status of many of our departments. There is still the problem with departments making turnovers to the Treasurer outside her posted hours. There was talk of going "cashless" as a town. The town does accept electronic payments for many things, but people still pay small bills with cash. Pat will check into that. After more discussion John B. suggested that there is no complete solution at this time and that we should at least try using the lockbox. Cheryl expressed her desire not to use it, but if the board was making an executive decision then she will work with it, although she is not taking any responsibility for any problems that may occur. Barb said she felt everyone could see both sides of the issue. She thanked both Cheryl and Sue for coming.

7. John B. read a letter of resignation from long time Transfer Attendant Bob Gauthier. Pat also mentioned that it was getting harder to get "Senior Work off" residents to help at the Transfer Station, and before advertising, wanted to know if the board wanted to do something differently. After discussion, Pat will look into how we would go about adding annual transfer station sticker to the tax bill, with some type of abatement for those that can prove they don't use the transfer station.

8. Citizens Comments:

Mr. Foley asked question about tax bill and transfer station. He is opposed to a "cashless" society. Mr. Daley asked about webinar material he sent to Ro regarding use of social media. Do we want to get PVPC involved in dump issue? John B. reported he would rather see what we can do ourselves first. There was a large crowd at today's concert. And of course, the Selectboard is invited to the Christmas lunch on Friday, 12/11. Any school news? John B. reported that their dealings with the committee are going well, feels they are making progress in some areas. The suggestion of "level funding" did not go over very well, but the budget process is moving along. Barb reported the issues involved with Special Education were very burdensome and expensive. All day preschool/better

marketing has been brought up as means of drawing out of district students to Gateway. John B. feels real potential to get thigs done this year and in the future. His focus is to change the process.

Mr. Daley noted that the withdrawal of “Herbology “ project was a disappointment, but Barb reported that at least “Chester is on the radar” for potential other RMDs and/or other types of businesses. A reference was made to the Economic Developer Jeanne LeClair being an active participant in the suggestion of other potential businesses, but the property is private so the town/ED can only act in a supportive role.

Cheryl asked if we would be having any warrants over the next two weeks with the two Monday holidays. It has not been decided as yet, but Pat will speak to Bev about scheduling maybe one day in between so that the bills don’t pile up. She asked if the board had adopted the practice of designating one member to sign so as to take pressure off the others. Not as yet, but are open to the idea and would like Pat to check into what needs to be done to do so.

Mary Ann Pease asked if snow fences were still being used, specifically, on Rte. 20 and Skyline Trail. John M. said he had not yet heard anything from the state but was aware of the one on Skyline.

There being no other business, John B. moved to adjourn at 7:50 p.m. Barb seconded.
Unanimous.

Patricia Carlino
Town Administrator

John Baldasaro, Chairman

Barbara Huntoon, Vice Chairman

Rene Senecal, Clerk

