

TOWN OF CHESTER

Board of Selectmen/Water Commissioners/Zoning Board of Appeals

Meeting Minutes

February 26, 2018

Attendance: BOS-Chairman John Baldasaro, Vice-Chairman Barbara Huntoon, Clerk Rene Senecal, Town Administrator Patricia Carlino, Administrative Assistant Rosanne McClafin, Highway Superintendent John Murray, Gene Watters, Bob Daly, John Foley, Wilma Foley, Justin Quinn, Brian Quinn, Mary Ann Pease, Teresa Donovan, Norma McDonald, Jeanne Leclair, Michael Hickson, Cheryl Provost, Peter Spot & Sean Callahan (Country Journal)

- I. Chairman Baldasaro called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. on February 26, 2018-Town of Chester and Country Journal recording.**
- II. Minutes from last meeting date February 12, 2018 were approved and signed.**
- III. Warrants were approved and signed.**
- IV. Highway Department-John Murray:** International truck at Nutmeg 2/13 for repair again, repeated issue with check engine light and loss of power, picked up today (2/26/2018) made it to Huntington and check engine light came back on and loss of power. Discussion followed, Superintendent Murray to “hold their feet to the fire” to pursue satisfactory repair. Board to be kept updated on issue. Johnson Hill section reclaimed and paved fall of 2017 already deteriorating, Superintendent Murray in contact with Palmer Paving to resolve. Murray to submit plans for 2018 Chapter 90 project requests. Clerk Senecal asked for clarification- he was informed that a vendor stated to District 2, that they already had an agreement in place with the Town for paving 2018-Superintendent Murray noted the Town follows procurement procedures, that the vendor may have been referring to Hampshire County Bid prices in effect until June 30, 2018-may be what vendor meant. Clerk Senecal questioned Highway Department Supply and Repair account balance, clarification provided regarding posting of transactions, account not in “the negative”.
- V. Department Head-Mary Ann Pease: Tax Collector/Library/Ambulance:** Library: Heat repaired at Library at cost of \$157.50, Pease questioned BOS regarding possible placement of 2 modular buildings behind church on Town owned lot as option for new library, discussion followed regarding accessibility, Board not opposed to proceeding with research.

Ambulance: Pease reported one of the six towns that participate in the shared ambulance service has been unable to pay their portion due to “internal issues”, but issue will eventually be resolved. She noted that during her meeting with the Finance Committee, she had been asked if they ambulance committee could do more fund raising to raise money for a new ambulance. Economic Director Jeanne Leclair to assist with research for additional grant funds.

Tax Collector: Property auction last May resulted in approximately \$87,000.00 income to the Town and placed properties back on tax roll. Pease would like to prepare to have another auction on the fall of 2018. Properties on Middlefield Road, Route 20, Old State Highway and Birch Circle have been identified as possible parcels for auction. Chairman Baldasaro asked if any value had been assigned to land locked property on Skyline Trail for tree cutting, Pease noted minimal value but lot could be another parcel for auction. Pease also asked the BOS to remind Building Inspector that any building permit applications must be signed off on by Tax Collector to ensure status of tax payments.

- VI. Board of Health-Norma McDonald, Terry Donovan:** The BOH would like Transfer Station responsibilities including permit and sticker ordering, warrant processing and fielding of phone calls to be under the Transfer Station Attendant responsibility. McDonald noted that BOH members have multiple responsibilities, have minimal time and receive a stipend of only \$1300.00 per year to perform all the duties and responsibilities. It was noted that Gene Bishop used to manage mandatory reporting tasks as a volunteer and Chairman Baldasaro also noted that the Selectmen's office had been handling some of the responsibilities since his passing. Discussion followed reviewing BOH duties and responsibilities, MA requirements of who is responsible, what responsibilities a Health Agent would have, the lack of a Health Agent in Town, regulations and open position on Board of Health. Michael Hickson volunteered to fill position if department is unable to find suitable candidate. Jeanne Leclair to help research shared services in this area.
- VII. Economic Development Director -Jeanne Leclair:** Leclair advised the BOS that four of the six towns participating in the collaborative have committed to funding the Economic Development Officer position for an additional year and required the Board of Selectmen's signature needed on standard MA contract. Chairman Baldasaro noted that Leclair is doing a "great job" and there is "good momentum", Vice-Chairman Huntoon asked about the progress of the marketing video, Leclair reported it is "coming good".
- VIII. Justin Quinn-Retail Marijuana:** Justin (plant biologist) and Brian Quinn (financial analyst) who currently own and operate a facility in Oregon "Kosher Green Organic", presented an overview for a proposed marijuana growth and processing operation to be located a 133 Middlefield Road. (Vice-Chairman Huntoon excused herself from the discussion due to possible conflict of interest.) Quinn expressed their largest concern revolves around CMELD's limited capability for business use of solar energy. Discussion followed, Chairman Baldasaro noted that with the increased interest in solar that the BOS and CMELD should meet to discuss updating the current policies. Discussion followed regarding Quinn's plans related to property improvements, security, growth operation, processing operations, air filtration, anticipated volume and personnel as well as MA regulation, host agreement and proposed time lines. Chairman Baldasaro declared the Town is not opposed but would like additional information from Quinn including financial liquidity, a draft host agreement, and information regarding their Oregon facility, and suggested they call to get on CMELD agenda for discussion.
- IX. Masonic Temple lease:** Town Administrator provided the Board with a draft for lease renewal, the Board requested lease be made for 99 years, but legal counsel advised that any lease over 30 years must be voted on at Town Meeting. The Board proposed drafting the lease for 30 years to provide security to the Historic Society until Town Meeting when the item can be presented for Town vote, then revise agreement. The original lease stated that the Town would pay for insurance coverage and the Society would reimburse the

Town for the expense. Chairman Baldasaro instructed Town Administrator Carlino to remove the clause for reimbursement from the lease. Carlino also noted she would like to see specified hours for public access.

- X. Town Administrator-Pat Carlino:** Chairman Baldasaro spoke about solar information provided in information packet and noted this topic is going to “come up over and over” - Administrator Carlino to coordinate meeting with CMELD to address.

Carlino informed the BOS there were only two unidentified properties per Assessor records, the “old power plant” off Middlefield Rd which is in a flood plain, and a parcel on Old State Highway. Additional research to be done to determine options for sale of properties.

Before moving to Citizen Comments, Chairman Baldasaro stated that the BOS had a couple issues they wanted to discuss:

Vice-Chairman Huntoon questioned item in dog license application that states, “No person over age 70 will be charged a dog license fee”, she questioned when that came about and how. Town Administrator Carlino stated she did not know, but the new dog licensing law was voted in at a recent Town meeting and would clarify. Huntoon also offered that she had received an anonymous letter of complaint and wanted it to be noted that any anonymous submission would not be addressed.

Clerk Senecal noted that he was disturbed about something that happened a month or so ago related to him, a photo that he had been made aware of, of which he had provided copies to other members of the BOS., which could have been detrimental to his career, immediately upon seeing the photo Administrative Assistant McClafin took responsibility and stated she had taken a photo and shared it with an individual in an attempt to add levity to a tense situation, she took responsibility for poor judgement in regards to the incident and apologized sincerely to Senecal and the Board.

- XI. Citizen Comment:** Bob Daly asked for clarification regarding the Pilot Program for Assessment Averaging for the school budget. Chairman Baldasaro explained that this is a state supported pilot program to provide equitable assessments to each town regarding the school budget, removing the current process that can create extreme increases to one town’s contribution while reducing another towns. Regarding the Becket spring, Daly also offered that the Becket BOS had a survey done which determined the spring is located on Deer Haven property, Deer Haven disputes the findings and there will be a second survey done to determine ownership before proceeding with the decommissioning of the spring.

Sergiy Suprunchuk was present to request the BOS assistance in procuring a permit for new septic system at 71 Cooper Drive, he stated he was referred to the Board by the Board of Health. Chairman Baldasaro assured him the Selectmen’s office would follow up and help resolve the issue.

John Foley noted that Highway Superintendent Murray had been adding material to Abbott Hill Road to try to resolve the mud problem, Murray to continue to add material to try to improve conditions, Mr. Foley also noted that Sylvester Hamilton Road had begun to “split” Murray to review. He also stated he felt many Town employees were underpaid and the school budget affects what compensation is made to employees. Vice-Chairman Huntoon noted that since she has been attending school committee meetings, she has learned that Gateway is required to comply with multiple unfunded state mandates that the district cannot control,

Chairman Baldasaro stated that there has been much progress in the communication and cooperation with the school committee and that we need to fight for the small school districts.

Bob Daly asked about BOH vacancy and the process by which to fill it. Chairman Baldasaro clarified, a vacancy can be filled by appointment by the BOS until the next election. Mr. Foley feels that “on the spot” appointments should not be made; any appointment should be noted on an Agenda to allow public discussion.

There being no further discussion Chairman Baldasaro adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED BOS MEETING MARCH 5, 2018 6:00 P.M. CHESTER TOWN HALL

Minutes submitted by: Rosanne McClaflin

John Baldasaro – Chairman

Barbara Huntoon – Vice-Chairman

Rene Senecal - Clerk