

TOWN OF CHESTER

Board of Selectmen/Water Commissioners/Zoning Board of Appeals

Meeting Minutes

February 12, 2018

Attendance: BOS-Chairman John Baldasaro, Vice-Chairman Barbara Huntoon, Clerk Rene Senecal, Town Administrator Patricia Carlino, Administrative Assistant Rosanne McClaflin, Highway Superintendent John Murray, Gene Watters, Bob Daley, Robin Allsop, Wilma Foley, John Foley, Dan Illnicky (Chief of Police), Mary Ann Pease, Andy Myers, Jeff Reynolds, Harold Sheid, Laura Lafreniere, Heather Hannigan, Kathy Engwer, Stephanie Bodendorf, Peter Spotts (Country Journal)

- I. Chairman Baldasaro called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. on February 12, 2018**
- II. Minutes from last meeting date 1/22/2018 were approved and signed.**
- III. Warrants were approved and signed.**

Clerk Senecal asked for clarification of document from PVPC requiring BOS signature related to the engineering award for Hampden Street Infrastructure Improvement Project through PVPC CDBG, he questioned determination of contract award due to the major difference in the bid prices submitted. Clerk Senecal expressed concern and questioned why there was such a difference between price submissions. Town Administrator explained bids were reviewed by the proposal committee comprised of Erica Johnson-PVPC, John O'Leary- PVPC, Patricia Carlino-Town Administrator and John Murray-Chester Highway Superintendent. Bidders were evaluated and ranked on the firm's ability to meet the minimum requirements established by the Request for Proposals. Based on the evaluation the firms ranked in order of first to last: 1. Lenard, 2. Weston & Sampson, 3. Stantec Consulting and 4. CPH. Once the ranking was established, price proposals were opened and recorded. Bids submitted were Lenard Engineering - \$113,466.00, CPH - \$98,850.00, Stantec Consulting - \$79,395.00, Weston & Sampson - \$52,200.00. With the top 3 bidders considered qualified applicants, and there being a difference of \$61,266.00 between the top 2 qualified bidders the award was made to Weston & Sampson based on the combined qualification and pricing criteria.

- IV. Highway Department-John Murray:** After recent expenses, the Snow Removal account will be in deficit by \$14348.43, Chairman Baldasaro motioned to authorize allowance of \$30,000.00 to cover current deficit and to cover additional anticipated expenses, Clerk Senecal seconded, unanimous. Murray reported the Highway Department has used 950 tons of sand, 448 tons of salt and 138 tons of chip so far this year. Chairman Baldasaro noted that the GRSD budget is projecting an increase to the Town of Chester's portion of \$139,000.00 and reiterated the need to reduce expenses as much as possible. Superintendent Murray informed the Board that the International (truck) stopped working again and had to be towed for repairs. Discussion followed regarding costs associated with the vehicle repairs, previous repairs, vendor responsibility for repeated similar issues, guarantee of workmanship and class action lawsuit against manufacturer. Vice-Chairman Huntoon feels vendor owes a refund, Clerk Senecal suggested referring to the original state contract and Chairman Baldasaro feels the BOS may have to "get involved" to resolve. Town Administrator Carlino to draft a letter to vendor and pursue legal assistance if necessary.
- V. Department Heads: Police/Assessors**

Police Department: Chief Illnicky stated the department is operating as planned and have had no additional expenditures. He offered that he was currently working on budget and finances-the Police Department has a policy where a new vehicle can be procured every four years without affecting the budget or tax rate. The Department will be receiving quotes for a new vehicle. The new vehicle will have a dash cam which can be automatically activated when strobe lights are engaged and can remotely record voice. This feature will provide security for officers and public alike. Chief Illnicky noted the Fire Departments need for a “newer” vehicle and thinks they (Police Dept.) can allocate the current vehicle to the Fire Department without issue as it is a Town asset. Chief Illnicky informed the BOS that officer Steve Griffin has retired from the department but does not feel the need to hire a replacement at this time. The Board asked the Chief to relay their appreciation for Griffin’s service and professionalism. The Chief asked about an account being established to aid in the timely issuance of detail pay, currently some vendors are up to 3 months behind in their payment to detail officers- many times due to delayed reimbursements to the vendors by state or other agencies. The BOS and Chief agree it is unfair to the officers to not be compensated in a more appropriate manner, Town Administrator Carlino and Chief Illnicky to meet to determine article for annual Town meeting to allow establishment of a reimbursement account to accommodate this request. Chairman Baldasaro remarked that the department is doing a great job, there have been no complaints and that the Department has a good relationship with the public and the Board.

Assessors: Laura Lafreniere updated the BOS on upcoming computer conversion (the Commonwealth will no longer support the current software and is paying for the conversion) and noted there will be some training needed related to the new software. Discussion followed regarding Hilltown Collaborative and shared services in connection to the new software, conversion and future department needs. Lafreniere informed the BOS that property re-evaluation will be done this year, and a full field review is required by the State. The Assessors reviewed expense associated with the re-evaluation and have hired Roy Bishop to complete commercial review, residential review will be done “in house” by Pam Anderson. Additional discussion of possible shared services. Chairman Baldasaro asked the Assessors to research unidentified Town owned properties to determine if they can somehow be put “back on the tax roll”.

- VI. Regional Resource Group-Jeff Reynolds, Harold Scheid: Assessors Services.** Andy Myers introduced Reynolds and Scheid and explained that the information and proposal from Regional Resource Group is part of the Hilltown Collaborative initiative. Regional Resource Group provides unique services and is currently under contract with multiple towns including Egremont, Otis, Becket, Richmond and West Stockbridge, providing all services related to all aspects of property tax assessment including Chapter Land, Conveyance, Exemptions and Excise Tax Specialists, Commercial, Residential and Personal Property Appraisers, Assessors and Research Analysts. They have been in business for 15 years and have 27 municipalities that they service, they work with the municipality’s existing staff- they do not replace them in most cases- and work jointly with staff and administration to determine each town’s individual requirements and create a proposal based on need. Discussion followed regarding service options and process. The BOS will review proposal and schedule a follow up meeting after review.
- VII. Robin Allsop-Knox Trail Riders:** On June 23, 2018, Mr. Allsop will host the “Pee Wee Hair Scramble” dirt bike races on his private property. There will be 2 races for 6 – 12-year old competitors and he anticipates 30-40 riders. This event has previously been held at the Fisk property. Race track and parking will be on his property. The BOS had no concern or issue with the proposed activity.

- VIII. Recreation Committee-Kathy Engwer, Stephanie Bodendorf:** minutes from Recreation Committee meeting were provided to the Board. Preliminary plans were proposed for improvements to the Emery Street ballfield, (some requesting support from Town Highway Department and CMELD i.e., moving soccer goals, trucking of materials and lighting) included new storage shed for use by Town and other non-profit organizations, new dugouts to be built, replacing damaged fencing and install additional new fencing, repair existing backboards and install new rims and nets on playground of old elementary school on Middlefield St., creation of handicap accessible parking spaces, level and seed field and construct skating rink. They also suggested as a fundraiser, a Christmas Lighting/Decorating contest, Bingo, Trivia Night, Karaoke Contest, Whiffle Ball Tournament and possible movie nights. Rec committee to follow up with CMELD for services. Discussion followed regarding logistics, BOS agreed committee should proceed with proposals and additional research as needed. Vice-Chairman Huntoon reported from attending meeting of Chester Hill Association that they are looking to rename and become "more inclusive" in town and with other organizations. She suggested the Rec Committee, and all such organizations (e.g. Chester Historical, Chester Foundation), try to collaborate instead of "compete". All agreed.
- IX. PVPC-DLTA affirmation of commitment.** Shared Services agreement for financial services, the BOS feels this is a good program and want to continue in the program.
- X. Mary Ann Pease-Library update: John Foley representing-** O'Connell Oil repaired boiler at library and purged radiators, library now has heat. Haley House on Middlefield St is in process of bank foreclosure, Town to pursue other option for new library location.

Andy Myers suggested old high school as option for new state housing initiative, Chairman Baldasaro suggested Andy reach out to current owner regarding sale of school, he also noted next Hilltown Collaborative sometime in March, and has had legislators inquiring to next meeting date.

Vice-Chairman Huntoon reported that The Town of Worthington is having a 250th anniversary celebration on June 30, 2018 - suggested Recreation Committee enter float in parade. Rec. Com. Is open to idea and took info.

XI. Town Administrator-Pat Carlino:

Ernie Foster will attend March 19, 2018 BOS meeting -regarding NEFF property Rte. 20.

Health insurance rate not going up.

Dave Pierce volunteered to walk Town boundaries.

Comcast contract expiring 2020, no action until build-out completed.

Clerk Senecal wanted to express his dismay at the incorrect information recently printed in The Country Journal and on social media regarding the Becket Spring. Senecal has been a resident of Chester since 1992 and does drink Chester water. He has also worked closely with the Water Department and State inspectors and noted that the Town has always been within compliance of State regulations. He expressed offense taken at the inference the BOS are responsible for "poisoning" the water by "cow-towing" to State regulations. He feels it irresponsible to state erroneous information.

Mr. Magni-East River Road resident who had applied for a variance from The Zoning Board of Appeals to build a porch on his home, requested information or direction to initiate rezoning of agriculturally zoned

properties that are residential and clearly are not agricultural. Chairman Baldasaro suggested Mr. Magni begin with the Planning Board, and that The Town would have to vote to approve changes at Town meeting.

Vice-Chairman Huntoon related that she had received a call from Richard Holzman expressing concern for Transfer Station attendants in inclement weather and suggested an additional shed be placed for recycle container attendant for shelter. Mr. Holzman stated Hometown Structures had a shed available for \$1000.00. The Board noted there are no funds available for this purchase and agreed to wait until the reconfiguration of the Transfer Station be resolved.

Richard Holzman (who entered meeting at this time): Would like to see CMELD aggressively address the overgrowth of trees on the lines to reduce risk and loss and aid in improving road conditions. Discussion followed regarding responsibility and cost. Mr. Holzman then suggested asking for donations to fund the proposed transfer station shed and continued to say that he would donate \$500.00 if the Town would match his contribution. Eventually the Board agreed to "find the money" - Town Administrator to contact Hometown Structures to initiate purchase. Mr. Holzman left check for \$500.00 with Town Administrator.

XII. Citizen Comments:

Bob Daley- Offered Chapter 70 state contribution funds down \$39,000.00 and Chester's estimates school budget portion increasing by approximately \$139,000.00. Chairman Baldasaro noted that the State recognizes the issues and a proposed Pilot Program which may aid in the resolution of these issues is under consideration but will require a special act of legislation. Mr. Daley questioned snow removal account deficit, Clerk Senecal noted impossible to predict costs related to the function as it is weather-driven.

John Foley brought up questions he had related to CMELD and solar options. The BOS suggested he attend Electric Light Commission meeting for clarification.

Administrative Assistant McClafin informed the Board that the Boy Scouts Box Car Derby will be held in Town Hall on March 11, 2018 from 1-3.

There being no further discussion Chairman Baldasaro moved to adjourn at 8:42 p.m., Vice-Chairman Huntoon seconded, unanimous.

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING 2/26/2018 6:00 P.M.
Chester Town Hall 15 Middlefield Road Chester MA

Minutes submitted by: Rosanne McClafin

John Baldasaro – Chairman

Barbara Huntoon – Vice-Chairman

Rene Senecal - Clerk