

TOWN OF CHESTER

Board of Selectmen/Water Commissioners/Zoning Board of Appeals

Meeting Minutes

April 9, 2018

Attendance: BOS-Chairman John Baldasaro, Vice-Chairman Barbara Huntoon, Clerk Rene Senecal, Town Administrator Patricia Carlino, Administrative Assistant Rosanne McClafin, Richard Holzman, Gene Watters, Mary Ann Pease, Andy Myers, John & Wilma Foley, Terry Donovan, Bob Daly, Steve Cooper, Jonathan Gliona, Lyle Snide, Brian Quinn & Justin Quinn-JBQ Resources LLC

- I. Chairman Baldasaro called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. on April 9, 2018**
- II. Minutes from last BOS meeting date 4/2/2018 were approved and signed.**
- III. Warrants were approved and signed.**
- IV. Recreation Committee: Appointment of new member – rescheduled**
- V. At this time the Chairman moved ahead on agenda to item VI, Mary Ann Pease: Library**

Pease expressed concern regarding the discussion of using the “new” elementary school as a possible location for expanding the COA and space for the Library. Chairman Baldasaro explained that using the school was no longer considered a viable option, and that PVPC was going to provide a feasibility study to determine the possible option of using the town-owned lot adjacent to the “old” elementary school for a new building.

Chairman Baldasaro moved ahead on agenda to item VIII, Town Administrator: Patricia Carlino

Carlino provided an update regarding the Emery St. ballfield expenses and electric service. She noted that the Recreation Committee will hire an electrician to install the sub-panel and wiring and once the Electrical Inspector signs off, CMELD will turn power on to the field. CMELD has installed lights as requested based on Jason Forgue’s assurance that security cameras would be installed.

Carlino noted that electric service to the new shed at the Transfer Station will be provided by CMELD once the sub-panel and wiring are installed.

Carlino noted that the payment issue related to the credit card the Town uses has been resolved. A payment was credited to the wrong account but she (Carlino) noted that the error had been corrected and that all late fees and interest were waived.

Carlino informed the BOS that UPS payroll delivery is now back to the Town Hall.

Carlino provided information regarding the suggested addition of Transfer Station fees to the tax roll or addition as separate fee on tax bills. She explained that cities generally provide trash pick-up as a city

service, and the charge is reflected on a separate utility bill and is not added to real estate taxes. The only allowable extra charge on real estate tax bills is a CPA (Community Preservation Act) assessment. These cities also have a Transfer Station for other trash and permits are purchased through their city halls. Periodically throughout the year these cities will allow “bulk pick-up”. Carlino believes that advertising the requirement for new annual permits, providing them in further in advance of the deadline (July 1-each year) and proper monitoring of current transfer station permits, and bag stickers will resolve concerns related to the Transfer Station income. Additional discussion regarding allowance of “dumping” without a valid permit followed and the BOS determined that no grace period should be allowed for residents to “dump” without a current permit. Mary Ann Pease offered that the “new” Transfer Station attendant, Peter Stroganow was developing an Excel spreadsheet to document permit and sticker sales, and she also stated that he (Stroganow) was getting “push-back” from residents who felt they should not have to pay full price for smaller bags etc. Clerk Senecal noted that Stroganow had mentioned fee changes to him, and he (Senecal) recommended that Stroganow develop a proposal for a new fee schedule for BOS review. Richard Holzman also stated that he felt the Transfer Station was “looking good” and he is researching prices to have the old containers painted. He also feels new signage regarding permit requirements, restrictions and fees should be installed.

Carlino asked the BOS if they still considered changing the date of the Annual Town Meeting as previously proposed by Vice-Chair Huntoon. Huntoon feels holding it on a Saturday is not conducive for many to attend. Hoping to promote greater attendance, the BOS proposed moving the meeting to the 2nd Monday in June at 7:00 p.m. Carlino will develop verbiage for the Annual Town meeting warrant.

- I. **Justin Quinn/Brian Quinn, JBQ Resources LLC-proposed marijuana cultivation and manufacturing business:** Justin Quinn offered that they had met with CMELD regarding solar installation on the proposed facility and that CMELD was very helpful. They will be meeting with CMELD again and will provide updates as available. Justin noted that “plans had changed slightly”, and due to the required environmental clean-up of 133 Middlefield Rd, they would initially utilize 126 Middlefield Rd. They will be here for the next few days meeting with building inspectors, contractors, etc. Brian Quinn shared their intention to incorporate Chester and its historical aspects into their branding by using local imagery. They would like to create an association of MA to cannabis production as Sonoma CA is to vineyards and wineries. Chairman Baldasaro noted these plans will tie in well with the current marketing initiatives for the Hilltowns. Discussion followed regarding the Cannabis Control Commission’s (CCC) requirements related to odor control, neighborhood restrictions, security, illumination, permitting and inspections. Planning Board Chairman Lyle Snide noted that the State has established regulation related to zoning, security, exterior illumination, video recording, etc. and that a provisional license will need to be obtained prior to construction. Justin Quinn explained in an effort to engage the community, a public educational forum will be held in the Town Hall auditorium-date to be determined. They also noted the benefits to the tax rate, increased commerce and employment opportunities, donations to the Fire and Police Departments, future access to the historical buildings, facility tours and working with The Town regarding options for utilization of the “Round House” and “Tower”. Additional details will be negotiated through the development of a Host Agreement. The question of water usage arose, and Quinn explained they plan on using a rain-capture and reclamation process and anticipate minimal use of 50 gallons per day. Discussion of power usage followed, and

Quinn noted anticipated usage is estimated at 1000kw per day and expressed plans to discuss ways to decrease peak load with CMELD, ultimately hoping to reduce electric expense for the rest of the Town. Vice-Chairman Huntoon questioned if there was a signed purchase and sale agreement in place and Quinn noted the need to finalize details of a host agreement to ensure a mutually beneficial arrangement before finalization of transaction. Additional discussion was held concerning demolition and/or repair of some buildings on the property, fertilization, shipping, anticipated volume, technology, tax payments to host the community and medical vs. recreational growth criteria. Baldasaro requested financial information and a proposed Host Agreement from the Quinns (no apostrophe) and expressed the Town's commitment to work with JBQ. All agreed time is of the essence.

VI. Finance Committee: Discussion of proposed FY19 budget

Finance Committee members present were Chairman Andy Myers and members Jonathan Gliona and Bob Daley. Myers noted that the committee had met with most of the department heads and provided an updated version of the proposed budget and their recommendations to the BOS. He noted several departments had submitted level-funded budget requests. Myers also noted that the Committee's recommendations were based upon the implementation of the GRSD Alternative Assessment plan.

- Tax Collector budget request was reduced from FY18.
- The Assessors proposed budget was also reduced from FY18 and offered information regarding assessor services provided by the Regional Resource Group. RRG services 27 MA communities including Becket and Otis and both towns recommended this service. RRG estimated a first-year service cost of \$33,000.00. Discussion followed regarding what services may be provided by RRG and the possible elimination of assessor positions. Chairman Baldasaro felt this was "something to look at" and requested the Finance Committee and Assessors attend BOS meeting scheduled for April 23rd for additional discussion and review.
- The committee received an email for a proposed budget request from the Treasurer, including a 19% salary increase, the addition of an Assistant Treasurer position to be funded, elimination of the \$800.00 training allocation (to be used toward proposed Assistant Treasurer salary) but that no supporting evidence of need was provided. Discussion followed regarding need for training, assistance already being provided to the Treasurer by the Tax Collector and the existence of an Assistant Treasurer position in the past. Determination made to leave requests for the salary increase and the addition of an assistant out of the proposed budget. Suggestion made by the Chairman for a meeting with the Treasurer, BOS and Finance Committee for review.
- The Town Clerk had requested a 27% increase to cover the cost of elections, and \$500.00 for a new laptop (Myers is hoping the new laptop may be covered under the PVPC IT grant). The Highway Department's request for a 5% increase in Supplies and Repairs, as well as an additional \$5000.00 increase in Tree Removal. The Finance Committee felt these requests were reasonable.

- The Board of Health requested a \$4000.00 salary increase. The Finance Committee increased the BOH expense account by the \$4000.00 to pay for a new Health Agent, thereby reducing the work load on the BOH members and did not recommend the salary increase. Myers also asked for the proposed new fee schedule submitted to the BOS by the BOH.
- The Recreation Committee requested an additional \$500.00. All agreed the Committee is “doing a great job” and the ballfield “looks great”, and Chairman Baldasaro noted we “should do what we can to support them”.
- The Fire Department submitted a level funded budget but requested a new firetruck. A capital expenditure account was proposed contingent upon GRSD proposed Assessment plan implementation.
- The Police Chief requested a salary increase of 5% to cover additional police detail hours, not to be used to increase hourly rates. A request for a new cruiser was made based upon \$15,000.00 per year lease for 4 years. Current cruiser is to be transferred to Fire Department for Fire Chief use and to replace his current outdated vehicle.
- Ambulance increase of 5 ½ % as per agreement with provider.
- Building Inspector request of 2 ½ % salary increase to be considered after Town Meeting.
- Debt & Interest going down \$47,000.00
- Unclassified Town Hall expense increase of \$500.00 for internet and phone service.
- County Retirement going up. Town was not paying fair share in the past (CMELD overpaying) and group health insurance increase of 4.5%.
- \$3700.00 for land fill monitoring near “new” elementary school required by DEP. The Town has a 30-year obligation to this monitoring but as the Town has never seen a violation, Chairman Baldasaro requested the Town Administrator send letters to DEP, and Senators Kulik and Hinds requesting relief.
- ~~Removing~~ Fee to Becket for spring testing to be removed.
- Economic Development Director position to be a special article on the Annual Town Meeting warrant. Chester’s share is \$12,300.00

VII. Additional Business:

Town Administrator Pat Carlino shared that Bernie St. Martin informed her that Mike Leach from DEP is retiring and he (St. Martin) would like funding to “keep him on as a consultant” – Carlino recommended St. Martin request a proposal from Leach.

Additional discussion of the Alternative Assessment plan for the Gateway school budget, and the need to educate voters on the future benefits to all towns.

Vice-Chairman Huntoon asked if the free cash figure was available yet and Carlino stated-no. The Chairman instructed Carlino to request information from the Town Accountant and have the information available and sent to BOS the following day.

Andy Myers questioned the BOS regarding COLA increases for the Town employees. After discussion it was agreed to include a 3% wage increase for all employees in the proposed FY19 budget.

Possible special articles for the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting were discussed, including Records Retention, software for Animal Control Officer and Town Clerk, and changing the day for the Annual Town meetings. Additional discussion needed to make decisions and determine verbiage.

Clerk Senecal asked for update on East River Road/Chapter 90 documentation, Administrative Assistant McClafin stated she was working on the Chapter 90 project request as directed but was having some difficulty narrowing down specifications and pricing for the materials being used. Clerk Senecal to provide assistance.

Emails regarding beaver removal from Skyline Trail from PETA and a citizen: no action.

Email request for Chester to suggest signage to Becket regarding the spring: no action

VIII. Citizen Comments:

Bob Daley asked about "Hampden Street Kick-Off Party" with PVPC and contractors. Clarification made that the "kick-off" is a meeting with all parties involved with the project such as the grant administrator, engineer, contractors, and Highway Superintendent, not a public event.

There being no further business, Chairman Baldasaro motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m.; Vice-Chairman Huntoon seconded; Unanimous.

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING 4/23/2018 6:00 P.M.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Rosanne McClafin, Administrative Assistant

John Baldasaro – Chairman

Barbara Huntoon – Vice-Chairman

Rene Senecal - Clerk