

## **Town of Chester Selectmen/Water Commissioners/Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting Minutes for February 11, 2019**

Attending: Select Board members Barbara Huntoon & John Baldasaro, Town Administrator  
Kathe Warden and various members of the public

Barbara opens the meeting at 6:00pm, the Select Board and the Country Journal are recording the meeting. Minutes of January 28, 2019 were reviewed and signed. Warrants to be signed.

### **New Business -**

**Hilltown Ambulance** – to review and sign contract – Mary Ann Pease is here to have the Select Board sign the contract. Barbara and John sign the contract.

**Planning Board** – review the proposed Adult Use Marijuana bylaw – Lyle Snide presents the revised bylaw for Adult Use Marijuana. John thanks Lyle for all the work the planning board has done to update the bylaw. Barbara asks when the public hearing will be held, Lyle would like to hold it soon on a Monday at 7:00pm. The bylaw will be on the Annual Town Meeting.

**Hilltown CDC** – Paul Lischetti – the Hilltown CDC would like to purchase the former Chester Inn and convert it to low income housing. Paul says there would be approximately 6 to 8 apartments. The Hilltown CDC would be looking for a significant reduction in taxes. The building sits in the floodplain and the insurance will be approximately \$9000 which Paul feels would negate the project if taxes had to be paid as well. He wants to know if the area is a priority development for the town, Barbara tells him it is, and Paul asks if the town could consider a PILOT since they are a nonprofit. John would like to see the building upgraded but neither John nor Barbara are in favor of no taxes. As a matter of Inquiry, Barbara asked why not senior housing and Paul says to renovate that building for senior housing it would be too costly. John would be willing to look at a sliding scale for taxes. Barbara would like to know about the management of the building as well as qualifications for potential residents. Paul says the management company is out of South Hadley and are available 24 hours. Both Barbara and John would like to see the property developed and would like to have more discussions about both the project and the taxes. John suggested CDC investigate the old High School and Paul said they are as well as at another property in town. Jeanne LeClair is willing to act as a third party and help the CDC get in touch with the owner of the former High School.

**Hometown LLC – Jack Ferriter and Matt Hoey** – proposed marijuana growing facility. Jack said they would be building a green house on Abbott Hill Rd. It would be for all-natural light growing of organically grown marijuana for Adult Recreation use. It would be a low volume grow facility and the closest neighbor is 210 feet. There are 19 acres and the greenhouse would take up approximately 1 acre. There will be security cameras, motion detectors and fencing. They will do what the town needs them to do. They would like a letter of non-opposition. Barbara would like to know more about them. The project will be owned by 2 fathers and 2 sons the Hoey's and Ferriter's. They are expecting to produce 1000 pounds of product per year. The growing season would be spring to fall. There are no plans for retail or manufacturing, only growing and harvesting. John asks for specifics of business plans, security and site focus, community outreach and wants the planning board involved. Jack says their main reason to come tonight to say hello and start the discussion of the project. Barbara and John both thanked them for coming.

### **Town Treasurer Cheryl Provost and Town Accountant Paula Beck – update –**

Paula says they are balancing for FY18 to within \$1100, Mary Ann and Paula have also been working together and they are balanced. Paula says she will start the Schedule A and plans to have it done before March 22. Tom Scanlon has helped with balancing the cash. Paula would like quotes to be put out for FY2019. Paula feels it would be in the best interest of the town to get quotes from other auditing firms. Paula is monitoring all expenses, and everyone is pretty much around 50% but she is alerting those who are getting close to the total budgeted. Cheryl said that all is good. There was a discussion about bonds and limits, Barbara asked Kathe to look into it. Barbara asked if there was anything that is needed from the Board. Cheryl is looking at another payroll company, Harpers that is starting in Westhampton. The conversion would be \$5000, but she isn't putting it in the budget just something she is looking into.

**RCAP Solutions** – Sign agreements for assistance with the water treatment plant issues and consumer confidence report. Barbara signs off on the agreements.

### **Old Business –**

**Employee Handbook** – review– Barbara feels the handbook needs some more work and updating and would like this reschedule this out to May after the budget season is over. John agreed

**Town Administrator update:** Veterans Agent is hosting a meeting in Northampton on March 19 at 2 for all towns to get updates on Veterans benefits and Kathe would like to attend, Barbara and John were fine with it.

Kathe had a call from Natalie Blais's office about the electric bills, Natalie's office will call CMELD in the morning and Representative Blais would like to have an open office meeting in Chester on a Monday late afternoon (date to be determined) before a Select Board meeting and wanted the Board to know if they need anything of her office don't hesitate to ask.

Kathe said there was a draft for the grant for the Shared Police dept. Agreement, Barbara and John had reviewed it and were fine with it. The grant asks for \$41,400 for starting the process to set up an intermunicipal agreement and start the conversion for the project. The Board had no changes to make on it.

**Jeanne LeClair** – The Montgomery Board of Selectmen sent out a revised intermunicipal agreement for the Economic Development Director position. The changes address concerns Montgomery has over dates and other issues in the contract. The Montgomery BOS believes the contract falls under Chapter 30b and they can't sign the agreement predated. Jeanne asks the Board to review the IMA. John would like it dated back to July 1, 2018 and for Montgomery to be responsible for their share. Montgomery would like to sign in March and have the amount they pay reflect that date, not the original July 1st, 2018. Jeanne mentioned Gateway would like to become part of the agreement and hire Jeanne for 25% of her time, which if agreed would lower all the other town assessments. A discussion continues about the agreement with different ideas of what could be done in the future.

Barbara asks about TSM rollout and what is going on with it. Jeanne explains what events TSM has planned for the future. They sent a list of information to area realtors in the fall, with mixed response. Barbara would like TSM to reach out to area realtors again including Maple-fest, Chester on Track.

**Richard Holtzman** submits a letter that he won't be seeking reelection as Town Moderator – Barbara thanks him for his years of service.

**DPW updates** – John said they will be rebuilding the plow; the used one he was going to buy wasn't in good shape. The crew has been trying to patch pot holes. He has put in the budget for next year to add a fourth full time crew member.

**Citizens Comments** - Sister Judith Dalesandro asks why the highway isn't plowing both sides of the road. John said the last storm he took care of her road, and it was the storm before in issue. John said he is making sure that doesn't happen again.

Kathy Engwer said that the lot across from the baseball field is still for sale and has talked to the realtor about it. She had a purchase agreement ready for signing but wasn't sure where the town was at with the Slocum property. John said he had talked to Mary Ann about it and she will put it out for sale with sealed bids since it wasn't taken for taxes. The minimum of the sealed bid would be what the state had originally offered it.

Jason Forgue says the opening day for baseball is April 27, 2019.

Bob Daley asks about the Board of Health, if they had obtained a senior work off. He asked if the 2 vacancies had been posted. John said they haven't had interest in the past postings.

Andy Meyers said through the Community Compact was looking at a shared position with Blandford and Huntington for a Health Agent. Gateway budget meeting would be Wednesday March 6 to present the budget to the public.

John makes a motion to adjourn at 7:55pm, Barbara seconds the motion, all vote aye.

Respectfully submitted

Katherine Warden

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Barbara Huntoon Chair

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John Baldasaro Vice Chair

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Vacancy – Clerk

Meeting Minutes for February 11, 2019 contain 3 pages.