

Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen
Minutes
December 19th, 2016

Chairman Baldasaro opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. Minutes of 12/12/16 approved and signed.

Warrant signed.

John Murray: Highway Department: John was unable to attend. Rene reported to the board that he and John M. had met last week for a time to talk over procedures, plow routes, informational items that Rene felt were important for the operation of the Highway Department, but not to tell John M. how to do his job. He explained he told John M. that he should bring to the board what he thinks should be done, not what the Board thinks should be done. Just keep them aware of changes, be proactive, not reactive. Should be working on a capital invest plan, roads priority, should be talking to other road bosses, go to more meetings, etc. Watching the weather. State vs. Chester. Confitions between downtown and the hill can be much different then what the state reports. Should have a "call list" for weather, not only other towns, but people in various parts of town. He said they discussed a lot, and the information was well received Will speak again with John at next meeting.

Richie Small attended to have the Selectboard sign a grant application to the State for a MEMA grant.

The board was in receipt of a letter from Comcast announcing meetings to be held at UMASS in February to speak to the next step in the Broadband initiative. Pat will attend on behalf of the Board and report back.

Financial Team meeting: Attending: Bev Cooper, Cheryl Provost. Question from the board regarding policies, procedures, etc. John B. specifically noted the deficit in the town clerk's budget. Unfortunately the town clerk is new also, and the accountant didn't catch the warrant being put in, or it would not have been in deficit. It could have been corrected beforehand. John feels strongly that this should not happen. Questions of how the \$250 State contribution is used, is it moved into the expense account, the election account, or how is it accessed. Will follow up. Bev will begin providing a revenue report, as well as an expense report at the end of each month, thay way the Board can see the true picture. John then asked Cheryl is she was reconciling each month with Bev. To date, no, but hopes to be able to do that by January. Running into some roadblocks with systems, agencies, etc. Pat suggested that there was some money in the budget for training, and will talk with Cheryl about this. There is a question with the Microsoft access also. Pat will check into this with the former interim Treasurer. Possible PVPC could help, or Andy Myers suggested asking Zach Blake, from the DLS for some help. Pat will follow up on this also. Question of IT support was asked. We currently do not have anyone to call on, but we ae searching. Cheryl suggested Northeast Inc., who is in Westhampton. Pat will check with them also.

John asked about the free cash figure. Getting there, Bev estimated it should be at least \$200,000. Pat reported that the Recap was done, and the tax rate set. \$20.32 for FY 2017. There was a question regarding the snow & ice deficit of \$14,000+ added to the recap. When monies were moved in June, for some reason there wasn't enough moved, which resulted in the extra deficit. Pat will check to find out why. It will be returned to the Snow & Ice budget this year.

Town Administrator:

PVPC Community Development Strategy to be signed.

Citizens comments:

Ed Meecham; How many vendors do we have for snow plowing? When is the determination to use vendors made, and why? Did we advertise? We need to advertise in Westfield, not just the Country Journal. Barbara felt we should also advertise elsewhere, but it is costly. Try Indeed.com. Do we use the grader? Discussion as to what trucks are used, when and why we would use the grader. Discussion the storm over the weekend. Where do we buy sand? Discussion held, will get an answer by next meeting.

Ron Ouimette asked about the routes as we discussed at the last meeting. Ro reported she couldn't find any written routes in the office, so had asked Steve to come up with what they use as routes. John M. is working on them. It's a work in progress.

Tom Beck remarked that there used to be a map on the wall with the routes. Ro said she would look more closely.

Ron Ouimette wanted to thank all involved in the work at the Transfer Station.

Andy Myers and Jonathon from the Finance Committee attended the meeting. Andy asked what the Board would like to do this year. Possibly hold a one day financial meeting on a Saturday with department heads to go over their budgets, or meet on Monday evenings. Pat will poll the department heads to get their input. She has asked for budgets to be back to her by Jan.31 at which time she will turn them over to the Fin Com. Currently there are 3 members of the Fin Com for sure, but they could always use more. Barbara will ask around. And we are always looking for opportunities with the other towns to share costs. Andy gave an overview of the goals of the Hilltown Collaborative, both from an economic development side and the share services side.

There being no other business, John B. moved to adjourn at 7:30 pm from open session, to go into Executive Session "to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body, and not to return to open session". Barbara 2nd. On a roll call, John Baldasaro, Aye. Barbara Huntoon, Aye, Rene Senecal, Aye. Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Carlino, Town Administrator

John Baldasaro, Chairman

Barbara Huntoon, Vice Chairman

Rene Senecal, Clerk

BOS meeting 12/19/16