

# TOWN OF CHESTER

## Board of Selectmen/Water Commissioners/Zoning Board of Appeals

### Meeting Minutes

October 30, 2017

Attendance: BOS-Chairman John Baldasaro, Vice-Chairman Barbara Huntoon, Clerk Rene Senecal, Town Administrator Patricia Carlino, Administrative Assistant Rosanne McClafin Bob Daly, Peter Spotts (Country Journal), Mary Ann Pease, Michelle Kenney, Bryan Farr, Jeanne LeClair, Dan DeMoss, Heather Hannigan

- I. **Chairman Baldasaro called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. on October 30, 2017**
- II. **Minutes from last meeting date October 23,2017 were approved and signed.**
- III. **Warrants were approved and signed.**
- IV. **Assessor Classification Hearing: Heather Hannigan** recommended a single tax rate to the Board, Vice-Chairman Huntoon motioned to accept recommendation for single tax rate, Clerk Senecal-seconded, unanimous.
- V. **Ambulance: Mary Ann Pease President-Hilltown Ambulance Association.** Association currently working on budget, financial meeting November 14, 2017- Huntington and Russell would like independent audit. Association trying to determine if cost should be included in budget, cost ranges from \$7000 - \$15,000 for independent audit. Other towns of Chester, Montgomery, Blandford and Worthington not in favor. Vice-Chairman Huntoon asked what the ambulance committee was looking to accomplish, Pease noted desire to “put to rest” questions regarding the associations accounting practices despite the association filing with the IRS and Commonwealth. Vice-Chairman Huntoon felt money is “tight” and there are better ways to spend it. Clerk Senecal noted that the audit is not recommended by majority, current disclosure should be sufficient, if only 1 or 2 towns have issue “let them pay for it”. Board does not have strong opinion one way or the other, will take the Associations budget recommendations into consideration when time comes.  
  
Chairman Baldasaro asked Pease if she was in favor of the new tax collector software from Zobrio Inc., (current software will no longer be supported.) Pease stated yes, and a regional consortium is formulating plans- a community compact grant for conversion and licensing for individual towns is available with deadline for application November 15, 2017.  
  
Town Administrator Carlino noted NEFF New England Forestry Foundation coming next week for discussion of tax assessment, Pease noted they owe taxes, discussion followed regarding NEFF’s non-profit status and question arose if they should be taxed at all, Pease noted BOS denial of status in 2006, review of 2006 documents needed prior to meeting 11/6/2017.
- VI. **Chairman Baldasaro** opened discussion of possible representative to MARS facilitated school budget meetings. No current volunteer, BOS feel they do not have time for additional committee commitments, but would like to be considered as alternates, BOS feel critical to have representative but must be

committed and consistent. Chairman Baldasaro suggested rotation of BOS member, Town Administrator Carlino reminded BOS the meetings will be held in executive session and member should be familiar with previous meeting information that would not yet be made public until the resolution and close of executive session topics, so continuity is important. Additional consideration and suggestions for nominee to be taken for future BOS meeting review.

- VII. Chairman Baldasaro** opened discussion of Route 20 notification board. Chester owns property on Route 20 across from Main Street intersection, per Mass DOT, the Town can erect signage outside of ROW. Resident Dan DeMoss was present for discussion of signage as his home abuts the property in question, posed concern for detracting from Veterans Memorial and design of sign to stay consistent with the Town's image. He also voiced concern that lighting may be intrusive, Chairman Baldasaro noted the Board would work with Mr. DeMoss regarding design and placement. Additional discussion followed regarding size, usage, expense and style of proposed signage. Economic Development Coordinator Jeanne LeClair to work with Town Administrator to research sign options. Michelle Kenney asked about COA Director's suggestion of a bulletin board at the Transfer Station, Clerk Senecal noted preference to board available to all traffic through Chester vs. only resident traffic at Transfer Station to promote events and attractions. Chairman Baldasaro noted the BOS were not opposed to signage at Transfer Station.
- VIII.** Discussion of Christmas tree lighting, Town Administrator Carlino asked if the Board still wanted to have an event in conjunction with the lighting, the Board agrees, would like to have a "ceremonial lighting" and then gather in the Town Hall for caroling, hot cocoa, etc. Friday November 24 chosen for date. Administrator Carlino to publicize and promote event.
- IX.** Unidentified business: Michelle Kenney, Bryan Farr, Jeanne LeClair: presented information regarding Village Enterprise Center, 26 Main St Chester, a location for SHEAC (Southern Hilltown Adult Education Center a program offered through UMASS) services including open computer lab, GED study, and adult education services and literature provided for additional information and resources. Office space would also be available for other entities to use. Would like to incorporate a visitor center in the space as well which will tie into the newly appointed Economic Development Coordinators goals to promote growth. BOS in support. Michelle Kenney noted January 2, 2018 for opening date.
- X.** Chairman Baldasaro noted at 7:00 p.m. Zoning Board of Appeals Hearing: separate minutes attached, return from Zoning Board of Appeals hearing to regular session BOS meeting 7:20 p.m.
- XI.** Vice-Chairman Huntoon clarified that Trick or Treat would be 10/31/2017 5-7 p.m.
- XII.** Citizen Comments: Bob Daly asked if Treasurer would be present 11/6 meeting, it was noted that at the time of the meeting it was expected that she would be present, Mr. Daly noted that he would continue to follow up until she was in attendance, wanted assurance that employee deductions were corrected and that employees would not suffer any losses, feels a greater sense of urgency from the Treasurer is needed. Chairman Baldasaro noted that until structural changes (i.e. appointment vs. election) were made, the BOS cannot enforce any sense of urgency. Vice-Chairman Huntoon noted need for changes in structure and shared services as many towns suffer from same issues. Mr. Daly noted that the voters were upset and hold a "trump card" and that "something may happen". Clerk Senecal noted that voters may feel the BOS hold

too much “power” if they have the authority to appoint this position but noted the BOS responsibility to the residents that services are provided accurately and timely. Vice-Chairman Huntoon noted voters elected “us” and need to have faith in the Board, Mr. Daly noted if more residents attended BOS meetings, voters would see how the BOS is working for the benefit of the Town. Clerk Senecal commented the Board has “3 completely different perspectives but with a common goal”.

**There being no further discussion Chairman Baldasaro adjourned the meeting at 7:32 p.m.**

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING NOVEMBER 6, 2017 6:00 P.M.

Minutes submitted by: Rosanne McClaflin

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John Baldasaro – Chairman

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Barbara Huntoon – Vice-Chairman

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Rene Senecal - Clerk