

TOWN OF CHESTER

Board of Selectmen/Water Commissioners/Zoning Board of Appeals

Meeting Minutes

November 6, 2017

Attendance: BOS-Chairman John Baldasaro, Vice-Chairman Barbara Huntoon, Clerk Rene Senecal, Town Administrator Patricia Carlino, Administrative Assistant Rosanne McClafin, Gene Watters, Bob Daly, Wilma Foley, John Foley, Jeanne Leclair, John Bergeron, Kim , Michelle Kenney, Erica Johnson (PVPC)

- I. **Chairman John Baldasaro called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. on August 7, 2017**
- II. **Minutes from BOS meeting October 30,2017 and Zoning Board of Appeals meeting October 30,2017 were approved and signed.**
- III. **Warrants were approved and signed.**
- IV. Vice-Chairman Barbara Huntoon volunteered to be Chester's representative to attend GRSD budget meetings. GRSD to be notified.
- V. **Update on Magni request for variance.** Building Inspector misspoke when determining frontage requirements, property is in an agricultural/residential district, vs. original determination thus needing 40' frontage as opposed to original statement of 25'. Additional question posed if the area is in an Historic District as well. Additional research needed to determine Zoning Board of Appeals' ability to grant variance.
- VI. **Holiday Tree Lighting** – too late to put notice in WATTS NEWS, Town Administrator to post on website and in Country Journal, post on Rte. 20 Fire Station bulletin board. Lighting "ceremony" to be November 24 at 6:30 p.m. with caroling at the tree and hot cocoa and cookies in the Town Hall immediately following.

Vice-Chairman Huntoon asked if Chester has an OPEB (Other Post Employee Benefits) account for Town retirees- NO, but Chairman Baldasaro recalled that at one-point Chester had a capital expenditure account but was unable to maintain it due to financial constraints. Discussion followed- Chairman John Baldasaro noted that once the Town pays off outstanding debt, some of those funds could be used to set up an account and would pose no additional burden on the taxpayer, suggested a line item for next year's budget. Additional discussion of stabilization, capital expenditure and capital investment accounts.
- VII. **PVPC Community Development Strategy-Erica Johnson:** reviewed PVPC draft of 2018 Chester Community Development Strategy (see attached) Additional items to be added include: water line from Horn Pond, IT needs, COA needs assessment findings, notification board. Past "Left-over" PVPC funds contributed to social service program. John Bergeron noted 269 people from Chester alone have been serviced by these programs in the past 10 months. Chairman Baldasaro voiced appreciation for all PVPC, SHAEC and Hilltown Community Outreach for all they do for the communities.

SHEAC Program Director Michelle Kenney wanted to remind everyone the Jacob's Ladder Business Association will be holding its 25th Anniversary Party on Thursday November 16 from 6-9 p.m. at the Chester Railway Museum.

Administrative Assistant McClafin announced that John Gould – Hilltown Community Outreach liaison from Senator Adam Hinds office will be at the Chester Town Hall November 15, 2017. Time yet to be determined.

Town Administrator Pat Carlino asked if in the past there had been a local TV station through Comcast, Vice-Chairman Huntoon stated yes, and Chairman Baldasaro stated it had been discontinued. Bob Daly commented it should be brought back, people should see what is happening at the BOS meetings, many good things are in progress, residents should be aware, discussion of YouTube live streaming of meetings, creation of a Facebook and Instagram account for Town, Economic Development Coordinator Jeanne Leclair to set up.

VIII. **Treasurer-Cheryl Provost:** Chairman Baldasaro provided overview of Department Head Meeting with focus on communication and discussion of comments related to unavailability of Treasurer for department turn-overs, and implementation of lock boxes for Treasurer and Tax collector. Treasurer Provost stated no-one has spoken directly to her regarding unavailability for turn-overs, noted other commitments (i.e. position in Westhampton) affect her hours here. Also stated she was not comfortable with the lock-box arrangement, feels it allows room for issues to develop, feels signed receipts should be given to departments when turn-overs are made. Discussion followed regarding Treasurers' hours and availability. Chairman Baldasaro requested Treasurer, Tax Collector and Town Clerk be present at 11/20/2017 meeting for review.

Chairman Baldasaro asked for an update on account status, Melissa Zwadski still helping Treasurer to finalize FY17, Treasurer optimistic should be final by end of next week.

Treasurer noted she has been balancing payroll on regular basis, deductions appear to be in order at this time. Also noted the payroll company changed software in May and feels payroll deductions and errors are related to that change. Discussion regarding payroll companies and voluntary retirement vendors followed, any changes made at Treasurers' discretion- Treasurer feels in good position with current payroll company now that errors are resolved, Universal has been responsive and helpful, Town will remain with Universal for now.

Bob Daly noted that Steve Cooper had called him at 5:00 regarding payroll deductions, Vice-Chairman Huntoon questioned why Mr. Cooper had called Bob, Mr. Daley felt it due to his interest in BOS meetings and issues, Treasurer provost noted that the issue had "been resolved weeks ago" and she had not been contacted by Mr. Cooper regarding the issue since. Chairman Baldasaro noted that contact should be direct with the Treasurer regarding these issues, not received "second hand".

Chairman Baldasaro asked for an estimate of how many hours a week the Treasurer commits to the position, Provost noted-5 hours on Mondays, 2-3 hours on Tues or Weds and 6-10 hours on Fridays. Vice-Chairman Huntoon asked if she felt overwhelmed, Provost stated that without assistance from Melissa, she would have, but is confident going forward.

IX. Citizen Comments:

Jeanne Leclair noted that DCR coming to discuss Gardner State Park, Chairman Baldasaro requested she draft a letter to request the re-opening of the Chester-Blandford State Forest campground.

John Foley noted concern regarding drainage ditches being blocked by leaves that were “blown” by landscaping company, Chairman Baldasaro asked if Mr. Foley had relayed the concern to Superintendent Murray, Clerk Senecal noted it is the homeowner’s responsibility to address the issue. Highway Department to review, contact homeowner to have their landscaper return and remove leaves, if homeowner fails to do so Vice-Chairman Huntoon stated we will bill the homeowner for any hours the Highway Department dedicates to the removal of the debris.

Bob Daley commented the BOS leadership and progress, Chairman Baldasaro noted we (The BoS) are all committed to increased dialogue to work toward changes for the good of all our communities. Bob Daley asked if the Board had a “Plan B” in regard to the GRSD, Clerk Senecal noted there is no “Plan B”, we must develop a jointly beneficial budget. Additional discussion of school and budget and regionally shared services. John Foley noted concern regarding shared services- “GRSD is a regional service-not working well-how will other shared services be different?” Chairman Baldasaro explained there would not be committee oversight to shared services, each Town would maintain its own controls. Clerk Senecal offered “we already have shared services-we just call it ‘mutual aid’” in relation to emergency service support. Bob also asked about security cameras for the Transfer Station-there was more vandalism over Halloween weekend - if any progress toward head phones for hearing impaired to attend BoS meetings had been made-S. Kucharski and P. Carlino researching, and if the Emergency Preparedness Plan is available yet (per his previous request) Chief Ilnicki to be asked to provide.

There being no further discussion Chairman John Baldasaro motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m., seconded by Vice-Chairman Huntoon, unanimous.

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING NOVEMBER 13, 2017 6:00 P.M.

Minutes submitted by: Rosanne McClaflin

John Baldasaro – Chairman

Barbara Huntoon – Vice-Chairman

Rene Senecal - Clerk