

Town of Chester

Board of Selectmen/Water Commissioners/Zoning Board of Appeals

Minutes

December 28, 2015

1. Chairman Donald Ellershaw called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Town administrator announced the meeting was being recorded.
2. Minutes from December 14, 2015 approved and signed. Warrants signed.
3. John Murray, Highway Department: John gave overview of work for past two weeks. (List on file). Has been having issues with trucks needing repairs, or needing to be looked at. He received an estimate of \$10,000 for all new brakes on the grader. Highway/CMELD working on storage for vehicles, due to size, etc. Blades for brush cutting came in today. John moved, Barbara 2nd, to sign the paperwork/notes for the borrowing for the new Highway\ Truck. Unanimous. Borrowing rate was 2.25%.

John M. also brought up discussion of increase in pay. He has been here almost a year (Jan 27). Pat noted that Tom Beck was given an increase of \$2.00 after six months, based upon a six month review and a performance review. This was to compensate for the fact that Mr. Beck took a \$1.00 pay cut from the former Highway super's pay. It should be noted that Mr. Murray started out at the same reduced pay, and has had no increase other than the 2% COL given to all employees for FY 16. The board said they would take it under advisement.

4. Andy Myers: Andy presented a "Memo of Understanding" between the towns of Chester, Blandford, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery and Russell, which is being passed around within the towns for Selectboard signatures. This agreement between the towns was generated By Rep. Smitty Pignatelli, based upon the same being generated in Berkshire County, and in conjunction with Gov. Bakers Joint Community Compact initiative. Don asked what kind of shared services this would allow. All agreed with the concept, and recognized that nothing would take place without much further discussion and approval by each board. Pat will follow up with Berkshire County agreement and keep all informed. Andy will let us know of the involvement from the other towns. While signing this Memo does not commit the town to any one project, it recognizes the fact that our towns need to start working together, not only on the school issues, but town issues as well. This will allow us to join with the other towns to submit an application for the Joint Community Compact program for the technical assistance needed to provide analysis and recommendations to the towns for their review and approval. John moved, Barbara 2nd, to sign the Memo of Understanding. Unanimous.

At this point John B moved to sign the warrant for the Special Town Meeting. Barbara 2nd. Unanimous. It will be held on Wednesday, Jan 13, 2016 at 7:00 and contain only two articles dealing with the School budget. In addition, a letter addressed to Rep. Kulik and Sen. Downing was also signed by the Chairman. This letter was asking for Special Legislation in regards to the

sending of late tax bills. The Special legislation would allow the bills to be payable 30 days from mailing. Without this, the town's cashflow will be severely compromised.

5. Board of Health: the Selectboard received a registered letter from the BOH with an "Order to Correct" in regards to debris that had been dumped on town property on William St. John B. was upset that the board did not just come and speak to us regarding this problem. While the issue has been resolved with the help of the highway department, he did not think it was handled properly. Pat contacted the BOH and N. MacDonald and S. Bishop came upstairs to speak with the board. Their opinion was that they needed to send the letter registered to cover their actions. Both John and Don felt that this was unnecessary and that the Board should have just come to talk to them. We are all one town and should work together. Discussion was held as to whose responsibility it was to clean up. The BOH felt it was the Selectboard, as they are the "town fathers" and the Selectboard felt it was the BOH responsibility. The Selectboard asked that in the future should something of this nature occur, that the BOH speak to Pat first about it to get it taken care of.
6. Pat announced that the Trust handling the Frank Hamilton Scholarship had called to say they had an extra \$1,000 to distribute. Pat asked if they could return it to the fund and was told no, that they would distribute \$167.00 additional to each of the six students receiving the scholarships this year. John B. indicated this has happened before, and asked Pat to inform the Bank that this was unacceptable.
7. Carl Baldasaro: Class II license. Barbara moved to grant the license. Don 2nd. Unanimous. It was noted that John B. abstained from this vote.
8. Zoning Issue: While this not being a formal meeting of the Zoning Board, some discussion was held regarding what we know of the 6 Hampden St. lot that is seeking a variance. Barbara noted that she had taken a ride by and felt that all of the lots adjacent were about the same. Don noted that there was some kind of documents that showed the property was sold as a "buildable lot" when it was purchased by Mr. Robinson. Barbara asked about the "shared driveway" and how that came into play with this lot. Pat will gather what information is available from the Assessors and any documentation and have it for our next meeting for us to look at. There apparently is a septic system plan that was approved a few years ago for the property also.
9. Citizens Comments: Ed Meecham is concerned with the amount of repairs going on with the highway trucks. Reason? They haven't been used. Why are they breaking down. We are spending a lot of money. G. Watters agreed. While the highway crew is fixing what they can, with the newer trucks, they must be brought to the dealer for repair due to the computerized mechanism of the vehicles. John B. feels the highway crew shouldn't be trying to work on the trucks unless for maintenance. He is concerned with number of breakdowns with the International and feel it might be time to get the dealer up here to explain why. Pat will discuss with John M. to see what we can do.

Mike Hickson asked about Solar Property income: This is the first year we should be seeing revenue from it. Pat will get particulars for next meeting.

The board then began discussion of the Excavator. Don feels that the crew is not giving it a chance, that it could be more useful if they wanted it to be. Barbara had spoken to John M. about his reasoning for not using it, ie; due to the stopping and starting, size, and bouncing that comes with it. Don disagreed. John B. said he did understand what John M. was saying, that he agreed a smaller version would work better and that if used in the road, it does require some kind of road closure/detail. Discussion of costs of running the excavator vs a farm tractor to cut brush. Discussion then started to revolve around highway work in general, about the expectations the board has of the department and what they feel is happening and what is not. The board felt that an "annual review" should take place for the superintendent. More discussion of putting a 4th person on the department. John B. felt that this was really the heart of the problem. We don't have enough workers. At one time had 7, now down to three. He feels that no matter who is in charge, the same issues will keep coming up due to lack of help.

At this point, John moved to adjourn the meeting. Barbara 2nd. Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Carlino
Town Administrator

Donald Ellershaw, Chairman

John Baldasaro, Vice Chairman

Barbara Huntoon, Clerk