

# TOWN OF CHESTER

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

### Meeting Minutes

April 23, 2018

Attendance: BOS-Chairman John Baldasaro, Vice-Chairman Barbara Huntoon, Clerk Rene Senecal, Town Administrator Patricia Carlino, Administrative Assistant Rosanne McClafin, Highway Superintendent John Murray, Gene Watters, Bob Daly, Olwen Dowling, John & Wilma Foley, Steve Cooper, Cheryl Provost Treasurer, Beverly Cooper Accountant, Stephanie Bodendorf, Kathy Engwer, Peter Spotts/Sean Callahan (Country Journal)

- I. Chairman Baldasaro called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. on April 23, 2018**
- II. Minutes from last BOS meeting date 4/9/2018 were approved and signed.**
- III. Warrants were approved and signed.**
- IV. Accountant-Beverly Cooper:** Chairman Baldasaro asked if the free cash figure was available, Cooper indicated that free cash was estimated “about \$200,000.00, but that the figure still needs to be verified with the Treasurer. There is currently a \$12,000.00 difference between the Treasurer and Accountant’s figures. Baldasaro asked if they (Treasurer and Accountant) were doing monthly reconciliations, Cooper stated “no”. Chairman Baldasaro noted that the BOS had directed the Treasurer and Accountant to reconcile monthly. Additional discussion followed resulting in the determination for the Accountant to come back to the BOS meeting once the Treasurer was available.
- V. Olwen Dowling- request for East River Road update:** Dowling asked for an update on the status of the East River Rd. project and indicated that Comcast had completed their work on E. River Rd. Chairman Baldasaro explained that a Chapter 90 project request for the culvert work was being added to the project and that the bid package should be ready to be advertised by April 30, bids should be submitted and reviewed within 3-4 weeks and that construction should begin within the first two weeks of July. Dowling questioned the amount of the Chapter 90 request for culverts and Baldasaro indicated that a request for \$80,000.00 was submitted. He also noted that they did not expect to use the full amount, they were adding “a buffer” as they “do not want to be short”. Dowling also asked if guardrails had been addressed and Baldasaro explained that although they were not included in this project, if there were grant funds “left over”, funds may be used toward guardrails. Ms. Dowling noted that she would “get the word out” regarding the update.
- VI. Highway Department-John Murray:** Murray noted the Department was preparing for pothole season and as soon as the temperatures were warm enough to transport and keep the hot mix asphalt hot they would begin. A discussion of Cold In-Place Recycling (CIPR) process for road rehabilitation followed, Clerk Senecal noted it works well under certain circumstances and is used on a “case by case” basis. Superintendent Murray noted that the road base needs to be in good condition in order to utilize this process. Chairman Baldasaro referenced an email from Kathy Stevens with questions regarding East River Rd. (Stevens is the

MassDOT District One State Aid Engineer) She questioned the Town's plan to "top" roads that have been reclaimed but need additional asphalt, a discussion followed regarding Superintendent Murray's plans for "topping" the roads and future use of anticipated Chapter 90 funds. Murray to prepare a strategy to address these concerns. Clerk Senecal questioned "why we haven't applied for "TIP" funds" and Administrator Carlino noted that although there had been some discussion, no steps had been taken to "get on it", and that the process can take many years before funds become available. Carlino noted that it was 13 years between the time the Town of Lee submitted a project proposal for TIP funds and construction began. Clerk Senecal noted that it is unlikely for a "first year" project submission to be accepted, but once you "are on" the funds will be awarded. Chairman Baldasaro instructed Murray to put together a project presentation for Middlefield Road. Vice-Chairman Huntoon asked how the International was running, Murray noted that as of right now it was running fine. Huntoon asked about the grader and Murray shared that he had not been successful in locating a 4-wheel drive rental, but that Pittsfield Lawn & Tractor does rent 2-wheel drive models. Murray shared that he was researching information about purchasing surplus military vehicles as well. Clerk Senecal stated that Fire Departments usually get first preference through these programs. Chairman Baldasaro stated he felt this was "a great idea" and instructed Murray to get in contact with Fire Chief Small and work together to determine options. Clerk Senecal requested approximate tonnage of asphalt be included in the E. River Rd. invitation to bid.

**At this time, Richard Holzman was not present and Administrative Assistant McClafin asked the BOS to allow the Recreation Committee to address the Board. Committee members Stephanie Bodendorf and Kathy Engwer were present.**

Bodendorf stated that Jason Fogue requested she question the BOS regarding the installation of cameras at the Emery Street ball field, Chairman Baldasaro stated the determination was yet to be made regarding funding and that "we will work on that". Bodendorf also questioned the process to be reimbursed for personal funds expended by committee members during the "work parties" at the ball field; Town Administrator Carlino clarified. Bodendorf requested that the BOS consider Kim Messek for appointment to the Recreation Committee, Vice-Chairman Huntoon motioned to appoint Kim Messek to the Chester Recreation Committee, Clerk Senecal seconded, unanimous. Committee member Kathy Engwer reminded the BOS that the Chairman usually addresses the residents during the Memorial Day ceremonies, that the annual Duck Race will be held May 19 and that the annual grinder sale will be at the Fire Station on Saturday.

- VII. **Richard Holzman (not present)-painting Transfer Station containers:** BOS noted no objection but that the determination must first be made as to the ownership of said containers.
- VIII. **Town Administrator- Patricia Carlino:** PVPC IT MOU (Memo of Understanding) for Community Collaborative IT services-signed. Carlino shared that The Berkshire Advisory group is disbanding but that the Berkshire Health Group will take over as advisor, letter to agreeing to allow the BHG to act as advisory board and procure insurance on behalf of the Town signed by BOS. Carlino requested authorization to transfer \$5000.00 from the Town Counsel account to Town Hall Expense account to cover cost of gutter work. Discussion followed regarding the work to be done and possible contractor to provide services. BOS authorized transfer. Carlino asked the Board if they would reconsider the proposed change to Annual Town meeting to be on either the first or third Monday in June which would allow Department personnel who

normally have office hours on the second Tuesday to attend. Chairman Baldasaro declined, stating he felt have the meeting on a night the Town Hall is normally open may improve attendance. Carlino reminded the BOS that JBQ Resources would be holding a public hearing on Monday April 30 at 6:30 in the Town Hall auditorium, the Board will move to postpone in order to attend the public hearing and then return to regular session when the hearing is over. Carlino to have a notice put on the Town website. Carlino noted that the finance Committee will be here next week with the Board of Assessors to discuss information provided by Andy Myers at last BOS meeting regarding possible use of assessor services provided by Regional Resource Group. Discussion followed regarding pros and cons related to regional services, additional discussion to be had at next BOS meeting. Vice-Chairman Huntoon asked about the "beaver situation", Carlino noted that additional emails and letters had been received and the Animal Control Officer and Board of Health member Terry Donovan would be in attendance at next BOS meeting to review.

Clerk Senecal suggested research into purchasing a new Christmas tree (the current one is dying) and it will take several years for the tree to mature. The Town will pay for the new tree.

Chairman Baldasaro referenced a memo regarding the July 21<sup>st</sup> One-Call-Away Foundation annual motorcycle ride that goes through Town. He noted that many towns show their support by having police and fire at road-side as well as veterans and residents, he would like a notice to be made on the fire department bulletin board to "get the word out". (The foundation aids in PTSD awareness and to further the aid in prevention of veteran's suicide.)

Vice-Chairman Huntoon asked about the status of the "new" sign for Route 20, Carlino to reach out to Jeannie Leclair for an update.

At this time Administrative Assistant McClafin was sent to collect the Treasurer (Cheryl Provost) and the Accountant Beverly Cooper) for additional discussion. Chairman Baldasaro asked why free cash numbers were not yet available. Provost noted that she was still finding discrepancies and was working on finalizing numbers. Baldasaro asked if Provost and Cooper were doing monthly reconciliations as they had been instructed to do by the BOS. Cooper noted that without accurate numbers and FY17 being "closed-out" they cannot reconcile monthly as they need "correct numbers to start from". Provost did note that bank accounts have been balanced monthly. Additional discussion followed regarding communication between Provost and Cooper, payroll posting errors, status of audit and the preliminary estimate for free cash. The determination was made for Cooper and Provost to submit free cash with the current \$12,000.00 discrepancy. Treasurer and accountant to keep "plugging away at it".

Chairman Baldasaro questioned Provost about her FY19 budget request referencing the Finance Committee report that she had requested increases with no clarification. Provost had requested a \$2000.00 salary increase and the addition of \$1200.00 for an Assistant Treasurer. After additional discussion regarding the Treasurer's responsibilities and work flow, Baldasaro noted that he was not opposed to an assistant and that it was "a good idea". Town Administrator Carlino to research local treasurer salaries.

Town Administrator Carlino clarified the disbanding of the Berkshire County Insurance Group would not affect Chester employee, Vice-Chairman Huntoon motion to terminate the agreement with the Berkshire County Insurance Group, Clerk Senecal seconded, unanimous.

**IX. Citizen Comments:** Bob Daley asked for an update on the status of a Health Agent, Carlino noted that the BOH was still interviewing people and that two agents may be hired, one for food inspections and one for PERC testing observation and reporting. Daley also asked if all members of the BOS would attend Wednesday's GRSD school committee meeting and support Jason Forgue's request for the district to reduce fees to the GYAA and GLL.

John Foley asked if the Town is required to be audited. Baldasaro noted that although it is not mandatory, it is highly recommended, especially when there is a change of Treasurer, that it adds confidence in our accounting and reporting, reduces the chance of problems with the DOR and any suspected financial mismanagement. Foley also question why the Treasurer and Accountant were not doing what the BOS had directed them to do (reconcile accounts monthly) Baldasaro noted that the BOS has no authority over elected officials. Additional discussion of the Treasurer position being changed to an appointed position followed, Baldasaro noted that to change the position, it must be voted on by the Town. He also noted the biggest advantage of having an appointed Treasurer included the ability to contract a professionally trained service provided and allow for the recourse to ensure quality job performance. Foley also relayed concern for the proposed Assessor Assessment RPG firm to "come in at a low price, then raise their rates", additional discussion followed regarding the interviews held with the three towns who currently use RPG and are satisfied with the results.

There being no further discussion Chairman Baldasaro motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING 4/30/2018 6:00 P.M.

Minutes respectfully 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

