

# TOWN OF CHESTER

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

### Meeting Minutes

May 14, 2018

Attendance: BOS-Chairman John Baldasaro, Vice-Chairman Barbara Huntoon, Clerk Rene Senecal, Town Administrator Patricia Carlino, Administrative Assistant Rosanne McClafin, Steve Cooper, Wilma Foley, John Foley, Andy Myers, Bob Daly, Mary Ann Pease, Joan Stalcup, Heather Hannigan, Richard Holzman

- I. **Chairman Baldasaro called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. on May 14, 2018**
- II. **Minutes from BOS meetings 4/30/2018 and 5/7/2018 were approved and signed.**
- III. **Warrants were not yet presented for approval.**
- IV. **Scholarship awards:** Town Administrator Carlino provided a list of applicants to the BOS. There were five applicants for the \$6000.00 Frank D. Hamilton scholarship. This scholarship is divided equally among the eligible applicants. The applicants were:

Nicholas Cooper 413-539-4562  
134 Prospect Street  
Chester MA 01011  
Attending: Western New England University

Benjamin Jameson 413-561-3550  
82 Lyman Road  
Chester MA 01011  
Attending: Holyoke Community College

Jessica Van Heynigen 413-667-5742  
85 Lyman Road  
Chester MA 01011  
Attending: Merrimack College  
University

Chelsea Edinger 413-770-6675  
28 Soisalo Road  
Chester MA 01011  
Attending: Western New England

Nicolas McClafin 413-354-2290  
61 Prospect Street  
Chester MA 01011  
Attending: Westfield State University

Vice-Chairman Huntoon motioned to award the Frank D. Hamilton scholarship equally among the five applicants, Nicholas Cooper, Jessica VanHeynigen, Chelsea Edinger, Nicolas McClafin and Benjamin Jameson, Clerk Senecal seconded, Chairman Baldasaro "aye", motion passed unanimously.

There were 3 applicants for the \$1,200.00 Theodore Steinhard scholarship. This scholarship is awarded to the applicant with the highest-grade point average. The applicants were:

Jessica Van Heynigen 413-667-5742  
GPA 4.14  
85 Lyman Road  
Chester MA 01011  
Attending: Merrimack College  
University

Chelsea Edinger 413-770-6675  
GPA 3.40  
28 Soisalo Road  
Chester MA 01011  
Attending: Western New England

Benjamin Jameson 413-561-3550  
GPA 3.27  
134 Prospect Street  
Chester MA 01011  
Attending: Western New England University

Vice-Chairman Huntoon motioned to award the Theodore Steinhard scholarship to Jessica Van Heynigen, Clerk Senecal seconded, Chairman Baldasaro “aye”, motion passed unanimously.

- V. **Discussion of advertising appointed positions (tabled from 5/7/2018 BOS meeting):** A list of the appointed positions was provided to the BOS. Clerk Senecal noted that the Highway Superintendent position was not on the list. Discussion followed regarding when the Superintendent’s appointment was increased for one to three years. After review of previous BOS minutes, it was clarified that the position had been given a three-year appointment in 2015, and thus was up for re-appointment. The Highway Superintendent’s position was added to the list of positions up for re-appointment. Town Administrator Carlino was instructed to advertise the list, and anyone interested in being reappointed will need to submit a request for reappointment. Any applicants wishing to be newly appointed to the positions will be interviewed by the BOS. Discussion moved to letter of support for the Town of Middlefield in their pursuit of a MassWORKS grant, the BOS will provide a letter of support to Middlefield.

At this time warrants were delivered.

The BOS approved the invoice from PVPC related to the grant administration of the Hampden Street water line replacement and road reclamation project. Vice-Chairman Huntoon asked if minutes from BOS meetings were digitized and Town Administrator Carlino noted minutes back to 2012 or 2013 were on-line but that older minutes were on still only available “on paper”. Chairman Baldasaro felt this would be “a good project to get done”, Carlino suggested utilizing an intern to work on the project. Chairman Baldasaro returned the discussion to the appointed positions and the possible use of shared services for some of the positions. Baldasaro noted that the Blandford BOS Chairperson, Cara Letendre had approached him to discuss the option of sharing services with Chester for a professional

administrative position, Board of Health, Building Inspector and police services. Baldasaro noted that Chester is “willing to discuss” these options. Town Administrator Carlino offered that Lee and Lenox “share” a Town Administrator and that there is approximately a 95% approval rating for his services. After further discussion it was determined that no decisions were to be made ‘tonight’ and that a joint Boards of Selectmen meeting should be scheduled for further discussion.

VI. **Assessors/Finance Committee:** Chairman Baldasaro offered that the Board felt there was a misconception regarding the information provided by the Finance Committee about the assessors’ services provided by RRG. Baldasaro asserted that no one wants to “get rid of the BOA” and that the BOS and Finance Committee have been looking at multiple ways to increase efficiency, improve services and save money for the Town in all departments. Assessor Heather Hannigan stated that the BOA was not in favor of hiring an outside service that would eliminate Principal Assessor Pam Anderson’s position, and that they felt it was important to have someone here for “face-to-face” service to town residents. Clerk Senecal asked if Pam Anderson was coming to the meeting and Hannigan stated “no”. Finance Committee Chair Andy Myers noted that when Worthington left the school district, the towns applied to the DLS (Division of Local Services) for assistance. DLS recommended regionalizing services to aid in providing financial relief to the district and the Hilltown Collaborative was created to work toward that goal. Myers also explained that some of the advantages of utilizing an outside service would include: software conversion and upgrades, access to a “help-desk” 40 hours a week, a person on site for service, commercial reevaluations, no liability to the Town for employee benefits, updated maps and property owner information on the Town website including assessor maps, and the implementation of best practices by a professional assessing company that serves 27 Massachusetts towns, disadvantages would be the loss of local staff and the adjustment to new procedures. After lengthy discussion, Chairman Baldasaro asked the Assessors to review the information provided by RRG and the Finance Committee and determine what “would work” and work jointly to develop an RFP for services. Additional Finance Committee business included discussion of the proposed Alternative Assessment plan. Five of the six towns are “on board” with the plan but Russell is demonstrating “strong opposition”. The Finance Committee suggested Chester provide funds to the GRSD to offset the imbalance of the assessment to Russell. A proposed warrant article was provided to the BOS for review. The BOS in agreement to put the Article on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. The proposed article reads:

“To see if the Town will take from Free Cash the amount of \$40890.00, as a one-time only payment to Gateway Regional School District to allow the School Assessment Stabilization Plan to be implemented by offsetting the imbalance of the assessment to the Town of Russell. This Article is contingent on all towns approving the Stabilization Amendment in their FY19 budgets. This Article will save the Town of Chester \$92,941.00 versus the Statutory Assessment Method if the Stabilization Amendment does not pass”.

Finance Committee member Bob Daley made a request that \$2250.00 be allotted each year to the Recreation Committee to continue to “build” the Emery Street ballfield and “kick-start”

a “play-space”. Chairman Baldasaro offered no opposition and suggested an article for the use of Free Cash and to allow for discussion among residents at Town Meeting. Clerk Senecal stated we are “eating away” Free Cash and questioned cost of “new Christmas Tree”, Town Administrator Carlino noted that she was still waiting on a price for a tree.

Chairman Baldasaro asked if the BOS had discussed the previously requested .50 @ hour increase for the two Highway Department employees that obtained new specialty licenses as requested by Superintendent Murray. Clerk Senecal noted that past practice had been to provide the additional compensation when additional or upgraded licensing but questioned if the increase had been incorporated into FY19 budget. Discussion followed regarding total cost of the proposed increase, Vice-Chairman Huntoon interjected that “while on Highway”, it had been suggested to her by her father that the Highway Department consider “renting” a grader with an operator versus renting a grader that a Town employee would operate. She quoted a \$90.00 per hour rate from White Wolf and noted this action would “free up our guys with so much to do”. Clerk Senecal noted that it would take extensive planning to coordinate Highway Department support for this service. Chairman Baldasaro felt it would be worth looking into and instructed Administrative Assistant McClafin to research pricing.

Andy Myers reminded the BOS that “dog software” was also an item being proposed at Town meeting with cost to be covered by Free Cash, the Chairman stated, “let the Town vote”.

Myers informed the BOS that The Chester Theater purchased banners to “put up” to generate interest in the Theater and that CMELD volunteered to put them up.

Chairman Baldasaro brought the topic back to the proposed .50 increase and Clerk Senecal stated that he thought they had voted last week on the item. Vice-Chairman Huntoon noted that they had not voted as the Chairman was not present at the May 7 meeting. Clerk Senecal motioned to approve a .50 an hour pay increase to the employees who had obtained new specialty licenses, Vice-Chairman Huntoon seconded, unanimous. Myers noted that the Finance Committee was also in favor of the increase.

The Chairman returned to the topic of advertising the appointed positions and instructed Town Administrator Carlino to post the complete list and let people “apply for what they want”. All in agreement.

- VII. **Town Administrator-Patricia Carlino:** Carlino informed the BOS that Water Treatment plant operator Bernie St. Martin received a quote from Elm Electric of \$10,474.00 for a new Water Treatment plant computer system with all “upgrades”. Clerk Senecal stated he thought Elm Electric had replaced logic boards and had “done a lot” just before he left the Highway Department position. Chairman Baldasaro instructed Carlino reach out to Elm Electric and request they attend a BOS meeting to discuss work that was done in the past and the current quote. Vice-Chairman Huntoon suggested Carlino find invoices to research past work. Carlino provided the BOS with the proposed host agreement from JBQ Enterprise for review and future discussion.

Clerk Senecal stated he had a few questions.

- He asked if there was an answer on the “tag sale issue”, Carlino noted that she sent a letter to the resident reminding them of the required permit and associated \$5.00 fee. Carlino did state that she was unable to confirm the restriction of only 2 allowed tag sales per address, Chairman Baldasaro noted it was a Town By-law.
- Senecal also asked if the East River Road bid had gone out, Administrative Assistant noted yes.
- He also asked if there was a timetable for when a Nutmeg representative would attend a BOS meeting, McClaflin stated no, she would review with Superintendent Murray.
- He questioned if the Conservation Commission had been contacted to review the East River Road culvert repair, McClaflin stated yes, and that she had Conservation Commission member R. Duane Pease document Conservation Commission approval.

Carlino noted that the “new” 2018 Transfer Station window permits were in and that she would put a notice on the Town website as well as asking the Fire Department to put notice on the bulletin board on Rote 20, Transfer Station attendant Stroganow will also have signage at the Transfer Station. It was also noted that the Transfer Station will be closed Wednesday July 4 and open Thursday July 5.

Clerk Senecal presented a replica check for \$130,170.00 received from The Department of Energy Resources for Chester’s Green Community certification and participation. He was also provided with four Green Community notification signs to be put up at Town lines. The signs will be put up by the Highway Department.

The Chairman also noted that he had a complaint about “the two trucks on Chester Hill doing street sweeping” and stated that he thought the “new blower” should be utilized. He also stated that the Highway Superintendent needs to ensure culverts are installed at the “curb cuts” where logging is being done on Johnson Hill. Administrative Assistant McClaflin to notify Highway Department.

Vice-Chairman Huntoon relayed that Jason Fogue was concerned that the Emery Street ball field be mowed on a schedule to accommodate scheduled events, McClaflin to notify Donald Gauthier of requested schedule.

Richard Holzman stated he “would be happy” to have the Transfer Station recycling containers painted. After discussion it was determined that the container used to contain returnables and the welds on the Town recycling container would be painted. Chairman Baldasaro instructed Carlino to contact Andy Delnickas to see about removal of the unused container.

Administrative Assistant McClaflin noted that the Community Service work crew would be cleaning roadsides on Thursday May 17. She also asked the BOS for approval to request funds to be carried over to FY19 by the accountant for the Nutmeg bills related to the International truck repairs that the BOS has yet to approve. She also advised the BOS that the Highway Salary account was close to being depleted, she will need to do more research and report back to the BOS.

**VIII. Items tabled from May 7, 2018 BOS meeting:**

- Discussion of proposed Route 20 illuminated sign, Carlino to ask Economic Director Jeannie Leclair to research possible grants.
- Carlino informed the BOS that there was only one submission for the RFP for proposed shared accounting service. The proposed cost is \$40,000.00 for the first year of participation, \$35,000.00 the second year and \$36,000.00 for the third year. Chairman Baldasaro stated it “doesn’t look like this will happen this year”.
- Carlino informed the BOS that she was still waiting for a price for a “new Christmas Tree” and the Chairman suggested use of free cash to purchase.

**IX. Citizen Comments:**

- John Foley asked for clarification regarding the .50 increase for Highway employees who upgrade or procure new licensing, the Chairman noted the increase only applies to licenses utilized by the department.
- Bob Daley asked for confirmation for the audit date, Carlino noted that it was still scheduled for June 4.

**There being no further discussion Chairman Baldasaro adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.**

**NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING 5/21/2018 6:00 P.M.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Rosanne McClafin

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John Baldasaro – Chairman

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Barbara Huntoon – Vice-Chairman

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Rene Senecal - Clerk