

**Town of Chester Board of Selectmen/Water Commissioners/Zoning Board of Appeals**

**Minutes**

**October 22, 2018**

**In attendance: Board Members, Town Administrator, Katherine Warden, and various members of the public (Barbara Huntoon not in attendance)**

1. V. Chairman John Baldasaro opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. Warrants signed. Minutes of 10/15 submitted.
2. **Accountant/Treasurer:** the Board had asked Paula Beck and Cheryl Provost to be in attendance to give them an update on how the reconciliation process was coming along. Both agreed that it was coming along, and seems to be working well, and they are making progress. But they are just not there yet. The part time accountant, Kathy Borden is back now, and she and Paula are working on closing out FY 2018, as well as FY 2017. Pat to reach out to former Accountant Bev Cooper to see about Journal Entries and where they might be. John remarked that this was the #1 priority of the auditors, reconciling, and he was glad to hear that it was coming along. Paula stated she would like to reconcile quarterly once they get to that point. John asked if they had an approximate time. Both felt that December 31, 2018 would be a reasonable date. John then asked if they had any needs that the Board could help with. Paula stated she has tried to connect with Tom Scanlon, the auditor, numerous times, but he has not gotten back to her. Pat will reach out to him and ask him for his help. There are adjustments that the auditors recommended to be made, but neither Paula no Cheryl know if they have been made, or how to make them.
3. John B. read a resignation letter from Doug Noel, Highway Laborer, effective November 16, 2018. The Board thanked him for his 7 years of service and wished him well.

Duane Pease asked about any plans for Middlefield Rd., as it is in very bad condition. John B. stated that he had plans for this week, and would convey them to Doug. Rene would like to get the Fire Department to help out with cleaning some of the culverts. Mrs. Foley expressed her concern for a culvert that is blocked and broken across from the Bolduc's property. John will look into it also. Bob Daley remarked of a culvert on Andrews that is also blocked. John B. stated they need to make to correct these problems by instituting a maintenance plan that goes on all year. Bob asked about the International. John stated it was now at Nutmeg. Bob asked if the ad for the transfer station had been in the Country Journal. Pat stated yes. Rene talked about getting some figures into a plan for culvert work next year.

#### **4. Eileen Leahey: Comcast Representative**

The 10 year contract with Comcast is up in 2020 and Eileen was here to discuss any changes, goals, etc. that might be part of the next contract. The build out is complete throughout town. The original order called for 232 parcels to be connected, but 263 parcels were connected in the end. There have been very few technical problems to date.

John B. is not in favor of a 10 year contract. He might possibly only go for a two year contract. He has a concern that the original contract called for 125' layout. Most of Chester's layouts are more than that. Eileen to check the numbers. He feels the two biggest issues are Service Quality and Pricing. Eileen cannot negotiate pricing. What will rates be for the next two years? Rene feels there is an unfair variable for existing customers vs new customers. Existing customers feel that new customers can get better package and rates than themselves. Eileen said customers should speak directly with a Comcast rep to see what they can do for themselves for better packages & rates. John asked what kind of commitment can they make as to service area goes. Will it be the same service as Springfield. Eileen said yes

John B. suggested that the town hall needed more email addresses. Currently we are only allowed 5-6 and in today's world that is not acceptable. Connectivity is also an ongoing issue. Ellen will have someone reach out to Pat to discuss the issue. John asked if the current "drops" were updated technology drops. He doesn't believe so. TV costs for town hall? Eileen stated we could look into all of this. John asked from Comcast's view, what are they looking at? He is not crazy about a ten year contract. For now, Comcast will send someone out here to go over the concerns, then we will have another meeting, as well as a Public Meeting is needed at some point during the negotiations.

John asked about Community Broadcasting? Is there a way? Through a grant? Bob Daley stated that there was equipment available, although it was probably antiquated, from before, when there was a community broadcast system at Gateway. We can discuss this as well. It was in the original contract. Eileen said a Chris Ziegler will be calling Pat.

Bob Daley asked the status of the IT grant. The Board signed an agreement tonight to move the process along. Pat will be speaking with PVPC tomorrow.

John B. explained that East River Rd. is moving along. Unfortunately the weather has been somewhat difficult. Further discussion of roads. John will be in touch with Doug about his plan for Middlefield Rd. Line Painting? Chapter 90 funds were approved for when we are ready.

#### **5. Highway Laborer/Truck Driver Interviews**

At this time the Board entertained four people for the soon to be two vacant positions in the Highway Dept. the following candidates were interviewed and asked the same questions.

Responses were fairly close. Below is an overview of the qualities/or lack thereof, of the four. Questions:

1. Why do you want this position? Are you looking to stay on or is this a stepping stone to something else?
2. Any mechanical experience.?

3. What equipment have you run? Any grader experience?
4. Wintertime experience? Long hours. Plowing experience?
5. Work with the water department? Cemetery department?
6. Licenses?
7. Work with a "new team"?
8. Availability?
9. Financial needs?

**Eric Besancon:** Looking for stability, and to stay. 30 years of mechanical experience on just about everything. Has run bulldozers, backhoes, excavators, bobcats, dump trucks, plow trucks. No grader experience. Plowed for State using F350. Holds a DOT card currently, but would have to get relicensed for the CDL and get 2B Hoisting license, as well as the 4G license. Doesn't mind the winter work, or overtime. Water Department and Cemetery Department okay also. Can get along with a team. Can start almost immediately as he is currently in his own business. No specific financial rate given.

**Sam Bandowski :** Sam has worked in Chester for two years as a summer intern. He likes the variety that comes with the job. Has a little mechanical ability. Has operated mostly had held equipment. No grader experience. Does know how to run a backhoe and mini excavator. Does have some mowing experience. No licenses, but would be willing to get them. Does have a DOT card and has started studying for the others. He has flushed hydrants, and cleaned filters for the water department. Not worried about getting along with a team. Not lots of experience in the trucks and has not really snow plowed before. Weather doesn't bother him. Would be willing to obtain all licenses needed. He would need at least \$15.00 per hr.

**Corey Sparks;** Looking for a stable environment for work. Likes this kind of work. Has some mechanical experience in fixing small hand held equipment and routine maintenance of trucks, whatever he could. Weedwhackers, backhoes, hydraulic lines. He has run Backhoes, front end, bobcats, mini excavators and 550 dumptrucks with sander/plow. He is fine with winter work and overtime. It's expected. No grader experience. Would like working with a team. No specific financial numbers discussed.

**Jonah Degorlas:** Wants to start a new career. Long term hire. Has some hydraulics, tractor, excavator and backhoe experience. He's ready for a new start and would look forward to working with a team. Wants to work with people who enjoy their job. Not much plowing experience, but has done some driveway work. Okay with winter weather and 24 hour call in when necessary. Has no problem working with water department and cemetery. Has DOT card. Will be taking test for 2B Hoisting in November. Has to wait until 21 for CDL licensing. No specific number given for a rate of pay. Asked if he could work more than 40 hours consistently. Rene explained the finances of working for a town.

The Board told each candidate that they planned on making a decision tonight on two new hirings. After the interviews the Board discussed the pros and cons of each one, their

strengths and weaknesses. After much discussion it was agreed between the members, with a motion by John B. to hire Eric Besancon and Corey Sparks, seconded by Rene S. Unanimous.

More discussion held regarding hourly rate, etc. It was resolved that due to the licensing requirements requested in the advertisement that there needed to some sort of adjustment for Eric Besancon, but also some credit for his mechanical abilities.

The current base pay for the position is \$21.28 pr hr.

Eric will be offered a rate of \$19.28, and upon completion of each license will immediately receive a .50 raise per hour for each. And at the end of a 6 month probationary review in the positive, receive a final .50 per hr. raise to get to the current rate. He will have six months to obtain at least the CDL and 2B hoisting. If extraordinary events keep him from making that deadline, the Board can extend the time period if they so choose.

Corey will be offered \$19.78 as base rate, with an additional .50 after receiving his 4G license, and a final \$1.00 at the end of his six month probationary review in the positive, which will bring him up to the current rate. Pat to contact both with offers.

Pat will research with Registry and Pubic Safety as to times/classes/process in obtaining necessary licenses.

Annette La Mountain spoke up that she would have made the same decisions as the board.

Tom Beck did not think the Board highlighted the road work involved enough.

Bob Daley felt the board had good questions for the candidates and though the Comcast discussion went well.

John Foley also agreed with the choices

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Carlino

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Barbara Huntoon, Chairman

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John Baldasaro, Vice Chairman

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Rene Senecal, Clerk