

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

Minutes

November 19, 2018

In attendance: Board Members, Town Administrator and various members of the public.

1. Chairman Huntoon called the meeting to order at 6:00. Minutes of 11/5/18 were signed and Warrants were signed.
2. Mary Ann Pease, Library Trustee: Mary Ann reported that William Ivey Long had accepted the offer made to him by the Library Trustees to purchase a piece of property from his property at 10 Middlefield Rd. The Library will pay for the survey, lawyer, closing costs, etc. This should be a fairly easy procedure as it would be a Form A subdivision. The Board was very encouraging and told Mary Ann they did a great job!
3. Barb, do we have a mailbox policy if our trucks take one down? John B. said yes, and he had already taken care of it.
4. Barbara then brought up the subject of holding a special election to replace Rene Senecal's seat on the Board. Her reason for believing they should is that what if there is a Highway decision that needs to be made and John B. can't vote? John disagreed, pointing out that by the time an election could be called we would be into January, and that person would have to put in papers by March to run in the May election. He said he would not disagree if she was insistent that we hold one, but he thought it somewhat a waste of time, money and energy. Bob Daley asked about the cost effectiveness? Pat will research time elements. Kathe Warden spoke up and contributed that a time period of a 100 days would bring us into the time frame John spoke of.
5. Barbara discussed plans for Friday night's Tree Lighting at 6:30 p.m. She brought copies of the songs to be sung, Pat needs to make more. Pat will ask Dave Pierce to set up some tables and chairs.
6. John B. reported that the McDonald suit brought against the Board had been settled by our Attorney Courtney Mayo.
7. John gave an overview of the Highway activities over the first storm. New crew, couple of complaints, John is pleased with the new crew. They are working well together. They had a couple of mechanical issues, but are working those out in house. Grader is actually working, and they are moving it around to keep the brakes working. Barb asked about Rte. Old Huntington Rd. being down to one lane. John explained how it worked when plowing, and it was widened after the first sweep.

Mr. & Mrs. Foley pointed out a few places where there was further work needed.

8. At this time Treasurer Cheryl Provost approached the Board with a request to have her mother appointed Assistant Treasurer, a separate line item approved at Annual Town Meeting, for the primary purpose of putting together tax title information, which has not been updated in quite a while. She also requested that Ms. Provost be paid the whole amount over the course of her employ, rather than prorated, given that almost half the year is gone by. It was discussed that Mary Provost had once before been the Asst. Treasurer in Chester years ago, so should be an asset. Cheryl will sign disclosure and give to Town Clerk. Barbara H. moved to appoint Mary Provost as Asst. Treasurer, and to approve the monetary request, John B. seconded. Unanimous. Cheryl then reported that Paula Beck was great and they were able to work together quite a bit.
9. Pat explained that the request to look into Hampshire County COG program for health insurance benefits through them, rather than through the BHG program, requires the town to send a letter to the group asking for Chester's admittance to the program. The Board approved Pat to send such a letter. At the same time, she will look into MIIA rates as well.
10. Employee handbook discussion. Pat has finally got a draft copy ready for inspection by the Board. There are a few changes she knows that need to be done, and if there is any input from the Board, before finalizing the document at a subsequent meeting.
11. Bill Clark and his daughter, Madison, were In attendance to ask the Board's approval in her attending Smith Vocational program for nursing this year. After discussion, the Board approved in her attending the program. Pat to prepare paperwork for Gateway.

Citizens Comments;

Andy Myers was in attendance to remind the Board of various meetings, such as Hilltown Collaborative, which Barb will attend, and the MARS meeting, which John B. will attend. Barb questioned if there are exit interviews done with students/parents when they decide to leave Gateway? Andy said he wasn't aware of that, but it would make sense. In that way we could find out what the driving force of the students was when they leave Gateway. Currently surveys are sent out each year, but not many come back. At this time the school is concentrating on the "Vaping" issue, which is of great concern.

Barbara is concerned about students leaving for vocational programs, shouldn't Gateway be marketing their school?

John and Wilma Foley: Heard a rumor that John B. got stuck In a ditch during the storm. John said yes he did, he was trying to widen the roadway, and got off into mud, which was unforgiving, and necessitated a tow out.

Bob Daley was concerned with the number of students leaving Gateway. Do we have anything to say about the Superintendent's evaluation? Andy responded no, but that we have a few new school committee members this year, which may make a difference. Bob also wondered if Chester ever received any FEMA reimbursement for Irene? John assured him we did. Also wondered about the IT grant. Pat responded that it is coming along. Hope to hear something by middle of December. There was an inspection last week of our wiring system for the IT repair services.

John Foley asked about the auditor's suggestion that CMELD and the Accountant were on different schedules in their reconciliation. That is being worked on.

BOS is looking for the Accountant's monthly report. They haven't seen one for October. Pat will contact Paula for next week, and then for November's on Dec. 4th.

John Foley feels that the appointment procedure is not being done properly. John B. disagreed. Barbara reinforced that this is a problem, no one is applying for boards or committees, or even some paying jobs, so when they get someone who does apply, they are usually appointed immediately. John explained about the process between certain positions which are different than normal hirings.

Andy believes there may be something we need to do when we appoint a school committee member to fill a vacancy according to the school agreement. Pat will inquire.

There being no further business, John Baldasaro moved to adjourn. Barbara Huntoon seconded. Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 7:08.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Carlino

Barbara Huntoon, Chairman

John Baldasaro, Vice Chairman
