

Town of Chester Selectmen/Water Commissioners/Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting Minutes for March 4, 2019

Attending: Select Board members Barbara Huntoon & John Baldasaro, Town Administrator Kathe Warden and various members of the public

Barbara opened the meeting at 6:00pm, the Select Board recorded the meeting. Minutes of February 25, 2019 were reviewed and signed. Warrants were signed.

New Business

Glenn Posey – informal discussion about opening an independent testing lab for adult use marijuana – Glenn presented a plan to build an independent testing facility at 1 Birch Circle in Chester. The lot has approximately 12.02 acres and is adjacent to his home at 484 Skyline Trail. The facility would be approximately 3000sq. feet. Glenn holds an MBA in science, is a Navy veteran, and taught chemistry so has a strong background in this type of work. This would be the only lab in the western part of the state. Glenn would like the Town's approval to move forward with the project. Glenn is aware of all the regulations by both the Town and the Cannabis Control Commission. John asks for a copy of the Zoning Bylaws, to verify whether or not the area is zoned for business, John confirmed the area is zoned for agriculture and residential but in reviewing the bylaws, it was clear the area isn't zoned for business and the law is specific that there can't be labs in the area and can't be granted a special permit. Glenn said that he is interested in establishing a lab in Chester and asked if there are any buildings that could be repurposed. Barbara excused herself from the discussion due to her family interest in a commercial zoned property in town. John explained that there are 2 commercial buildings currently for sale. Heather Anello said Glenn was interested in repurposing originally and wants to create the least amount of impact on the town. Barbara asked about employment, Glenn said he is looking to hire veterans, first responders. Barbara asked about hiring locals and Glenn said that if they can pass the background check and be able to be trained to do the testing, he would be glad to. John asked about financing, Glenn said he would have four investors, but he would be owner and manager. John said he and Barbara both are open to any new business coming to Chester. John Foley asked more specifics about the employees, Glenn said that they must be over 21, pass a background check, and have a science background or be analytical. Employees would be considered agents for the state and would be certified to run the testing equipment. Bob Daley asked if there is a cap on the number of labs in the State and Glenn said there is a limit of 10, but currently there are two, one in Milford and the other in Salem. There is a research lab in Framingham but isn't considered a testing facility. Glenn asked when they could be on the agenda again and it was decided to be March 18.

Departments and Committees

Cheryl Provost, Treasurer – Updated on the payroll issue of a malware attack on Universal Payroll. Universal said there was an attack, but no data breach. Cheryl provided a statement from the software company. Assistant Treasurer Mary Provost and Tax Collector Mary Ann Pease are balancing the tax title accounts. John asked how many accounts are in tax title and Cheryl said between 12 and 15. John asked the age of the accounts that are in Tax title, and she said they

have been quite a few years. She stated this has been on the back burner but now that everything has been caught up, there will be a focus on getting the accounts up to date. Mary Ann's new software will have a tax title program system which will make it easier to stay on track with everything. The Treasurer should be the Tax Title Custodian, and May Ann has been doing it since former Treasurer Lisa Edinger left. Barbara asked how long the process is for tax taking. Cheryl said it must be published in the paper and then it is one year before it can be taken, giving the owner time to get it paid. Cheryl said the taking is when the collector turns the properties over to the Treasurer. John would like to know what the total dollar amount is. John asked how things are going with Accountant Paula Beck and her. Cheryl said on Tuesdays, they were together getting caught up and talk over any questions they may have had. Cheryl paid off the East River Rd note and despite the School bill also being due, cash flow is fine.

Old Business

Review of letter from Springfield MRF (Material Recovery Facility)– Kathe explained that the MRF contract (for recycling) will be ending in June of 2020. A new community agreement is needed by December 19, 2019. Kathe had asked Kathleen Casey about the length of the contract and she said the current contract had been a 10-year contract. There is language that was included in the letter to be put on the ATM warrant, for the Town of vote to let the Select Board to enter into negotiations of the contract. Barbara asked if there were any other options for recycling facilities, and Kathe said Tam in Pownal Vt was the only other facility she knew of. John said it should be on the ATM warrant so the Town would be able to negotiate a contract in the future and Barbara agreed.

Town Administrator Update: Natalie Blais' office sent over a letter asking for assistance in identifying capital infrastructure needs in the 1st Franklin District. The information will be for her to advocate for funding opportunities that could become available. She is requesting a limit of 3 capital infrastructure projects not to exceed \$100,000. John said he was sure there were projects that we could come up with. Kathe suggested possible repairs of or a new roof for town hall. She said that Natalie would like to hold an open office session at town hall on the last week of March and will get back with some dates for it.

Citizens Comments

*Kris Lee asked why Hampden Street was plowed today so there is only one lane until the end of the day when it was opened. It is very hard for the mail carrier to get up the road. Kris doesn't understand why they can't do two passes the first time. Barbara asks why they don't turn around and come back down. John thought the driver went up Hampden St then went up to Blandford Rd. John explained that all secondary roads get opened with a single lane at first then the crew goes back and pushes the snow back to widen the roads.

*Former Highway Department employee, Steve Cooper said it should only take 3 guys 4 – 5 hours to plow the entire town. John said it takes them more than that and with a new crew it is taking them time to learn their routes. Barbara said over the weekend she drove a number the roads in town, particularly dirt roads, to check out their condition and it took her a couple of hours to do so and she wasn't plowing, so she doesn't believe the plowing could be done in 4 hours. She asked Steve how the independent contractors hired in the past fit into the 3-men 4-hour scenario, but he didn't answer. Steve continued to question John on Highway Department

procedures, but the conversation came to an impasse, so Barbara said “It’s clear Highway has some issues they are working on and this conversation is not going to solve them so we need to move on”. She also stated drivers, any drivers have a responsibility if they are on a road that doesn’t feel safe or properly plowed, to pull over and call for help. Highway will respond as soon as possible. She said she appreciated everyone coming in with their concerns and not just posting them on the Chester Community Facebook Page which, while it has its value, its not the ideal format for cohesive communication on issues between complainants and the departments that can solve those issues.

*Bob Daley asked if the Assessors had rsvp’d on the meeting next week and Kathe said no one was in the office today but she would be asking them tomorrow. Bob also asked about if there needed to be a spending freeze and John asked what he was talking about. Bob heard John say they were close to overdrawing the account. John explained that was the snow and ice account and the Town can deficit spend on that account. He went on to state the account is just starting to go over and it won’t be a large number like it has been in the past few years.

*Barbara said on Tuesday 12th, Ann Daley is driving a group in the COA bus to Pittsfield to take the train to Springfield for a public meeting for the East – West Rail at 2:30pm. If anyone wants to attend, please let Barbara know. Each person going will pay his or her own train ticket (\$12) and kick in \$10 each for gas for the van.

*Barbara also reminded everyone this coming Saturday, March 9th, is the Maplefest on Chester Hill and encouraged everyone to come if they can. .

*Steve Cooper asked if the East River Road came on budget. John said it was 5% over budget but there are many issues with the road and John is meeting with Lane Const. next Tuesday to discuss those issues.

Barbara motioned to adjourn at 7:12pm, John seconded the motion, all vote aye.

Respectfully submitted

Katherine Warden

Barbara Huntoon Chair

John Baldasaro Vice Chair

Vacancy – Clerk

Meeting Minutes for March 4,2019 contain 3 pages