

## **Town of Chester Selectmen/Water Commissioners/Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting Minutes for March 11, 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 March 4, 2019 were reviewed and signed. Warrants were signed.

### **New Business**

**Discussion with the Assessors about the Assessor's Office** – Kathe said that the Assessors' respectfully declined meeting with the Select Board

**Discussion and possible vote to ask Department of Local Services (DLS) to create a financial forecast and financial policies for the town** – John said he had read the report DLS had created for the Town of Windsor and was impressed with it. Barbara asked if there was a cost to the Town and Kathe said there is no charge to the Town. John made a motion to ask DLS to create a financial forecast and financial policies for the town, Barbara seconded the motion, and all voted aye.

### **Departments and Committees –**

\*Mary Ann Pease, Tax Collector said she received an offer for the Slocum property for \$35,000. She said to have the sale, it needs to go back to Town Meeting for a vote to put the property out to bid, since it was passed over at the last Town Meeting. If passed, she will list the property as a sealed bid, since only the two abutters can bid on it. She said Fish and Game is also interested and would like to purchase the property before the end of the fiscal year. Discussion of when to hold a Special Town Meeting followed, and it is decided to have it for April 8. Barbara asked if they are good with the survey and Mary Ann said that the surrounding properties had been surveyed and the part of the property that was sold in Middlefield which was 90 acres, 55 acres is correct amount.

\*John said he was talking to Erica Johnson, for Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, and he will be meeting with her about the Hampden St project on April 9. Kathe said Erica had also contacted her also about meeting that day and Erica was bringing someone from Department of Housing & Community Development.

\*Mary Ann is going to contact George Lytle, who owns the lot across from the ball field to ask him if the mini tractor pulls can be held there during Chester on Track. Mary Ann asked if George is aware that the Town is interested in purchasing the property and John said yes.

\*John said he would like to have the Forester contacted for the Watershed property and since it has been a few years since the property had work done. Kathe said there is information in the bookcases about it, and she would try to get ahold of that person.

\*Barbara said that in researching the last year of meeting minutes for the Town Report, she came across some projects that she would like if there could be an update on the status of:

- \* Bryan Farr had asked about doing an art piece sign at the end of Route 20 and she would follow up with him.
- \* Complete St Funding update, John said he hadn't done anything with that as of this time.
- \* What is the status of the highway crew getting they're over the guardrail license. John said they had been to the class and had to take the test either end of March or end of April since the test is only given once a month.
- \*Did the Town had received the signs that designated the Town as a Green Community, Kathe said she would contact the state about that.
- \* What is the status of security cameras for Town Hall? Kathe said it may have been part of a grant application with MIIA. Barbara asked her to look into it.
- \* What is the status of the turnaround on Williams St? John said he had talked to the surveyor Steve Salvini, who would need 30 more days, and he will be done.
- \*Barbara asked Kathe if she could contact PVPC about a COA feasibility study that was done last year.
- \*Where does the Town Clerk records preservation, John said the Town Clerk had talked about it at the budget meeting, she would be having material sent out to be bound. Barbara said these projects were just things that had popped out at her during her research.

### **Old Business**

**Update on Natalie Blais reports** – Kathe met on Friday with Dan Downer from Hill Engineering, and Ashley Alter from Martino Glass. She said they discussed the front door which needs an exit lit sign above it and Ashley took measurements for a replacement door and push button access. Dan had looked at the roof area above the auditorium and said the roof should be replaced, with a combination of rubber and standing metal seam. Kathe said that for the lower level Ashley's suggestion was for both doors to be half glass, they also stated they could fix the frost heave area by adding a French drain. Ashley also suggested adding wind panels to protect those entrance areas during the winter. Ashley was concerned about the door on the COA side: in case of an emergency there could be an issue. Ashley will send Kathe a quote to repair and add sweeps to the door, as well as the COA door. Ashley thought it would be approximately \$800 to repair them. They discussed the work of the roof and Dan said since the Town must pay prevailing wage, many roofers won't quote projects. Bob Daley had sent Kathe a COA transport upgrade request. Kathe wasn't sure if this could be submitted because Natalie is looking for infrastructure projects. Kathe said that Dan Downer suggested having a building assessment done if a grant could be found to cover it, the only issue being a lot of people don't like to see the money spent on a report, and the report costs approximately \$10,000. Kathe said she sent pictures of the boiler to a plumber friend and was told to contact the service provider for the best possible estimate. John had asked about the elevator and Kathe said she made a call to Associated Elevator and was waiting for a call back on that information.

### **Town Administrator Update:**

Talked to Mary Beverly of Adams who is the Town's sponsor for Berkshire Health Group that Chester wanted to join Hampshire County. Mary said the deadline was December 1, but she

would see if the town could get out of the contract. Kathe said she told Mary that the difference was \$12,553.00 in savings to the Town.

There will be a kickoff meeting for March 26 at 1:00pm in Blandford for Shared Police Services.

Kathe said she had a meeting this past Thursday with Hilltown Resource Management Cooperative (HRMC), Peter Stroganov and Norma McDonald were able to make it. It was a good meeting. Kathe asked if the landfill had been tested annually because Kathleen Casey said it needed to be. John said he didn't believe it had been. Kathe said that binders need to be set up for both the Transfer Station and the Town hall that has the permits, hazardous waste management agreement and recent testing in them. John said the time frame was the same as the wood landfill. Kathe said that Kathleen Cleary was certain that the town needed an annual test to monitor the landfill even though it is closed. Kathe said she would contact the company that monitors the wood landfill. Ann Daley has offered to be the town's representative for the HRMC. Barbara and John agreed accepted the offer.

John said the highway crew will be working on potholes and a couple of truck repairs. He put off the meeting with Lane about East River Rd since there is still snow on the sides of the road. Barbara asked Kathe if the Chapter 90 money had been received and it had been.

### **Citizens Comments**

John Foley said the pavement on Johnson Hill Rd was breaking up. John told Mr. Foley there may be more pavement breakage due to spring runoff. The culvert wasn't installed properly and needs to be taken care of once the thaw is done.

Bob Daley asked if the March 1 census for Gateway had been released, and John said it hadn't been yet. Bob asked about the Worthington withdrawal, if anything is being done regarding the lawsuit, John doesn't believe anything else will be done and Barbara said there is a time when may be best to move on. Bob Daley said he read in the Gateway meeting minutes that there are foster children in the school system, and he wondered if they would be counted in the census. John said they will be and due to the number of rental properties in the towns there would always be transitional numbers on the census.

James Higby said he had submitted his nomination papers to run for selectman.

Barbara said she and Andy Myers went to the Montgomery Select Board meeting last week to have them sign the Economic Developer Director's contract and the Select Board wouldn't sign it, despite language in it having been changed to address (at the Montgomery Select Board's previous request) when towns could opt out. The Montgomery Select Board chair is in favor of signing, but one of the other members is against it, and the third is noncommittal. Barbara stated she believes the majority of the Montgomery Select Board wants out of the collaborative and she state that at the Montgomery meeting, but they did not respond. Barbara said she and Andy will attend the Russell Select Board meeting to see if they will sign the agreement since they haven't yet either. Barbara said she did tell Montgomery that Gateway has agreed to pay part of the Economic Development Director's salary for the next year, but they didn't indicate that fact made a difference to their decision.

Barbara said there will be a contingent from Chester attending the East West Rail Study in Springfield on Tuesday. The group will be driver to Pittsfield in the COA Van (Ann Daley volunteered to drive each participant will pay toward the gas) then board the train from Pittsfield to Springfield, where they will then attend the meeting to show support for having a rail stop in Chester.

Jason Forgue asked if the Town was moving forward with the purchase of the land across from the ballfield. Since Jason had entered the meeting after the previous discussion, Barbara explained before the sale can go forward, a vote will need to be taken at Special Town Meeting on April 8<sup>th</sup>. If the article passes, then the Slocum property can be put up for sale and the Town can enter negotiations with the owner. Jason pointed out opening day for baseball at the ballfield is on April 27.

Barbara motioned to adjourn at 7:00pm, John seconded the motion, all vote aye.

Respectfully submitted

Katherine Warden

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Barbara Huntoon Chair

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John Baldasaro Vice Chair

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Vacancy – Clerk

Meeting Minutes for March 11,2019 contain 4 pages