



TOWN OF CHESTER BOARD OF SELECTMEN
WATER COMMISSIONERS & ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
15 MIDDLEFIELD RD
CHESTER MA 01011

November 25, 2020

Selectmen present John Baldasaro, James Higby, Barbara P. Huntoon
John opened the meeting in Board of Selectmen's office at 6:00pm. Signing of meeting minutes and warrants. Meeting was recorded by Selectmen and Country Journal

There will be no public comments during this meeting.

New Business

#1 Discussion of options to fill town Treasurer position. Present Treasurer is resigning as of next Monday. John asked Kathe for an update and Kathe stated that she put the word out and put it on Mass Treasurer Collector and Berkshire County job posting site, as well as made phone calls to other treasurers, collectors and accountants. Had 2 local people apply, one said they just want to help us get through the transition period, the other person is thinking of which way he is going to go. Received an actual resume in the mail today, who can now be put in for consideration. Candidate is a former treasurer from another community and has left that position because it was elected, but he did serve in that position for 8 years. John asked if it was a local person and Kathe answered yes, one of "The Hamptons", Southampton she thinks. Kathe just received the resume today, did not have time to reach out and ask questions and to be sure they know the job is not a fulltime position. Kathe recommended they interview these candidates and any others that apply, at next week's meeting. Kathe mentioned outgoing Treasurer, Cheryl Provost is concerned because there is only one signer on the accounts and the Tax Collector can be another signer. Kathe spoke with Tax Collector Mary Ann Pease and she has agreed to be the second signer. Kathe mentioned that even when a new Treasurer is hired, Mary Ann will continue to be the second signer. Should always have a second signer available in case Treasurer is unable to sign. John thanked Mary Ann for stepping up and being the second. Kathe also mentioned she was hoping to have more response for the Treasurer position, with all the calls Kathe and Paula Beck made. With this being a holiday week, it may have something to do with a slow response. Next regular meeting is scheduled for the 9th but could do a meeting on the 2nd to do the interviews for Treasurer and to sign the first refusal letter. With the hiring of the Treasurer being critical John feels that the Selectboard needs to do an extra meeting on the 2nd to hold the interviews. John also suggested doing Highway Supervisor interviews as well. John reminded the room that as of the 6th, he will no longer be the Highway Superintendent. Kathe stated she has had only one applicant for Highway job. Barbara and James agree to meeting on the 2nd to interview for Treasurer and Highway Supervisor. Jason Forgue spoke up to say that as one of the three applicants for Treasurer he would be unable to attend on the 2nd for an interview. If Selectboard needs him to remove his name, so as not to hold up the hiring process, he will



because he knows time is of the essence. John checked how the meeting was posted concerning the treasurer job. It was on the agenda as “discussing options on filing the positions” which can include interviewing. The candidate, Jason Forgue, is present tonight and cannot attend the Dec. 2nd meeting for an interview so the Selectboard interviewed him at this meeting.

Interview with Jason Forgue for Treasurer position

John asked Jason why he wants to be Town Treasurer. Jason said, as he has mentioned before, he cares deeply about this town and feels Treasurer is a very important position and, thinks the needs someone who can handle it. He lives here, cares about it, and “breathes the town”. He had applied for Accountant position; feels he would make a great fit with new Accountant and could help continue the forward progress she has made. Barbara asked Jason to remind everyone of his background in economics. Jason has a BS and MA in economics and worked in the financial district in Boston for 5 years doing accounting, custody, and treasurer work. Has owned his own business and a lot of the same principles apply when running a business and a town. Has considerable experience on the treasury and financial side of things and would love to start using those skills again. John mentioned there will be a steep learning curve and training involved and unfortunately a quick learning curve and whoever gets the position would have to agree to that. Jason understands there is a difference between municipal finance and real-world finance and agrees to the training and said he is a fast-learner. The issues the Town was having in the past have been time constraints and the person being able to dedicate enough time. John asked Jason if he would have the time to dedicate to this and Jason answered “100% believe so yes.” Barbara mentioned that part of the job is HR record-keeping (including sick and vacation time), payroll, insurance, medical, dental, and retirement. The position has developed into much more than in the past. Jason asked of an estimate of time from the past Treasurer. The job posting is for 10-12 hours per week. Past treasurer has said that it fluctuates, some 18-hour weeks, average for the entire year is 15 hours. It will most likely take more hours in the beginning due to learning curve it will take more hours.

Email from Rich Gullick– He has left RCAP, to start his own business, but RCAP has already reached out and will be putting everything together and assigning the Town a new person by tomorrow. John asked if the company Rich is starting can perform the same services. Presently the Town is not paying RCAP, can the Town set the same deal up with Rich Gullick’s company? John says he has not seen someone with the expertise Rich has and wants to continue to do business with Rich as he is already familiar with Chester’s system, has done things for the Town and the Town wants to continue working with Rich, if at all possible. Critical point is if Rich’s company will qualify for the same status as RCAP so Rich can work with DEP and the Town. Kathe will reach out and ask if the Town can continue to work with Rich. The agreement we may have had with RCAP has been met and Rich was continuing to help us. If Rich’s new company cannot do the same as RCAP, get an estimate of what Rich’s company would charge.



Barbara reminded everyone that the tree lighting will be this Friday at 6:30 with cookies and cocoa at Town Hall after.

Public Input

Kathy Engwer – Donations to Rec Committee

Kathy E asked about donations to the Rec Committee. Donation goes to general fund. Need to go to town meeting to get a revolving account for Rec Committee to have funds available to buy materials. Chester Hill Association wants to make a yearly donation but for a specific project. Kathe suggested for now they purchase the material themselves until a revolving account can be set up. Have Paula check to see if there is a revolving account for Rec Committee already set up.

Barbara reminded everyone that the tree lighting will be this Friday at 6;30 with cookies and cocoa at Town Hall after.

Old Business

Town Administrator update

#1 Code of Conduct discussion and

#2 Update about meeting with CMELD

Dept & Committee updates

Discussion with Town Committee and Department Chairs – updates

Motion to adjourn made by James and second by Barbara. All in favor voted aye.

Meeting adjourned 6:20