



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

**Monday July 13, 2020 at 6:00pm**

Open meeting - Town Hall Auditorium. Signing of warrants.

Meeting being recorded and web-based available also. Barbara called meeting to order at 6:00. John Baldasaro, Barbara Huntoon and Richard Holzman present.

**#1 Meeting with Blandford Selectboard and Chief Ilnicky for review of FY2020.** Email sent to all with account conditions from Paula Beck, Accountant.

Shared service account numbers are accurate. Return to towns are \$9218.

Everything going smoothly. Chief asked for a couple of encumbrances for street signs and upgrade the laptops or the cruisers. Also encumber the money for the police cruiser that was supposed to be in, in March. Both towns felt that things are going very well with the Chester Blandford Shared Police Department; thought budget and salaries were fine and looking forward to it continuing.

Request for joint meetings quarterly for updates. Agreed that next joint meeting will be October 19.

**Discuss the Permiteyes program – Blandford signed off of Go-To-Meeting so did not participate in this discussion.** Josh Garcia from Blandford applied for a community grant and received it. This grant is for a permitting program for building, electrical and plumbing. Other departments can be added in the future such as Conservation, Assessors, and Town Clerk. Program has many layers that can be added in the future. Full Circle Technologies, which runs the Permiteyes Software, is only company that put a bid in. Building module is \$4730 upfront then \$2380 each year after. A \$250 one-time additional fee was added to this package to allow online payments. Assessors integration option is in different levels, basic level is no charge. GIS integration is \$4400 one time and then \$1250 each year after. The original set up charges for the building module and add-ons are covered by the grant that Blandford got. The continuing fees would be \$2380 per year plus the add-ons. Kathe explained that this program allows online applications and will follow a protocol, as far as what departments will be notified. For example, the





permit request will go to Tax Collector to ensure there are no taxes owed. Should there be taxes owed the applicant will be notified and the permit will not be issued until the problem is solved. It will then move on to any other departments that need to review building permit conditions prior to issuing the permit. Allows tracking by departments as well as contractor or homeowner. At end of process when building is complete this program will then notify the Assessors' office of "New Growth" so that the value of home and taxes can be adjusted without getting going through the Building Inspector. This GIS system will integrate with the Assessors GIS system and use the set parameters such as setbacks, wetlands and other items that departments will need to approve the permit and move to next step. Building Inspector Jason Fogue spoke in support of this software program. All departments will be able to see what is going on in any permit application process. With this program every customer/contractor will pay online through Unipay, and the contractor information will be retained and the contractor will not have to complete all this information for each permit. John made a motion to accept the proposal. Rich second and all voted aye.

Discussion about difference in two GIS systems. There will be two separate GIS systems that will talk to each other. Assessors maps will share with the Permiteyes program to allow to see setbacks and other parameters. Everything can be accessed remotely at all times.

**Jason Fogue**, Building Inspector, spoke in favor of this new permitting software. Called it a "no brainer" and said that all departments can access the site but not run their department unless another layer is added to the package the Town decides to purchase. Need to pay for the Town's part, which is \$3650. Kathe to look to see where we can find the money in the budget. Jason stated that Blandford is the only town that fees are lower than ours. Could review the fees the Town charges and look to increase them. Jason has put together in the past and is working on another comparison showing the fees that surrounding towns charge vs Chester. Rich asked about how are fee structures compare to other towns. John answered that Jason had explained that we are low to medium in where they are suggested a review of our fees and John mentioned that Jason had said that he is putting together a new



proposal together for fees. Jason is preparing a spreadsheet comparing to 7 towns for fee review before Selectboard in future.

**#2 Continuation of Highway Superintendent Corey Sparks review – John Baldasaro stated he will be abstaining from participating in any of the review because he has a family member that is on Highway Department and he cannot participate.**

Corey was asked if he brought the list of accomplishments Highway has done, progress they have made, and what still has to be done.

Corey listed the following items:

Painted crosswalks and stop lines, installed 2 speed bumps and 8 road signs.

Completed brush cutting of culverts and ditches on the following roads: Johnson Hill, Mica Mill, Skyline Trail, Lyons Hill, Western View, Eastern View, Middlefield Road, Holcomb Road, Abbott Hill, Ingel, Crane, and Maynard Hill. Barbara stopped him and asked what they have not done.

Starting road side mowing on Bromley Rd., CMELD has already started mowing there and Highway is collaborating with them to get same areas done while equipment is there.

Maintaining all equipment and trucks including oil changes, grease jobs, hydraulic fluids and air filters as well as the whole deal on wood chipper, backhoe, grader, Freightliner and the International. All the equipment done.

Barbara asked for plan going forward and where he felt he needed improvement. Corey asked to go back so he could mention that they have patched potholes and done 15 tons of black top so far. Streets were swept and sidewalks. Not done with potholes but have a long way to go. Immediate plan is black top and potholes, roadside mowing and dirt roads. Ron Radwich will be coming Monday to start running the grader on dirt roads.

Barbara asked Corey how he prioritizes his projects, because she feels that the potholes should be done by now, the middle of summer. Corey says the weather and equipment available dictates the job. Manpower that is available, depending on what is going on that day and there is always something. Three main things are dirt





roads, pot hole and paving. Corey is scheduled to give Treasurer the packet to move forward with purchase of truck approved at town meeting. Barbara asked if Corey had anything to add and he said he has a whole list of things that have been done and will be done. Long term will be hoister license for everyone. Getting estimate to pave Bromley and/or Middlefield via Chapter 90. Corey asked about a grant due to COVID19 to redo sidewalks to improve street dining. Corey just finished the salt and pretreatment for the winter Scheduling the Prospect Hill project and a few culverts in town need replacing. Corey said these are large projects.

Rich and Barbara have concerns with signing Corey's Employment Agreement due to the following:

#3 on Agreement lists hours as 7-3:30. Not salaried, so Corey must keep accurate track of his time. Agreement also lists Corey will attend Selectboard meetings and that hasn't happened on a regular basis.

Barbara stated she has concerns regarding Corey's ability in handling the different facets of the position. Does not believe he is managing his time well as evidenced by resident complaints, tardiness of required paperwork being completed, and other town staff having to complete some of his work. She also questioned his management of his staff. Corey listed various issues that have come up that he believes prevent him from finishing or carrying out things. Rich feels that onsite management of the employees in the field is required. He believes it would be helpful if there were a format established for reporting to Selectboard; complete with the key items that are always needing to be done. Simplify by having a format that everyone is familiar with and can understand and see in writing. Listening at a meeting doesn't always capture everything that is needed. Having it in writing so it can be reviewed anytime. Rich has gotten reports that Skyline Trail has not been patched and he cannot answer that question to the taxpayers. Corey must stay on top of what is going on.

Barbara is seeing struggles and challenges and she is not sure Corey is up to these challenges. Corey stated there are challenges every day and he can make a thousand excuses including COVID19, no new truck, etc. Having only one person in a truck is a challenge. Barbara pointed that will always be the case; there will always be something and he has to be able to juggle and prioritize. She told Corey





he has to do Highway warrants and Chapter 90 himself, and any other necessary paperwork, as well as keeping track of his crew. Barbara not sure this is working out really well and asked Corey if he thought it was and if the Board were to extend the probationary period for a couple months and revisit it, how does he feel. Corey again pointed out that the challenges have been extreme and out of his control. Barbara again stated that there are always going to be challenges. Corey feels he has done a really good job. Barbara stated there are some things that Corey has done a good job on, but there are things that he is struggling at and does not have a grip on. Asked if he needs help as far as instruction or advice in juggling all these things and acknowledged Highway is a very difficult position. Rich and Barbara agreed they do not feel Corey is up to the task. Corey stated that he has said previously that he is up to the task. Barbara disagreed and said that the Selectboard is just not seeing that he is in fact up to the task. Corey responded that he cannot do any more than he is already doing. Barbara responded that was not exactly the answer she was looking for. Corey apologized but he is pulling his hair out trying to figure out how to do his job without trucks and personnel. Barbara asked why we didn't have the truck yet. Kathe said Treasurer was on vacation the week of town meeting, so Corey is just getting to meet with him tomorrow.

Rich pointed out that the Highway has always had legitimate excuses or maybe not legitimate, but the key is regardless of the task and circumstances it is about the safety of the town. We now have four people on Highway and we have not had that in the past, so there should be more work getting done. Rich said sometimes you have to make do, as all bosses in the past have had to do. Some past bosses have actually excelled with a lot less than we have now. The taxpayers want to see and deserve progress. Taxpayers should see people working and a working road boss working and supervising. Corey must multi task.

Barbara asked for Corey's thought on his growth in the last six months. Corey's opinion is he has done a great job considering what he has had to deal with. Barbara told him to leave that out because there is always going to be there. Corey says he learns every day. Barbara asked Corey if he works 40 hours a week and Corey answered "at least". He was asked if he has to leave, or doesn't come in, does he let anyone know and his reply was yes. Barbara pointed out that Kathe is the Selectboard's representative and speaks for them when she communicates with him. Corey pointed out that he hasn't even taken a vacation.





Rich mentioned again that we have four people working now, and it is Corey's job to make sure it is done efficiently. He suggests that all four be working on the roads, the more work is done.

Barbara does not want to sign a three-year contract at this time and would like to continue this review to two months forward. Barbara asked Corey how he felt and what his thoughts are. Corey responded he knows their concerns and will address them. Rich and Barbara agreed to continue the discussion until September 14.

Bob Daley was recognized and asked about OSHA rules about at least two workers on each job. When asked if that was a problem Corey said he had no idea. Depends on the job but he does not have a factual answer.

Rich asked if he has built any relationships with other highway bosses and Corey said he called a couple just recently but did not name them. Rich said Corey must think outside the box.

Barbara expects in the next two months, things to get done that need to be done, paperwork up to snuff and if he needs help, to reach out to other superintendents. Set the goals of completing paperwork timely, attend Selectboard meetings once a month, and work on time management.

Rich has asked that a reporting format be established with key functions and things that need to be done and updated every two weeks or at least at the monthly meeting. Then the Selectboard can see what the Highway needs really are or why something did not get done. Cannot be pulled off of a job unless it is an emergency such as water.

Another discussion ensued about the water department not being the Highway main job. Corey stated that water department consumes a lot of the Highway time is a huge part of why things aren't getting done, but Barbara mentioned the work orders do not reflect the amount of work that Corey is saying the water has taken up for time. John said that Bernie has a person that would be interested in doing meters. Kathe also spoke to Bernie about this. Corey said he did not know; he should have spoken to Bernie and will do so and pass any info along to Selectboard.

Corey to come to Selectboard meeting on August 10.



### **#3 Update on meeting with Dr Richard Gullick about Sanitary Survey**

Good meeting with Rich Gullick. Work on Sanitary Survey first then capital Asset and Improvement Plan. A copy of proposal is in the packet. The fee for year is \$16,800 and development of the plans is another \$28,000. Dr Gullick will be working in Chester on Thursdays and is ready to go. Asked for another extension from the State and they will get back to us. This is the biggest step for long term water improvements that the Town of Chester has taken in a long time. Kathe said we should ask Dr Gullick help to get our T2 and D2 designation to a T1 and D1 on the Water Plant, which should help.

Kathy Engwer mentioned that Dr Gullick is not designing the repairs just doing the plan for the repairs to be done. Tighe & Bond called Kathy today and offered to address the Sanitary Survey and that they had found a potential \$150,000 in grant money to address the issues on the Survey. Kathy suggested we meet with them also.

Bob Daley stated the press is on to get the Sanitary Survey done as quick as possible and that Dr Gullick is the genius and way to go.

Need to be on a road for good and healthy water that is not brown nor has an odor and this is a big step in the right direction.

John made a motion to accept the proposal from Dr Gullick, Rich seconded, and all voted aye.

Noted that Chester is on water restriction.

### **#4 Discussion: Lecrenski Bus Company & Vocational Transportation**

Lecrenski provided a breakdown of the bus company ongoing expenses and expenses that are not presently being incurred. The report shows that his daily expenses to have the buses sitting in the yard is \$994 per day.

Gateway paid 65% of the balance to keep the bus companies solvent. The State passed a resolution and recommended that school districts pay the companies to help keep the companies solvent. The only towns that have not paid are not using the company they have been using. Huntington paid 65% as well.