



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

Monday December 7, 2020 at 6:00pm – in person and via Go To Meeting

Open meeting in Town Hall Auditorium. Signed minutes and warrants.

Meeting called to order at 6PM

Attendance: Selectboard members John Baldasaro, Richard Holzman and Barbara Huntoon (Remotely), Administator Kathe Warden, Administrative Assistant Kathy Engwer, Chester citizens.

#1 Administrative Assistant applicant – Jill Strong, interview and possible hiring. Barbara Huntoon recused herself from this discussion and vote due to her relationship to applicant.

Kathe Warden informed Selectboard she and Jill met last week and had a great interview. Kathe recommended the Selectboard hire Jill. Rich Holzman made a motion to hire Jill Strong for the Administrative Assistant position; John Baldasaro seconded; both voted aye.

#2 Employee Review- Carl Baldasaro, Highway Foremen with discussion and possible vote to change status to Superintendent. This item was tabled to December 14, 2020.

#3 Tax Classification Hearing along with Board of Assessors to determine the tax rate for all classes of property for FY2021 Harald Scheid from Regional Resource Group (RRG) participated in the meeting remotely. Harald informed the Board that the assessment conversion has been completed, has some concerns as the valuation models are fundamentally different. Interim revaluation shows land up 10%, homes 5-7%; larger land parcels have a higher increase. No proposed tax rate was presented, there are still some items being worked on by Accountant that are not completed yet, such as tax recap. Paula Beck, accountant is still working on this. Harald said the tax rate cannot be set until this is completed. John asked for a timeline and it was agreed that this item would be moved to the next meeting on December 14th. Barbara asked how often homes are reassessed. Harald answered



once a year. Barbara said she had complaints from homeowners about the assessed value going up considerably on their property. It was noted that typically when values go up the tax rate goes down but that has not happened yet. Harald said he does anticipate a tax rate decrease but no timeline was given for this item.

#4 Alcohol License and Common Victuallers License Renewals

- A. Chester Village Market Inc -Package Store and All Alcohol & Common Victuallers**
- B. Chester Common Table LLC- Restaurant and All Alcohol & Common Victuallers**
- C. Eric Bird-Classic Pizza - Restaurant and All Alcohol & Common Victuallers**
- D. Carm's Restaurant LLC- Restaurant/Beer & Wine & Common Victuallers**

Rich made motion to issue license renewal to all of the above businesses. Barbara seconded and all voted aye.

Town Administrator Update:

There is a Rapid Recovery Grant available that will pay for a Planner to help with grant to help the revitalization of downtown. This grant would include working with Huntington, Russell, Blandford and Chester. Andy Myers commented that the Town has a pretty good chance of getting this grant. The Selectboard urged Kathe to go ahead with it.

John Baldasaro took a moment to announce that the Town has lost long-time resident and 40-year Fire Department member, Earl Stone. John wanted to recognize Earl's dedication and service to our Town. He will most be remembered for being Santa on the Fire Truck every year for many years.

Public Comments and questions

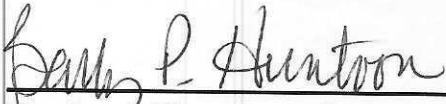
Andy spoke about the joint budget meeting with the Gateway Regional School. Enrollment is down, and there are 24 direct-home school students. Chester lost the least students. No school choice numbers were available. Chester's portion is the



highest increase at \$77,000. The Town put money in stabilization at Annual Town Meeting for this purpose.

Meredith Babcock has a climate mitigation program going on and thinks the Main Street bridge would qualify for this kind of project. Concerns about the potential flooding of downtown with one of the river channels being filled in with sediment and does not divert extra water as intended. Consider extending the flood containment in Becket to protect downstream Chester.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:26



Barbara Huntoon, Chair



John Baldasaro, Vice Chair



Richard Holzman, Clerk