



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

Monday, March 8th, 2021

Opened Meeting at 6:00 – Meeting is Virtual

For the Executive Session Selectmen John Baldasaro, Barbara Huntoon, and Richard Holzman present as well as Police Chief Weidhaas, Town Administrator Kathe Warden and Administrative Assistant Jill Strong. Once Executive Session had been adjourned the meeting was joined by Board of Health members Elizabeth Massa, Nick Chiusano and Greg Harrison. Town Hall staff - Accountant Paula Beck, Town Clerk Sister Judith Dalesandro, Tax Collector Mary Ann Pease, Highway Foreman Carl Baldasaro, Animal Control Officer Terry Donovan, Building Inspector Jason Fogue, Council on Aging Acting Director Peggy Graveline and Finance Committee Members Andy Myers, Bob Daley and Jessica Sakaske. There were also three participants who did not have a name displayed.

Minutes and warrants to be signed at Select Board's earliest opportunity.

5:15 Executive Session: To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining session or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel – Police Chief Weidhaas. The Select Board voted by roll call vote to move to Executive Session to discuss the contract of Police Chief Weidhaas. Kathe will make any changes and have Chief Weidhaas sign the contract as well as the Select Board at the earliest opportunity. Barbara made the motion to adjourn, John 2nd roll call vote with all voting Aye. Executive session adjourned 5:45 PM.

6:00 Meeting with DOR/DLS Zack Blake and Marcia Bohinc: Discussion about Finance Department and implementing new procedures. – This was rescheduled for Monday, March 15th.

Meet with Departments:

- The first update was from Tax Collector Mary Ann Pease who let us know that she is getting the 4th quarter tax bills ready to go out. They will include an explanation statement since there will be an adjustment from the 1st through 3rd quarter and bills may reflect significant increases.
- Board of Health is investigating getting a new compactor at the transfer station as current one is twenty years old. Also need a new compactor for single-stream recycling and this will require a concrete pad and some electrical work being done. A quote for the compactor and estimates for concrete and the electrical have been submitted to the Finance Committee. Greg thanked the Chester Blandford Police Department for their help in addressing trespassing at the transfer

station. They have now put cameras up and were able to catch on camera someone who was causing a problem.

- Accountant Paula Beck stated she will be doing expense warrants on a bi-weekly basis and asked all departments to please be on top of their bills. We are in the process of the Treasurer clean-up and Paula asked if the Select Board could provide support by giving extra oversight over these positions to ensure work is being done in a timely manner and to ensure accountability. Barbara agreed that this has been difficult during Covid because everyone has not been in the Town Hall as often and we could all do more to help.
- Peggy from COA let us know that right now the main thing they are focusing on is food services. The third week of the month they are doing meals in the dining center and once per month they do a brown bag. They have also handed out masks and most of this has been at no cost to the town as they have been donations from Highland Valley Elder Services. Rich asked about the foot clinic that had been done, and Peggy let us know that it had been cancelled due to health issues of the person who puts this on, and we should have it back in April.
- Police Chief Weidhaas who has officially been Chief of our Chester Blandford Police Department for six weeks now, is going to be working on setting up a Facebook page for the Police Department. This will help to communicate with the public and keep everyone in touch with things going on within the Police Department. Chief Weidhaas was also interested in starting a Police Association which would allow the Police Department to take donations and do other things that would allow them to give back to the community. John believed that this had been previously voted for and advised to check for past minutes. The cruiser that Chief Weidhaas uses has a blown engine and is just out of warranty. Richard Small is available to do repairs and quoted \$6,000.00. John suggested we speak with Blandford about the cost as it could be a shared expense. Chief Weidhaas also let us know about the Police Reform Bill that is now in place which is going to take away the certification of any officer that only went to the part-time academy. These officers will need to take a bridge academy to keep their certification which costs the officers \$5,500.00. Chief Weidhaas and the Select Board discussed how this was a difficult situation as most of our small towns were made up of part-time officers and we could all write to our state legislature as to how we felt this bill would impact our town.
- Town Clerk, Sister Judith Dalesandro, let us know that she is slowly getting the street census back. She printed in the Watts News that they need to be returned to her by April 15th or anyone who did not fill it out will become an inactive voter. Right now, she is working on the town bylaws any of which that have not been submitted to the attorney general. We have an old booklet with the town bylaws that was printed in 1988 which was a project done by UMASS. John stated if we want to put all the bylaws together new and old that it was a very large project, and we could possibly do again a student project or through the senior work off program. Barbara also suggested a grant for doing such a project.
- Andy Myers gave update from Finance Committee. One of the focuses is on the cost for repairs and maintenance for the old Chester school across from the Town Hall. They are also looking into the finances for the improvements we are looking into with the Water Department and any salary adjustments. The Finance Committee plan to have the budget ready for the Select Board meeting on March 29th.
- Highway Foreman Carl Baldasaro gave an account of the two large trucks that are both out for repairs. He also stated we're already getting into mud season and the Highway Department is

working on fixing a York rake which would help take care of the dirt roads without having to bring the grader out all the time. Carl and Highway Department employee Jason Ellershaw both obtained their 2A and 4G licenses and should be receiving the physical licenses in the mail soon and will get them to Kathe when they do so she can make a copy to have on file. Rich asked if there were any guard rail or paving projects in mind. Carl said a Chapter 90 request to pave part of Bromley road is on that list, and the guard rails on Middlefield, Johnson and Maynard Hill are the most problem areas which he plans to work on this year. There is also a culvert that is needed which is also on the list of upcoming projects.

- Our Animal Control Officer Terry Donovan let us know about the Rabies Clinic that is going to be conducted on March 20th at the Middlefield Town Hall. Other than that, things have been quiet for her.
- Jason Forgue, our Building Inspector, discussed Permitteyes, the new online permitting system which is going well. Since that has been switched, we have only had two paper applications. Right now, is a quiet time but with spring coming people are going to be doing more projects. He informed us there were plots that had been purchased on Lynes Road so there most likely would be some permits pulled for those properties. Jason also asked about any fines that had been collected and where those funds were going. Paula explained that as of right now they go into general funds and free cash. Jason felt that it could go into another account for addressing the derelict properties for a time when we are able to bring things back to Housing Court which as of now is still in back-log. Paula said to do this we would just need to move to set up a revolving account for this and move the funds at the next Special or Annual Town Meeting. Barbara suggested adding it to the Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

Town Administrator:

- Kathe stated the search for a new Treasurer has begun, and while she was given the name of someone from the DLS who are helping us with the clean up right now, the job will be posted. She asked the Select Board before posting the position if they would be okay with it being one day in office and one day remote. All agreed that is fine.
- The Cultural Council has made the decisions for the awards and we have already sent out the letters for awards and denials.
- A new motherboard for the elevator in the Town Hall has been ordered and should hopefully be in by April.
- The new front door has been installed at Town Hall and the keys are available to all who need them.
- The roadwork for the CDBG grant is going out to bid for the Prospect street project.
- Suggested moving the bulletin board on Skyline Trail to the First Congregational Church parking lot for safety reasons. Andy let us know that his wife could help us with that as she is the Chair for the Chester Hill Association and the board of the church.
- Set the date for the Annual Town Meeting to June 14th at 6:00pm.
- The Theatre is going to be using the Town Hall for a few weeks during the summer for rehearsal and we will need to relocate or still be virtual for a few meetings. A suggestion of using the Fire Station was brought up, which will have to be cleared with Fire Chief Richard Small. Rich and John agreed this would be a good option for these few meetings.

John brought up the option of bringing meetings back into the Town Hall now that more things are opening. Everyone coming will have to sign in and provide a phone number upon entering the building hand sanitizer is available at the entrance. The Select Board agreed starting next week (Monday, March 15th) their meetings will be held in-person at Town Hall with everyone attending wearing masks and honoring social distancing.

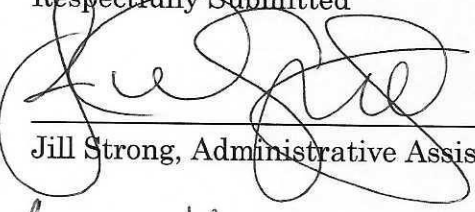
The Select Board thanked all departments for their work and dedication. Barbara noted it had been a rough year and while there can be tension between departments and individuals, she appreciates everyone doing their best for the town.

Public Comments and Questions: There were no additional comments or questions.

Barbara made the motion to adjourn, John 2nd. All voted Aye.

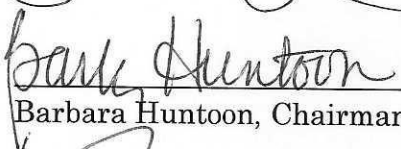
Meeting adjourned 8:11 PM

Respectfully Submitted



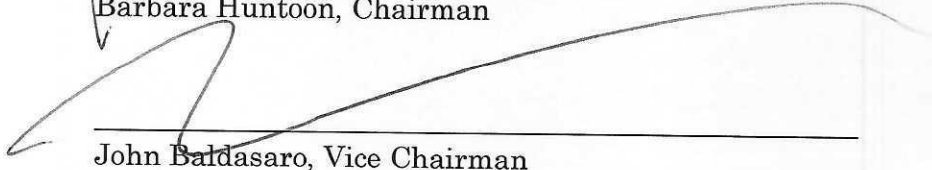
Jill Strong, Administrative Assistant

3/10/21
Date Signed



Barbara Huntoon, Chairman

3/15/21
Date Signed



John Baldasaro, Vice Chairman

3/15/21
Date Signed

Richard Holzman, Clerk

Date Signed