



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

Monday, March 29th, 2021

Open Meeting – Meeting in the Town Hall

Minutes signed, no warrants.

Selectmen John Baldasaro, Barbara Huntoon and Richard Holzman present. Town Hall staff present were Town Administrator Kathe Warden, Administrative Assistant Jill Strong, Town Clerk Sister Judith Dalesandro and Tax Collector Mary Ann Pease. Also present were Finance Committee members Andy Myers, Bob Daley, Jessica Sakaske and Jason Fogue whose son Brian Fogue was also present. Duane Pease and Derek Savoy from the Electric Light Commission were present as well as our Animal Control Officer Terry Donovan. Lucia Brown and Karen Shaw present as per the agenda as well as residents Laura and Adam Wade.

Water Operator Bernie St. Martin, Jason Ellershaw from the Highway Department, and Dr. Gullick from Water Compliance Solutions are not present.

Barbara opened the meeting at 6:00 pm.

- **Lucia Brown request for appointment as a Library Trustee.** Lucia was present for the meeting, Barbara read Lucia's request for appointment. John made the motion to appoint Lucia Brown as a Library Trustee, Rich 2nd all voted Aye.
- **Discussion to allow Little League to have a spring season.** Derek Savoy explained the plan for the Gateway Little League season which they are hoping to start the week following Easter. The Select Board had all read the proposed guidelines and were fine with what had been laid out. Derek mentioned the only thing that had been changed from the original is that the umpire was now going to be allowed to return to the original position but would still be required to wear a mask. The Select Board saw no problem with that change. Derek let us know that they had approximately 40% less than the traditional amount of sign ups so they would be keeping them open for now. John made the motion to allow Gateway Little League to have a spring season, Rich 2nd, all voted Aye.

- **Resignation letter from Officer Christopher Barton.** Barbara read the letter of resignation of Officer Barton. His family is relocating to upstate New York. John made the motion to accept the letter of resignation, Barbara 2nd, all voted Aye.
- **Interview with Karen Shaw and possible vote to hire as interim Treasurer.** Karen came to us through a contact in the Blandford Town Hall, Sarah Hunter who is the Tax Collector and Treasurer; Karen is her Assistant. Karen explained that she knows there is a backlog of work to be completed which Sarah Hunter will be helping us to complete and Karen would be able to focus on keeping up with the day-to-day tasks. Karen does have experience with HR, and John remarked that we were fortunate to have her interested as looking at her resume she is very qualified for the position. John made the motion to hire Karen Shaw as interim Treasurer, Rich 2nd, all voted Aye. Karen thanked everyone and Kathe let her know that she would be hearing from her shortly about getting started.
- **Discussion about Board of Health overseeing the Water Department.** A discussion began about whether the Select Board should remain the Water Commissioners or if this should be an independent board again. Barbara made mention that the reason this was changed is that the positions were not occupied so it fell back to the Select Board, John agreed. Rich brought up that because we now have an active Water Improvement Committee as well as a plan that is being focused for the improvement of our water it could be re-visited. Barbara asked the other Select Board members if they thought those positions should be appointed or elected and if that were to be changed if a bylaw would need to be changed? John did believe so and all thought they should be appointed. Jason Forgue suggested if this were to be changed that perhaps in writing the new bylaw, there could be a clause that it is not necessary to bring it back to a town meeting if the positions are not filled it defaults to the Select Board. Bob Daley from the Water Committee agreed and encouraged us to move forward with the critical items that were brought forward by Dr. Gullick's plan which was presented on February 8th. Barbara also had given some information about White Water, Water & Wastewater Solutions. They gave us a quote on the cost of helping as an operator and would allow Jason Ellershaw, who is in training to be an operator, to shadow them. The cost for White Water to be here only one day per week for two hours is \$1,310.00. Barbara said that this was not affordable, and John also stated that it did not make sense to pay for the plan from Dr. Gullick and White Water as well as our own Water Operator and that we needed to get all parties together to discuss the best course of action. Rich stated that we needed to make sure we brought in people with experience and focus the new fiscal year on getting this plan rolling. John stated that he was not opposed to any of the plans he again just believed that we needed all parties in the room to know the best plan and to ensure everyone would work together. Barbara asked Kathe to set up the meeting, even if not a regular Select Board meeting.
- **Finance Committee to present the FY2022 budget to the Select Board. Discussion and possibility to vote to approve it.** Andy Myers presented the budget to the Select Board who did all have a chance to look it over. Barbara had a question regarding the Board of Health if they had asked for a Clerk as well as the Highway Department. Jason Forgue said yes, a question was raised if the positions could be combined as the Highway Dept. only requested four hours. This

could make the position easier to fill. The next Finance Committee meeting is on May 15th by which they plan to finalize the budget and would then like to present the finalized version to the Select Board on May 17th. Kathe asked if Finance Committee meetings could be held on days other than Saturday. Andy said the Finance team could discuss it, but it is difficult because people have other meetings during the week. But that they were very happy to have her participate she is the first Town Administrator to participate in the Finance Committee meetings. Andy stated that doing the budget nothing needed to be taken out of stabilization, and the budget 2021 vs. 2022 brought in more than had been projected so we should have a surplus. Free cash is still waiting to be certified; Kathe sent out an email to Sarah Hunter – the professional who will be “cleaning up” Treasury issues - asking about a timeline and we are just waiting on a response. Jason suggested starting the process of creating the budget sooner so there is less of a time crunch. Jessica also agreed and would like more one-on-one time with departments to know what is needed. Bob thanked everyone on the Finance Committee, “it has been a privilege.” Barbara stated it was helpful to be able to sit in on the Finance Committee meetings and thanked the group for their hard work.

Town Administrator:

- Kathe let us know that the Electric Light Commissioner and Inspector would like to have a meeting with the Select Board to discuss an issue with the diesel and gas fuel pumps. Derek Savoy and Duane Pease from the Electric Light Commission were in attendance, so they explained the problem: The pumps we have are all used by Chester as well as Middlefield and Blandford and every five to six months approximately 500 gallons are unaccounted for. Jill Moretz, manager of Chester Municipal Electric Light Department tried to contact someone regarding the pump and was told the pump needs to be fixed. Derek believes the pump needs to be re-calibrated, John agreed, and both had the idea of contacting Rob Popko who is the Inspector of Weights and Measurers in Westfield. **This will be set to the agenda for the next Town Meeting for a vote.**
- Kathe thanked everyone who has stepped up to help with any of the Treasurer’s office tasks.

Public Comments and Questions:

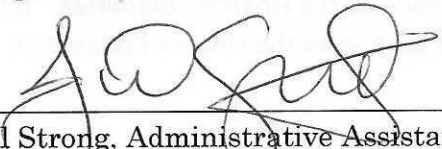
- Jason Fergie informed everyone that this weekend would be the Easter egg hunt down in the ball field. The Superintendent Search for the Gateway school is ending, and a decision should be made on Wednesday night of next week. You can find on the school’s website a link to all the videos of interviews, and he welcomed any feedback that he could bring to the next meeting. Jason had also investigated the solar panels which are currently on the salt shed at the highway garage. He determined they are not currently providing us with any savings. He has reached out to the solar company and has not received any feedback and believes the design itself is wrong. Kathe commented that PVPC handled the Grant to take care of this project and wondered why they did not check into this. Rich mentioned that he could look into this because he has contacts within PVPC.

John thanked the Highway Department as well as CMELD for a great job today, dealing with terrible winds, trees down and power outages.

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

Meeting Adjourned 8:06 PM

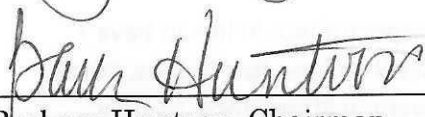
Respectfully Submitted



Jill Strong, Administrative Assistant

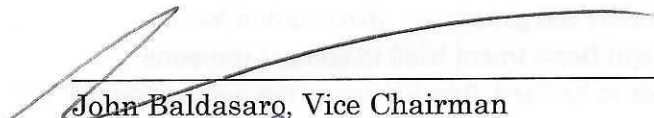
4/5/21

Date Signed



Barbara Huntoon, Chairman


Date Signed



John Baldasaro, Vice Chairman

4/5/21

Date Signed



Richard Holzman, Clerk

Date Signed