



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

Monday, April 26th, 2021

Open Meeting – Meeting in the Town Hall

Selectmen John Baldasaro and Barbara Huntoon present, Selectmen Richard Holzman participating remotely over the phone. Town Hall staff present, Town Administrator Kathe Warden, Administrative Assistant Jill Strong, Tax Collector Mary Ann Pease, and Town Clerk Sister Judith Dalesandro. Also present were, Bob Daley, Jessica Sakaske, and Andy Myers from the Finance Committee. We also had Terry Donovan our Animal Control Officer, Carl Baldsaro our Highway Foreman, Duane Pease from the Electric Light Commission, Lyle Snide from the Planning Board, Building Inspector Jason Forgue and his son Brian. From the Board of Health Elizabeth Massa, Nick Chiusano, and Greg Harrison. Per the agenda Christopher Brown was also present as well as a few Chester residents.

Minutes and warrants were signed.

Barbara opened the meeting at 6:10 PM, she asked if anyone was recording the meeting; no one was.

- **Highway discussion with Carl Baldasaro.** Highway Foreman Carl Baldasaro gave us an update on the current projects being worked on by the Highway Department. Street sweeping of the roads has just been done and they are going to be using the tractor with the blower on the minor roads which will help cut some costs. John recommended doing this after a wet day to help eliminate a lot of dust. They just ordered parts for the grader which cost around \$3,000.00 and approximately ten hours of work for necessary repairs. Rich asked if we had a plan if the grader is down and not usable, could we contract out to White Wolf? Carl answered yes but he was confident these repairs will make the grader operable and contracting the road work to White Wolf could cost between \$12,000.00 - \$14,000.00. They are looking at a few upcoming projects such as culverts that need to be replaced on Skyline and Johnson Hill as well as a drainage issue that needs attention on East River Road. But the biggest project they are focusing on now, is going to be paving Bromley Rd. which they are trying to start by the second week of May. Only a portion of this was to be paved but with some Chapter 90 money that was left from this past year we are going to be able to pave the entire section of road. They are currently in a discussion with the contractor to come to a decision if they will be the one who takes the

millings, or the Town will keep them. The Town currently has millings they were unable to use so before we take them Carl wanted to discuss the best practice in using the millings and finding out if the millings at the Town garage could be usable. Bob Daley asked if we would be putting the speed bumps back up, Carl answered yes. Barbara asked about putting one in front of the Town Hall again, Carl answered that was up to the Select Board. All agreed that was ok to do. It was asked if it would be possible to add another to Emery Street because there have been issues with speeding through there. That was not a problem, the Highway Department would be working on putting those up starting this week.

- **Interview and possible vote to hire Christopher Brown to Highway Dept.** Chris had already met with Carl as well as Kathe and they both recommended him to the Select Board as a good candidate for hire. The position has been posted and we have had three applicants, but Chris seems to be the best candidate. Chris already holds his Class A CDL and 2A Hoisting license and has experience driving truck. He lives in Russell so is close by for the winter when we have inclement weather, and he has unlimited availability and is able to start right away. Rich made the motion to hire Christopher Brown to the Highway Department, Barbara 2nd, all voted Aye.

- **Discussion of antennae for Police Dept. dispatch with Chief Weidhaas.** Chief Weidhaas discussed the issue of her dispatch radio not having any service in her office in the Chester Town Hall. Due to this issue, she now has missed at least six calls from dispatch two of which were for an unresponsive resident and she is now relying on the other officers contacting her through her cell phone. Chief Weidhaas was able to get quotes for putting in an antenna for assisting in this problem, one from Goosetown Communications in Connecticut which was quoted at approximately \$7,300.00 and the other with Pittsfield Communications for approximately \$6,300.00. John remarked although the cheaper option is Pittsfield Communications, we have had issues with them in the past, and it may indeed be a poorer quality equipment. Chief Weidhaas agreed with John and remarked that we have been waiting five months for Pittsfield Communications to install a new radio in one of our cruiser's and have had issues with anyone following up with us after multiple phone calls. Barbara asked if Chief Weidhaas's radio worked anywhere in the building? Chief Weidhaas answered yes, the only problem was on the ground floor where her office was. John brought up that we did need to keep the Police Department office on the ground floor due to security and privacy reasons it did need to have a private entrance. Rich asked if there was a possibility that this could be a shared expense with Blandford? John did not believe so because this did not specifically benefit Blandford; the office in the Chester Town Hall is not a shared asset. Rich thought that we should review the agreement but had no problem otherwise. Chief Weidhaas said that she would review the agreement and reach out to the Town Administrator from Blandford Joshua Garcia and discuss it with him. There also was a donation made by a resident in the amount of \$2,400.00 to be put toward the Police or Fire Department. This would be a great opportunity to use this to help alleviate some of the cost.

John made the motion to move forward with the purchase of the antennae equipment for the Police Department contingent on the review of the agreement with Blandford, Barbara 2nd, all voted Aye.

- **Fuel Pump update from CMELD:** We only had Duane Pease from the Electric Light Commission present at the meeting so this discussion will be moved to the meeting next week Monday, May 3rd.
- **Discussion about Taft Rd.** The Select Board received a letter from a resident who lives on Taft Rd. as a request that it be taken over by the town, the Select Board had all read the letter. Barbara had looked up the laws that pertained to changing the status of a road that is a private way to a public road. One of the biggest undertakings is all the residents who live on the road need to bring the road up to Chapter 90 standards which are determined by the state. John also commented that changing a road from private to public is not as simple an undertaking as some may think. Although we are sympathetic to the request it is not in our authority to simply change the status of the road.
- **Review of Citizen Petition for Wind Turbine limits for Annual Town Meeting Warrant.** The Select Board was presented with a Citizen Petition which would change our Wind Energy Conversion Facilities Bylaw which was adopted on November 13th, 2006 at a Special Town Meeting. It reads as follows, "Wind energy conversion facilities shall be no higher than 420 feet above the natural grade. The height of all wind turbines shall be measured to the highest point reached by the rotor blades. The SPGA may allow this height to be exceeded as part of the special permit process if the project component can demonstrate that the additional height is needed and that the additional benefits of the higher tower outweigh any increased adverse impacts." The amended Bylaw would read, "Wind energy conversion facilities shall be no higher than 80 feet above the natural grade. The height of all wind turbines shall be measured to the highest point reached by the rotor blades. The SPGA may not allow this height to be exceeded for any reason." The petition was received with signatures from twelve registered Chester voters and the Select Board had a chance to view the petition. Lyle Snide from the Planning Board gave us some information regarding the Green Community Act which states that we need to allow a tower that produces a minimum of 600 kilowatts of energy which would be approximately 250 feet. By limiting the height to 80 feet we are essentially saying that we are not allowing any commercial wind turbines. Our bylaws need to be approved by the attorney general and because of the standards in the Green Communities Act Lyle was confident that this limitation would cause the bylaw to be rejected. We could limit the height to 250 feet and limit the amount to allow only one large scale wind turbine. John made the motion to include this in the Annual Town Meeting Warrant to be open for a discussion, Rich 2nd, all voted Aye.
- **Recall Bylaw update:** The Town Clerk is having trouble locating a copy of the existing Recall Bylaw so this will be moved to the next meeting. Mary Ann asked if John remembered an approximate year when it was made, which he thought it could be early 90's. Jason asked if we could institute a new one if we could indeed not find the existing one, Barbara and John both said yes.
- **Dog Control Bylaw for review for Annual Town Meeting Warrant:** Two versions of a Dog Control Bylaw were presented to the Select Board, one version by the Town Clerk the other by our Animal Control Officer, both of which the Select Board had a chance to review. One specifically pertained to dog licenses while the other was a thorough explanation of licenses as well as care, restraining and fees or fines for issues with your dog. Since the one written by our Animal Control Officer was more thorough this was thought to be the better choice.

John made the motion to accept the Dog Control Bylaw presented by the Animal Control Officer and put on the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting, Barbara 2nd, all voted Aye.

- **COA Bylaw updates:** The Select Board received a copy of the COA Director job description for review. Mary Ann remarked that this is the committee's first draft, but they wanted to present it for review, and would have the final draft ready in two weeks and would email it to the Select Board for edits and suggestions.

Town Administrator: Kathe brought to our attention that she was approached by the Drowsy Dragon kitchen about a free book box; take a book leave a book. Barbara brought up that another resident had asked about this at one point and the only concern they had was a good location. Kathe suggested the possibility of encouraging as a business to have it on their property rather than on town property. Rich mentioned that he thought there was a resident in North Chester who was also interested in starting something and maybe we could get the Library Board involved. Kathe and Barbara both thought that it was not completely necessary to involve the Library Board if this was something these residents wanted to do on their own. Jason mentioned that replying to the residents who are interested in starting this we just mention that they abide by the zoning bylaws. Kathe also mentioned that she would be looking at and reaching out to any towns that may already have these.

Kathe also brought up that she had been looking over our bills from Northeast IT and going forward we will be billing each department for their usage to their calls to NEIT if at the end of the month the usage exceeds 300 minutes of call time.

Public Comments and Questions:

Greg Harrison let us know that the Board of Health has put up handrails in front of the trash bin at the transfer station, which was a DEP requirement, and BOH is also looking at a new compactor in New York. Terry Donovan remarked that the height of the new handrail seems "pretty high", and she had multiple people comment on it. Greg said the handrail was inspected and is at a legal height and that it cannot be changed. Liz Massa mentioned that an option is that other towns limit the size of bags allowed, this would make sure that bags are not too heavy to lift over the rail.

Andy Myers let us know that the roadside cleanup that the Chester Hill Association put on over the weekend went very well. He thanked the transfer station for taking care of the trash. Barbara brought up that a resident on the Chester Facebook page had asked why this was not done downtown, and Barbara did explain to him that this was organized by the Chester Hill Association and was all volunteers. She also encouraged other people to organize something, and she would be willing to participate as she did with this one.

Elizabeth Massa asked if we had looked into using money, we had received for Covid-19 to purchase equipment for making the Town Hall auditorium more workable for zoom/go-to-meetings/live streaming. Barbara said that we had not as of now, especially because we had switched back to in-person meetings. Kathe mentioned that Blandford had purchased equipment to do this however, where they hold their meetings has much better acoustics which made this not such an expensive task as it would be for the Chester Town Hall. Also, since we host the Chester Miniature Theatre in Town Hall some of those things may need to be moved on a consistent basis. Barbara pointed out even during remote meetings, attendance was primarily from town officials or staff, just as the current meeting is, and stated she is not in favor of spending said funds on it.

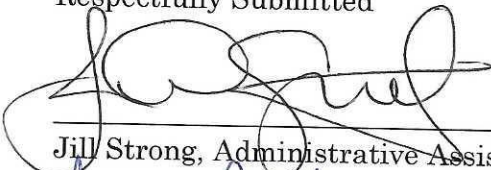
A resident Ed Meacham asked about some road signs that need to be replaced on Skyline Trail as well as some trees that need to be removed that he understood were already to be taken down. The Select Board explained that the Highway Department had been short-staffed and Barbara said she will contact Foreman Carl Baldasaro about both issues to remind them.

Jason asked regarding the private way vs. a public road he has had several inquiries about property on Lynes Rd. and Abbott Hill Rd. both of which are public but are back roads, and Lynes does turn into an unmaintained road. John told him that the Highway Department has a list of all the Chapter 90 accepted roads. Jason also let us know that the Gateway soccer and little league seasons are starting and anyone who is interested should come down to the ballfield to watch and show their support.


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

Meeting Adjourned 7:48 PM

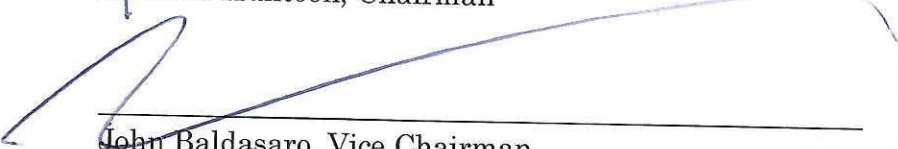
Respectfully Submitted




Jill Strong, Administrative Assistant



Barbara Huntoon, Chairman



John Baldasaro, Vice Chairman



Richard Holzman, Clerk

5/5/21

Date Signed

5/10/21

Date Signed

5/10/21

Date Signed

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