



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

**Monday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

Open Meeting – Meeting in the Town Hall auditorium, Virtual available as well.

Selectmen Barbara Huntoon and Richard Holzman present, Selectmen John Baldasaro is out of town. Town Hall staff present included Town Administrator Kathe Warden, Administrative Assistant Jill Strong, Town Clerk Sister Judith Dalesandro, and Tax Collector Mary Ann Pease. From the Finance Committee Andy Myers and Jessica Sakaske were present. Per the agenda Paul Lischette from the Hilltown CDC was present. Also participating remotely were Sara Hunter and Janice Boucher from the office of CPA Erik Kinsherf as well as a few residents.

Minutes were signed, there were no warrants.

Barbara opened the meeting at 6:00 pm, there were some issues with hearing anyone remotely. They were solved and we began at 6:07pm. Barbara asked if anyone was recording, no one was.

- **Sara Hunter and Janice Boucher update the Town on the Finance Dept.** Sara and Janice gave us an update on how things are going with the Treasurer's office cleanup. Janice has been working on getting setup to have access to everything through our VPN and all of our software to process, validate and enter warrants. Sara has been working with Mary Ann to organize all of our accounts, currently CMELD accounts. They believe they will have our free cash certified by the end of June and as soon as this is done, they will begin reconciling our accounts for FY21 and work on getting this year's free cash certified in a timely manner. Barbara asked what they considered to be a timely manner? They would like to have this done by the end of October if everything reconciled. Barbara thanked them for their work and their promptness moving forward.
- **Paul Lischette – Hilltown Community Development – Discussion about Chester Commons** Paul gave us an update on the work they are doing on the Chester Commons building. Hilltown CDC is applying for a Community One Stop For Growth Capital Grant which at our last meeting with him on April 5<sup>th</sup> he believed the town needed to submit the application. He has since been informed that the property owner is the one who actually needs to apply. The Select Board has signed a letter of support to include with the application which is due on June 4<sup>th</sup>. Now that they have begun evaluating the building, they have started to discover that the condition is a little worse than they originally thought when it was purchased. The roof needs to be replaced as



there are multiple leaks into some of the apartments. Barbara asked if insurance would help to cover the cost of replacing the roof? Paul answered no, insurance is something that would only help if there was a "total loss," there is no severe damage just leaks and they have begun to patch things as a temporary fix. When Paul was filling out the application a question came up if we had a "Complete Streets Policy"? Barbara answered yes, however because we have had a turnover of a few Highway Superintendents in the past few years it may have been lost in the shuffle and she would reach out to our current Highway Foreman Carl Baldasaro to look into it. There was also a question if we had any assistance for seniors? Barbara and Mary Ann explained that we have a senior work off program to assist people to pay with their taxes as well as assistance for veterans and people who are blind. He asked if the town was still interested in moving the library from the building? Mary Ann told him that they were, there had been a discussion to have it moved across the street to the old elementary school, but we are still waiting for things to be finalized for the town to have full ownership of the property. Paul had brought up at the last meeting utilizing a grant to rehab the school as well which would also be a Community One Stop Grant, which he suggested again. He brought up that in Chesterfield they are working on the old school and their community building and have applied for the grant in a "planning stage," because they are not sure what they will be doing with the buildings but need to do repairs to make them usable. This may be a good option for the school because we have multiple options for the use and have not yet made a final decision. However, Kathe brought up that we should wait on moving forward with applying for anything until we own the building. Barbara agreed because there is always the concern that the property owner could come back and pay off the back taxes and penalties and we could have done the work with no reward.

- **Jason Ellershaw – Discussion about Water Dept.** Jason was unable to make it so this will be moved to the meeting next week May 24<sup>th</sup>.
- **Greg Harrison – Request to be considered for the Cemetery Commissioner.** Greg was unable to make it so this will be moved to the meeting next week May 24<sup>th</sup>.
- **Town Administrator – Discussion about changing fees for weekend burials and changing notification time from 48 hours to 96 hours.** Kathe brought to the attention of the Select Board that now that we are into warmer weather, we have begun any burials for people who have passed away over the winter. Currently we have no cemetery commissioner so locating the burial plots has been the job of herself and Jill. Because things are busy, and we have had issues with the cemetery maps she asked if we could change the notification time for all burials from 48 hours to 96 hours. Kathe also asked if we could charge more for weekend burials due to the fact that we are paying more for our Highway Dept. to be there on a weekend to take care of the burial. Currently it is \$500.00 for a full burial and \$100.00 for a cremation. Kathe asked if we could change the price to \$750.00 for a full burial and \$175.00 for a cremation. Barbara asked that changing the fees we first check with surrounding towns to see if our fees are comparable, also changing the notification to allow for exceptions for religious customs requiring more prompt burial. Rich agreed with Kathe that we should make sure that the burial fees did cover the costs for us i.e., the Highway Dept. to be on site. Kathe said that she would indeed check with the other surrounding towns to verify their costs before making changes.

**Town Administrator:**



- Kathe brought up to us that the Chester Theatre Company will begin using the Town Hall as their rehearsal space and due to restrictions set by the Screen Actors Guild Union, we are not allowed to occupy the same space as them on rehearsal days. Therefore a few of the Select Board meetings will need to either be full remote or moved to a new location. The dates are, May 24<sup>th</sup>, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, and 28<sup>th</sup>, July 26<sup>th</sup>, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup>. Also, for anyone working in Town Hall the actors need to have their own dedicated bathroom, which will be the single bathroom on the main floor. It was decided for now those dates we will go full remote but once there is a change in the Select Board they can discuss this again.
- On Tuesday evening we were scheduled to have a second hydrant flushing done which Dr. Gullick our water consultant from Water Compliance Solutions has suggested we not do. It was discussed if there should be a robo-call done to alert people that this would no longer be happening, and it was decided that it was fine to not do this because no call had gone out that it would be happening.
- We continued the discussion from the meeting last week about re-opening the Town Hall to the public. It was thought that we should keep things small at first and Barbara agreed that it is not the best idea to have the doors completely open. Everyone working in the Town Hall has a job to be done and limiting the hours available to the public gives everyone the opportunity to focus on their work and then allotted time to focus on needs of the public. Kathe said that she would be sending out an email to the staff letting everyone know about the stipulations with the theatre coming in and would ask everyone to include when they would like to have office hours. She added that it would be best to keep everyone consistent such as Monday and Wednesday afternoons as an example. Rich wanted to ensure that if someone did come outside office hours that had business that needed to be addressed, they could speak with someone. Kathe said that we could have something on the door with office hours listed, and our website does have the phone numbers of all departments to be able to reach someone and ask to be let in because they have something urgent. Mary Ann asked about offering evening hours, Barbara answered that some people had offered hours on Monday nights during the Select Board meetings which any of the departments could continue to do if they chose.

Before moving to public comment Rich wanted to address the discussion of the Bromley Road project. Barbara had spoken to Carl about the start date, and she will be posting it to the Facebook Community Forum and send a press release to the Country Journal. She asked it to be posted to the website as well. The discussion over the past few meetings has been if we will be keeping the millings from the project or if the contractor is taking them, and how we can use them if we are to keep them. It has been concluded that the contractor indeed will be taking them, and Rich wanted to make the point that going forward we need to maximize to potential of these contracts in ways that benefit the town, "It is complicated because we have been given conflicting opinions." Barbara said that the fault does not go to Carl as we have had a turnover of four Highway Superintendents in the last few years and moving forward is the right thing to do.

Barbara brought up that the Memorial Day Committee has met, and they will be going forward with having the Memorial Day celebration. There will be a service and a parade and as of now they do have a speaker. They are going to have another meeting to discuss further planning.

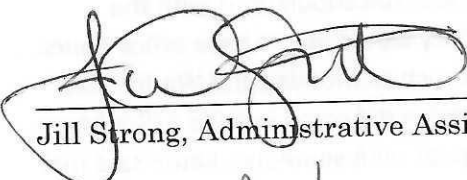
#### **Public Comments and Questions:**

- Bob Daley thanked the Select Board for hosting the meeting Virtually despite having challenges to start. He also wanted to give a thank you for having the town report dedicated to Gene Waters who passed away May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
- Andy let us know that the Finance Committee has their meeting on Saturday and is planning to be ready to meet with the Select Board for the meeting next week on Monday the 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Sister Judith wanted it addressed that when anyone is dropping things off in the black box in front of the Town Hall it needs to be labeled where it should go. Very often there is simply a check or cash with no direction as to what bill people are paying. Barbara suggested having this put in the Watts News also putting it on the Chester Facebook page and the Town website. Another suggestion was to put a notice on the box itself that it needs to be properly labeled.

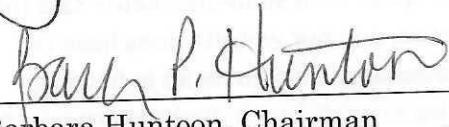
Barbara made the motion to adjourn, Rich 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Meeting adjourned 7:03 PM**

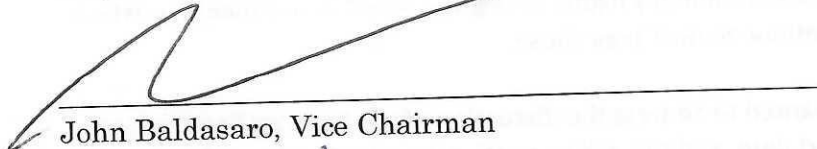
Respectfully Submitted

  
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Jill Strong, Administrative Assistant

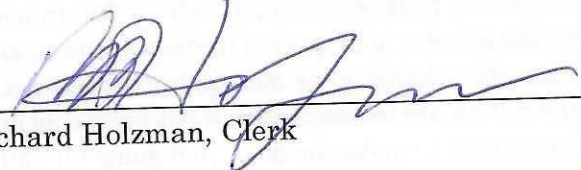
5/20/21  
Date Signed

  
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Barbara Huntton, Chairman

6/9/21  
Date Signed

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Baldasaro, Vice Chairman

6/14/21  
Date Signed

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Holzman, Clerk

6/8/21  
Date Signed