



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

Monday, June 7th, 2021

Open Meeting – This meeting is Virtual.

Selectmen John Baldasaro, Barbara Huntoon, and Richard Holzman present. Town Hall staff present were Town Administrator Kathe Warden, Administrative Assistant Jill Strong, Tax Collector Mary Ann Pease, and Town Clerk Sister Judith Dalesandro. From the Finance Committee Andy Myers and Jessica Sakaske, also Bob Daley and Lora Wade from the Water Improvement Committee. Elizabeth Massa and Nick Chiusano from the Board of Health, and Jason Fergie our Building Inspector. Per the agenda Corrin Meise-Munns, Patty Gambarini and Meredyth Babcock from PVPC for the MVP listening session. There were also two Chester residents listening.

Warrants and minutes to be signed at the Select Board's availability. Barbara asked if anyone was recording the meeting, no one answered that they were.

- **Review and possible vote to adopt the COA director description and bylaws.** The Select Board had all had the chance to read over both the job description and bylaws and saw no problems with either and were ready to take a vote. John made the motion to adopt the COA director description and bylaws, Rich 2nd, all voted Aye. The Select Board thanked all on the COA Bylaw Committee for their work on this project.
- **Opening of Town Hall effective June 15th with the hours of Tuesday and Thursday 11:00 – 3:00 all other by appointments or any other schedule the Select Board would like to adopt.** Kathe had asked everyone in the Town Hall what their preference in returning to opening Town Hall was. The answers from everyone ranged from opening back to full time to keeping things to appointment only. The decided compromise was to be open to the public Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Any other needs could be met by a scheduled appointment. Rich asked before they approved this decision were there any concerns among the Town Hall that they should be aware of. Kathe answered no, and we would put a sign up with the hours posted as well as a sign to please continue to use a mask if you are not yet vaccinated. Mary Ann mentioned that her only concern about keeping posted hours was that in the past residents have come in to pay bills and made the rounds to other offices, "as a social hour." She made the point that people have work to do, and we need to stick to the posted schedule. Rich

made the motion to open the Town Hall on June 15th, with the hours open to the public of Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 – 3:00. Barbara 2nd, all voted Aye.

- **Juneteenth discussion and possible vote to adopt new Mass holiday.** Juneteenth or Freedom Day, June 19th is a holiday that celebrates emancipation of those enslaved in the United States. Barbara asked if this was already a holiday? Kathe answered yes, however many towns are going through the motion to make it official as it constitutes a day off. Barbara stated that as it is already considered a state holiday, we should honor it. Barbara made the motion to honor Juneteenth as a holiday with the day off, if the day falls on the weekend the day off will either be the Friday before or the Monday after. Rich 2nd, all voted Aye.
- **Discussion of compensation for Mary Ann Pease, Tax Collector for her hours covering the Treasurer Dept.** Barbara read a description of the tasks Mary Ann has been performing while she has been covering the Treasurer's office. Kathe made the point that she had asked Mary Ann to put this together as she believed Mary Ann had really stepped up and has put in multiple extra hours to assist while we attempt to fill the position. The amount that would cover her compensation could come out of the tax title account which would not disturb any other funds and would mean that we do not have to search for money to help compensate her. Mary Ann also let us know that there was money in the Accountant's and Treasurer's expense account as well. John and Barbara both agreed this was well deserved and had no problem with this. Barbara asked Mary Ann if she knew how much longer she would have to help? Mary Ann answered she would at least help until the end of the fiscal year June 30th. Rich also thanked Mary Ann and told her that we were very grateful to have her. John made the motion to compensate Mary Ann Pease for her hours covering the Treasurer's Department. Rich 2nd, all voted Aye.
- **Vote to approve MassMuni/Sara Hunter as Treasurer.** We took care of this item on the agenda before moving into the listening session because Selectmen Baldasaro was going to have to log off from the meeting at 7:00 pm. John stated that he thought this was the right move, we have tried for too long to fill a full-time job with only part time people. Rich and Barbara were also in favor, Barbara believed that it was time for a professional firm as we have posted the job and have not yet had any success. Barbara asked for an update with the Accounting Firm that has started. Kathe informed us that they had started and were there today, (6/7/21) from 9:30 – 5:30. Things were not going to correct themselves overnight, but we have two professional teams that are dedicated to the town and getting us straightened out and moving forward. Barbara made the motion to approve MassMuni Sara Hunter as Treasurer. Rich 2nd, all voted Aye.

Before moving to the MVP listening session, we listened to updates from Kathe and opened things up to Public Comments and Questions.

Town Administrator: Kathe let us know that the stop on virtual meetings has changed and has been extended to September 1st so we will have no problem with the necessary remote meetings while the Chester Theatre Company is using the Town Hall. Barbara asked if the choice was to continue to do them all remote or to move them to the Fire Station which was brought up as an option. John, Rich, and Barbara all agreed that they would prefer to be in person. Barbara said that she would reach out to the

Fire Department to see if this would be an option for us to use the Fire Station for these meetings. She also mentioned that we could possibly make them hybrid; in person but have the virtual option.

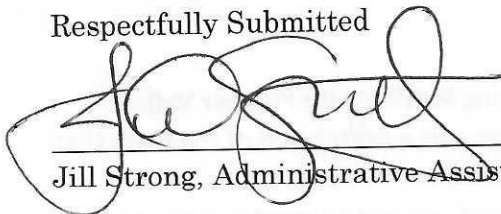
Public Comments and Questions:

- Rich wanted to speak regarding the water discussion that has been ongoing. We have been facing a complicated challenge and are hoping to come to a resolution for the future for a long-standing problem. Andy let us know that our consultant from Water Compliance Solutions Dr. Richard Gullick has a new proposal and will be requesting time at the Select Board meeting in the next few weeks. Barbara knew of this and expected to have some time with him on the Select Board meeting on Monday the 21st.
- Barbara thanked the Memorial Day Committee for coming together and putting together a wonderful celebration, stating it was great to be among each other again. Andy thanked Barbara for her participation in the Memorial Day celebration.
- Bob brought up Bill H.3152 which is an act to modernize participation in public meetings. He thought that with this on the table the Select Board should consider offering a permanent remote option as it could encourage more residents to participate. Barbara thanked Bob for his input.
- Mary Ann asked about the hydrant flushing; she has had a few residents ask her if we would be continuing with this and wanted to be able to answer their questions. Bob answered her: when the first round was done it was the hydrant on Middlefield Road and it took 21,000 gallons of water before it would run clear. Given that amount was a large part of the total water in the reservoir, our water consultant Dr. Gullick suggested that we wait before proceeding any further.
- **Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Public Listening Session with Pioneer Valley Planning Corrin Meise-Munns and Patty Gambarini.** Rich gave us a description of the team that worked on creating this Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan. He discussed how the Hilltowns are familiar with extreme weather such as snow and rain but although we are on high ground, we have experienced flooding. He thanked PVPC and the team for their hard work and professional job that is helping us to prepare for challenges that concern us. Corrin led us through the presentation with Patty and Meredyth adding in points along the way. Corrin explained that the state has a goal of having every community in this program. We started this process in June of 2020 and will shortly be receiving designation as an MVP community. The main goal of the team that has worked on this project was to identify problem areas and provide strategies to resolve them and share these results with the public. All of the information they have put together is on the town website under the Resilient Master Plan tab in the Draft MVP Report. The core principles are to reduce vulnerability to climate change and provide steps to plan for the inevitable with the climate change projections and seasonal warming that has taken place. Bob thanked them all for their work and asked what the next steps would be when identifying the priorities moving forward who would be the decider as to what the priority is? Corrin explained that we would need to work that out, there is no best or set process. Other communities have designated a person or a department that specifically takes on MVP. However, others take another approach such as a round table format where there is a group effort and every year decisions are made based on current needs. Bob thought the idea of a

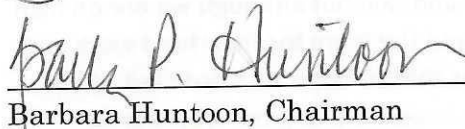
standing committee was the ideal way and the number one thing on his mind was the health of our water shed and Horn Pond and the future of our water. Rich asked how well they all believed Chester was positioned based on the work that had been done for the MVP action grant. Corrin thought we were making great moves in the right direction, getting certified as an MVP community being a big step. She suggested a collaboration with other towns when working on our strategies to make things easier such as the dirt road assessment. This could be done with surrounding towns who are in need of this as well. A good practice is to turn the strategies into projects to have a timeline on grants. Rich asked if we could count on them for a continued relationship for the problems that have been identified? Patty answered yes, it was important for them to have towns to remain active and were happy to help if we needed assistance with staying in touch with legislature. Corrin added that it was common practice for them to keep in their mind the priorities of their communities so that they can watch out for applicable grants so they can send along the information as well as any other resources. Barbara thanked everyone for their work on the project and the team reminded everyone to take the three-question survey which was provided in the chat section of the meeting and is also available on the town website.

Meeting Adjourned 7:55 PM

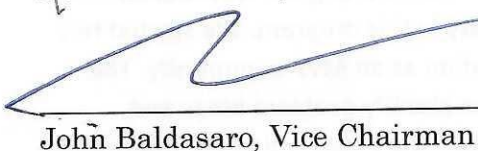
Respectfully Submitted


Jill Strong, Administrative Assistant

6/8/21
Date Signed


Barbara Huntoon, Chairman

6/9/21
Date Signed


John Baldasaro, Vice Chairman

Date Signed

Richard Holzman, Clerk

Date Signed