



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

Monday, June 21st, 2021

Open Meeting – This meeting is Virtual.

Selectmen John Baldasaro, Barbara Huntoon, and Richard Holzman present. Town Hall staff present included Town Administrator Kathe Warden, Administrative Assistant Jill Strong, and Town Clerk Sister Judith Dalesandro. From the Board of Health Elizabeth Massa, and Nick Chiusano. Our Building Inspector Jason Fogue, as well as Andy Myers, Bob Daley, and Jessica Sakaske from the Finance Committee. There were also a few Chester residents participating. Per the agenda Eric Weiss and Ira Brezinsky from PVPC were also present.

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

Barbara called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

- **Review Martino Glass proposal for replacement doors for lower-level exterior doors vote to approve.** Kathe led a discussion about finishing the project of replacing the doors in the Town Hall by Martino Glass out of Pittsfield. The front door was completed in March, and we still have \$31,000.00 left to replace two doors on the lower level. The cost of the doors is \$12,685.00, a permit costs an additional \$350.00 and if the Building Inspector would like engineer drawings that will be an additional \$1,750.00 - \$3,500.00. We also will be purchasing a wind guard for the COA entrance which will help with snow and wind which is an additional \$2,707.00. Even if we do need the engineer drawings at the full cost of \$3,500.00 the total cost would be \$19,242.00 still leaving the town with \$11,758.00 remaining. Kathe let us know speaking with Martino Glass that they currently have a four to six week lead time to start the project. Rich asked Kathe to give an explanation of why this is being done so it could be on record. Kathe explained that the doors in the Town Hall are all very old and need windows in them which they currently do not have. The door on the Police Department side has some rust and is in need of an upgrade. Rich made the motion that we go forward with the Town

Administrator's recommendation. Barbara made an adjustment to the motion, making a motion that we accept the proposal from Martino Glass for replacement doors for the lower-level exterior doors. Rich 2nd, all voted Aye.

- **Discussion and possible vote about Green Communities with PVPC as regional coordinator.** Kathe explained that with Green Communities the idea is to work on Net Zero planning. Net Zero planning involves reducing greenhouse gas emissions and creating local energy action plans as well as investing in renewable energy. Liz Massa mentioned that this would require all town owned vehicles to be green. Barbara remarked that she did not see that happening soon and was not sure that this was something that we needed to do right now. Rich asked for Andy's input as he has knowledge in this. Andy was aware that there had been some discussion within the School Committee and wanted input from Jason who is a member. Jason was not present at the moment of discussion, so we moved on to the next topic. Once Jason was present his input was that he knew that there had been some concerns with the forcing of Green Communities i.e., wind turbines but ultimately, he believed that the positives far outweighed the negatives. Barbara asked what his thoughts were on forgoing the Net Zero planning at this stage. Jason agreed and said that we were further away from accomplishing that at this point. John made the motion of setting PVPC as our regional coordinator as a Green Community and to not move forward with Net Zero Planning at this time. Barbara 2nd, all voted Aye.
- **ARPA plan update, decide who will be the authorized representative for the town, and signing of Assurances of compliance with Civil rights requirements and US DEBT of the Treasury Coronas state and local fiscal recovery report. (These are part of the ARPA Documentation.)** Kathe explained that there needs to be a representative that is available to sign off on documents or receive emails regarding the ARPA plan. She stated that it could be any of the members of the Select Board or the Town Administrator, the person simply needs to be available if it is necessary to stop at the Town Hall if something needs to be signed with any urgency. Rich offered himself if this would help Kathe, but John stated that he would take it on. Barbara made the motion to have Selectmen John Baldasaro be the authorized representative for the town, Rich 2nd, all voted Aye.
- **Review and possible vote on the contract for the Water grant to replace the Carbon Filter in one of the plants.** We have received a grant for \$127,396.20 from the Small and Disadvantaged Community Grant Program. There will also be an In-Kind Grant match of \$77,396.00, this will all be used to replace the carbon layer in one or two of the filters in the water treatment plant and upgrade the system. Kathe let us know that it is very specific in the contract what this money can be used for, and it needs to stay within the Water Department. Rich made the motion to go forward on the contract with replacing the Carbon Filter in the water treatment plant. John 2nd, all voted Aye.
- **Town Administrator:** Before moving on to the Listening Session with PVPC Kathe gave us a few updates. There are two grants that she will be closing out this week as well as three reports that will go out to that state by the end of the week. She thanked Bob Daley for working on getting the CCR report for water mailed out. She is going to have a meeting with the Accountant, Treasurer and Tax Collector to discuss closing out the

Fiscal Year. As we still do not have a cemetery commissioner, we are looking at the options for the upkeep of the cemeteries at this time. The Chester Hill cemetery as well as Pine Hill there is the possibility of more plots available, with a possible expansion of Pine Hill and looking into a professional landscaping company who could come in to clear the ground more at Chester Hill. Fire Chief Richie Small has also made us aware that they are in need of money to put toward a new fire truck. The older truck has aged out, Kathe said that she could reach out to someone from MEMA to see if we could get some assistance. Barbara asked Kathe if there were any grants available that would assist with the cemeteries? Kathe said that she has not been able to find anything as of yet unless there is something specific, an example would be a section that is dedicated to Daughters of the American Revolution. Rich also suggested the possibility of a community service project to help with painting the cemetery fences. Barbara asked how things were going within the Water Department and how much longer our consultant Dr. Rich Gullick from Water Compliance Solutions would be with us. Kathe said that Dr. Gullick would still be working with us until the end of June, and he has done no further training with Jason Ellershaw. Barbara had reached out to Bernie St. Martin our Primary Water Operator last week to touch base but has not yet heard back from him. Kathe had spoke with Bernie who was upset regarding what he discussed with Kathe were residents who were at the gate to the water treatment plant. Bernie was driving by and stopped and asked what they were doing there, they told him that they had permission which he then told him that they did not as he was the Primary Water Operator and knew of anyone who should be on the property. He told Kathe that it was not a pleasant conversation. Liz Massa spoke up and stated that she was the one who was there and was hiking. Liz said that she introduced herself to Bernie and equally was not met with pleasant remarks. Barbara asked if she did have permission to be there. Liz said that she had been speaking with Rich and Bob Daley about other sources of water and had been hiking in the area in search of just that. Kathe said that she would be calling Bernie to speak with him regarding the incident. Before moving on Barbara mentioned that next week Monday the 28th would be her last meeting as a member of the Select Board. This meeting should have been virtual, but we have decided to do this in person at the Chester Railway Station as we still need the auditorium in the Town Hall available for the Chester Theatre Company.

- **Local Rapid Recovery Program Public Listening Session with Pioneer Valley Planning Eric Weiss & Ira Brezinsky.** Ira first remarked that of the three towns they have met with Chester has had the best attendance. Eric and Ira gave us an explanation of Chester Rapid Recovery Planning which is under way. They first spent some time walking around downtown to check out the businesses and are now moving into the next phase which will look at diagnostics. They have looked at the public as well as private and non-profit businesses and investigated things such as sidewalks, parking, signage, building facades and curb appeal. It was suggested to identify the anchors or destinations of the town and encourage more of this or expand this type of business. Examples of business anchors were, The Blue Note Café, Carm's Restaurant, Chester Common Table and The Chester Theatre Company. Other examples of anchors were the Chester Town Hall, Hamilton Memorial Library, and the Chester Railway Station. Some ideas they brought

to the table were to capitalize on walking and what they referred to as downtown "stickiness" or a way to keep people in town and not move through so quickly. Suggestions to accomplish this were public art, speed calming on Route 20 which they knew was controlled by the state and DOT, as well as reviewing any zoning laws. Another suggestion was to work on branding, we have a town seal but no logo. We use the slogan "Gem of the Valley," but this could be used more to further our branding. Rich thanked them for doing a great job and asked about including the East West rail. Eric stated that he knew Rich would address this but before they included it, they wanted to make sure the town was the one to bring it up. Bob also mentioned that he thought Chester on Track should be mentioned. Eric thanked everyone as this was exactly the type of conversation that they want to have to help this along. A resident Elaine Gilmore asked about including the Arches Trail. Barbara commented that although hiking at the Arches Trail as well as at Sanderson Brook exploded during the Covid-19 pandemic we do not receive any revenue from the hikers, and we should explore ways of how we could gain revenue from the people coming to town for these activities. Barbara also mentioned, although she knew that this was not a "popular" idea she has always felt that having a gas station in town would help because there is so much space in between the closest gas stations. Elaine mentioned the gas station would be helpful to have with a charging station for electric vehicles as there is not one around. She also thought that at the hiking locations it might be good to have a sign informing people about the businesses in town. Rich also mentioned that the Littleville Fair should be included as they have done so much for improvements and are coming back strong. The next step for this will be to create a Local Rapid Recovery Program (LRRP) Committee of 7-9 people who will offer ideas and suggestions and meet periodically with PVPC to narrow down and decide on projects to move forward with. Rich asked if there could be periodical progress reports in the form of a press release such as in the Country Journal and the Watt's News. Eric told Rich that he would be happy to reach out to the Country Journal. Barbara asked when we needed the Committee to be together? Eric answered, the sooner the better. Rich said that he would volunteer to be apart of the Committee, Jill stated that anyone who was interested should email her so that we could put a list together. Kathe asked Eric if he would be willing to come to another meeting with us on Thursday, July 8th at 6:00 so we could discuss things further thinking we will have the Committee together by then. Eric and Ira both answered yes, they thought they could join us for a meeting. Kathe asked Eric if he could put together a small blurb, approximately two paragraphs to go into the Watt's News to inform people about the Committee it will also be put on the website. Barbara thanked them for all of their work thus far.

Public Comments and Questions:

- Sister Judith wanted to remind anyone who was newly elected that they need to be sworn in by July 1st.

- Jason mentioned that he would be willing to put together a volunteer group that could assist with cleaning up the cemeteries. He informed us that Blandford had their Annual Town Meeting and they voted for the Alternative Assessment Method for the regional school district agreement.

Middlefield has their meeting on Saturday the 26th but he was unsure if it would pass. He also let us know that the Gateway Little League team has a playoff game tomorrow, June 22nd, against Dalton and if they win will have a championship game on Saturday. He welcomed all residents to come to Emery Field to watch and support the kids.

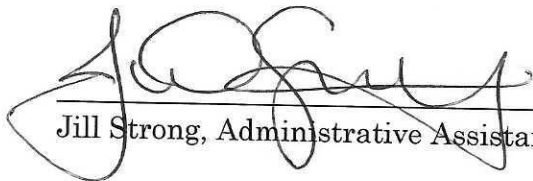
- Bob asked about the doors being fixed, if it would fix the drainage problem by the COA entrance? Kathe answered yes, she hoped it would, but some of the problems came from a build up of ice and snow in the winter months causing issues with the concrete. Rich asked if this was the new area that was done and thought it was the job or the company doing the project to ensure it was graded properly away from the building. Barbara mentioned that it was the new section but reiterated Kathe's point of improper snow and ice removal in that area. Bob also asked if Kathe knew if Bernie our Primary Water Operator had conducted the current PFAS testing which should have been done? Kathe was unsure but was hoping to speak with him tomorrow.

- Kathe asked Barbara if next week's meeting would be only in person or if we would do a virtual option as well. Barbara answered that we should do both. Barbara addressed everyone and apologized for being unable to attend the Annual Town Meeting last week as she was sick. She was disappointed to have not been there but thanked everyone who attended.

John made the motion to adjourn, Rich 2nd.

Meeting Adjourned 8:00 PM

Respectfully Submitted


Jill Strong, Administrative Assistant

7/26/21
Date Signed

Barbara Huntoon, Chairman

Date Signed


John Baldasaro, Vice Chairman

7/26/21
Date Signed


Richard Holzman, Clerk

Date Signed

