



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

Monday, August 2nd, 2021

Open meeting – This meeting is held in the Town Hall COA room with a virtual option.

Selectmen John Baldasaro and Richard Holzman present, Jason Forgue is on vacation and participated remotely. Town Hall staff present included Town Administrator Kathe Warden, Administrative Assistant Jill Strong, Tax Collector Mary Ann Pease, Town Clerk Terry Donovan, and Librarian and COA director Angelique Toroni. From the Finance Committee Andy Myers, Bob Daley and Sister Judith Dalesandro were present, Elizabeth Massa from the Board of Health and Jessica Sakaske from the Finance Committee were participating remotely as well as a few residents.

Warrants and minutes were signed, John opened the meeting at 6:00 PM. He asked if anyone was recording, no one answered that they were.

- **Water Commissioners – continued discussion about job description and stipends.** Over the past few weeks, we have been discussing creating a Board of Water Commissioners and removing it as a job of the Select Board. Last week Kathe brought to the table two job descriptions that she had found through Mass General Law as well as New England Water Works Association and it was decided that we would draft a job description as these were generic. Kathe started the draft of the job description which included The Board of Water Commissioners would be responsible for any emails, water results, finances, and their budget. As stated last week the Board would still be subject to the Town Budget even if they oversee their own finances. Jason also worked on a job description which included the following.
 - Oversee the management, improvement, and control of all aspect of the Town of Chester water system.
 - Award contracts for work to be performed in the maintenance and construction of Town water systems within the budget proposed and passes at the Annual Town Meeting. This includes the hiring of an appropriately licensed Water Operator as defined by Massachusetts DEP standards.
 - Establish rules and regulations for the use of the Town of Chester water systems.
 - Fix just and equitable rates for the use of the Town of Chester water systems, with all changes to rate subject to the approval of the Board of Selectmen.

- Keep necessary records and distribute necessary notices to customers as required by the Department of Environmental Protection and MA record keeping law.
- Oversee the collection of daily flow rates and acceptable water quality information.
- Provide regularly scheduled on-site inspection and evaluations as deemed necessary.
- Oversee the preparation and submitted of all necessary reports to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.
- Provide updates to the Board of Selectmen during the second regularly scheduled meeting of each month.

John stated that they should look over both that had been created and tweak them a little and we could vote at the Select Board meeting next week. Rich commented that he believed both captured the essence of authority and intense focus that would help us yield results. Kathe mentioned that at the Select Board meeting next week we will be meeting at the Blandford Town Hall to discuss the shared police agreement. Rich asked if we would still be able to make a vote at this meeting, Kathe answered yes, but after the planned meeting discussion has concluded. Bob thanked Jason for his draft of a job description commenting that he thought it was a good start and could help the Select Board, Board of Water Commissioners, the Board of Health work together. John agreed stating that it was important to work together. Kathe stated that she could have the revised job description ready for Thursday so there would be time for everyone to look it over before the Select Board meeting on Monday. Andy mentioned that while at the meeting with Blandford next week to mention that we would be interested in a collaboration with them as they also have a Water Department. John stated that this has already been a discussion and Kathe has been speaking with them.

- **William Ivey Long – continued discussion.** We have been contacted regarding the old Chester Elementary School which is currently owned by William Ivey Long about renting two of the rooms for storage once the Town has retained ownership. At the meeting on July 19th it was voted to allow rental to William Ivey Long at the rate of \$500.00 per room as well as any electric or heating bills. Kathe stated that she has been working with Donald Saunders who is the business assistant of William Ivey Long however he was away last week and this week our Town Council Tom Mullen is away who we wanted to speak with to have insight on a contract. This past week we were able to obtain a key to the building so that we can move forward with the energy audits we plan to have done on the building. When speaking with Donald he asked that Kathe or Jill accompany anyone who needs to enter the building to ensure there is no illegal trespassing. Rich asked who requested this which Kathe answered Donald who is William Ivey Long's business assistant, once we have full ownership, we can regulate who is in the building. Mary Ann asked what the status was on the sale of the building, Kathe answered that we were waiting on paperwork from William Ivey Long but she would follow up so we could move things along.
- **Road update from storms.** The Town has been working with Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, MEMA, about assistance with fixing the roads in town that were damaged by rainstorms in July. There had been a concern that a threshold would not be met to qualify us for aid as all of the Towns that submit for assistance combined need to have a damage total of \$10.4 million dollars or more. To assist with this the original submission was changed to include the Main Street bridge which has had problems for some time but was damaged further by the rising river. This should ensure that the threshold is met, and Kathe stated that now we were

waiting on MEMA and the state for approval. Rich commented to residents if they see any problems that should be addressed to contact the Chester Highway Department so we could ensure all things have been added. Jason asked if we would need to collect a separate proposal for every job that needs to be performed, John answered that it depends on how MEMA would like it done and that they may not know yet how they are going to proceed.

- **ARPA Funds – continued discussion.** At the Select Board meeting last week Jason was voted as the trustee to the ARPA account, American Rescue Plan Act. A trustee needed to be designated so that there is someone who will oversee the account and how any money is spent. Kathe informed us last week that the first installment of the money had been deposited however, the amount we should have received is \$206,000.00 and we only received \$70,000.00. Kathe had emailed State Representative Natalie Blais but did not get a final answer as to why the amount changed. Jason had some insight and was told that there were two allocations municipal and county. The municipal allocation was \$143,000.00 and the county was \$260,000.00, this first amount should be the initial installment and the second would be the remaining funds from the municipal allocation. Rich asked how this money could be spent, Kathe answered it would be used for infrastructure. Jason stated that he was aware of four components that the funds could be used under. The first was to respond to the Covid-19 economic impact, next was to provide employees that worked through the pandemic premium pay. Government Services was also allowed which allow use if we prove that there was any lost revenue to pay for any services. He stated that this is vague, and states are reading this as they could do what they want with the money as long as they can prove lost revenue in that capacity. Infrastructure is allowed as Kathe had mentioned, and could be used for water, sewer, and broadband. Jason thought that since this included water, we could possibly use some of the money to fix the road damage if state aide did not work out. It could be justified by needing proper drainage, culverts storm drains etc. He had not found in the federal paperwork if this would be allowed and wanted to verify from them not just the state because we are reporting to the Federal Government what we are using the money for. John asked if there was a time frame for the first report, Jason answered that there would be no report necessary until October 31st. Jason also let us know that there is a possibility with some paperwork that we could distribute the money over time as we may not have a plan for the entire sum. John stated that we should come up with a list of priority projects, Jason asked if we had held a meeting to discuss with residents what the money could be used for and for any input. John answered no, we had not done that but thought it may be good to do this as a public discussion and get any suggestions.
- **Discussion about solar for the Town Hall roof, discussion, and possible vote to expend Green Community Grant money for weatherization and energy audit.** There has been a discussion on how to use the remaining funds from the Green Community Grant. It had been suggested that solar panels be installed on the Town Hall and possibly the old Chester Elementary School. However, when we installed them on the Town Garage and Fire station it was not correctly organized by PVPC and we are still waiting to have them remedy the problem. Looking into this further there were some questions raised as there was large fluctuation of power usage month to month in the Town Hall. Kathe has asked CMELD to install a test meter on the Town Hall to track the usage. Jason stated that what they had received for the proposed solar installation was informative but was not the power generation that he was hoping for. We are prepared to move forward with the energy audit, Jason reached out to the company that CMELD is in contract with

for solar but had not heard back from them as of yet. Jason asked if we had to continue with PVPC for this as we are unhappy with the previous job they have done. Rich answered that we need to reach out to PVPC again to make this problem right. Jason stated they has spoken to Eric Weiss from PVPC and has been trying to get information on the materials and pricing on fixing the solar installation on the buildings that have been done but, has had some push back on them absorbing the costs. Rich reiterated that this needs to be corrected at no cost to the Town, he stated that we should not burn any bridges and we should put everything we expect from them in writing. Kathe asked Rich if he would draft the letter to be sent, he answered that he would but may need more information from her to include in the letter. John explained that we could put together a Request for Proposal, RFP, for the project but we would not wait on PVPC as it inhibits us from moving forward with this money. Kathe stated that we did want to keep the relationship with PVPC as they do an extensive report for us and have had no problems. John agreed that we did not want to sever the relationship just wanted their focus.

- **Town Administrator update:**

- Kathe let us know that one of the accounts for the two scholarships that we have in place for the Town will be dissolved. John asked why this was going to happen, Kathe answered that she thought it was because the account is not making any money. Town Council suggested that we open an account to put the money in at a local bank which would allow anyone to contribute to the account. The scholarship account in question is awarded for the student with the highest GPA from the Town of Chester which Kathe believed there was roughly \$30,000.00 in the account. The other the Sylvester Hamilton scholarship, which can be awarded to any Chester student, has a larger sum in the account as it has been active John believed since the late 1950's.

- Elizabeth Massa has worked with Hilltown Community Health Centers to set up a vaccine clinic in the Chester Town Hall. It has been scheduled for Wednesday, August 25th, from 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM. Kathe asked Liz if this would be open to everyone or only Chester residents, Liz was unsure but would let us know when she has all the details.

- The Mass Cultural Council which works with organizations to promote a cultural image in the state of Massachusetts. Businesses, artists, and organizations submit their needs for approval and are awarded a sum based on the available funds. They are changing the way the awarded money is distributed, currently the money spent will be reimbursed with records of how it was used. They have decided to change that and distribute a check to be spent first and then the organization will have to then submit a report on how it was used.

Before moving to public comment John wanted to give an update on the air quality issue within the library. Terry let us know that they had a company come in to test the air for mold and had received the results. The report states that remediation is necessary in the library and the closet as there is mold growth greater than the normal or expected range and all items including books, other reading material, etc. in the main library and closet are contaminated. The remediation can be done by a professional or by the use of air purifiers. It was recommended that this be resolved as soon as possible as it is dangerous to young children, older adults, and anyone who is immune compromised. The option of remediation does have a downside, the fogging that is done can leave a film on all items that we were informed is difficult to clean. The other option of using air purifiers would need continued use of the air

purifiers until the problem is remedied, this will oxidize any contaminants and sanitize all surfaces. The air purifiers should be at a setting of 3,000 square feet for eight hours per day, during off hours, then when the building is occupied put to a lower setting. This should be done until there no longer is an odor and everything smells clean. Afterward you can continue to use the air purifiers at a low setting. The Library Trustees have submitted a formal complaint as a tenant to the Hilltown CDC as they are the owners of the building. At the Trustees meeting last week they discussed that either route remediation or the use of air purifiers should not come at the cost of the library. In the meantime, they are brainstorming what to currently do with the library while it is being cleaned, to rent an additional space or move things to the old Chester Elementary school. Mary Ann commented that the closet in question holds all the meters and wiring for the building, and everything needs to be cleaned. Terry spoke with Hilltown CDC, and they told her that they had cleaned everything and the reason for the smell of cigarette smoke was that the library shared a crawl space with a tenant who smoked. Rich asked if this had been a problem over some time. Mary Ann answered yes with water damage but there had never been this bad of an issue with mold. Rich agreed that the landlord current and past should be held accountable for this, Mary Ann agreed the library and the taxpayers should not be responsible. Rich asked if any insurance would cover this, Mary Ann answered yes, the property insurance through the town, but mold sometimes is not included through insurance. Jason commented that Mary Ann was correct mold is usually excluded. Jason stated that he has done research on air purifiers and believed we should research what the air purifier that was suggested does so that we can search for our own. He was skeptical of the suggested option as it is sold by the company who performed the air quality test.

Public Comments and Questions:

Bob wanted it to be known that this year is Amtrak's 50th anniversary. There has been information that with this anniversary their plan is to expand nationwide including two daily stops in Chester as well as in Chatham New York. Rich commented that they will be at a meeting with Senator Eric Lesser, as well as Representatives Natalie Blais and Richie Neal. Rich stated that it was a long shot, but they were optimistic. Bob thanked Liz for her work in creating a vaccine clinic, he commented that doing research he found the number of vaccinated people in Chester was 518 out of a population of 1,250. He asked the Select Board if they had any further information regarding if the TOC testing has been done at the Water Plant. John answered no they still did not have updates but there is a meeting this week with our Primary Water Operator Bernie St. Martin. Bob also mentioned that we should have the quote from Elm Electric on installing the SCADA system at the Water Treatment Plant.

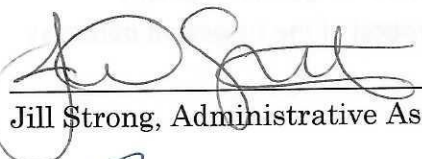
Andy let everyone know that it is the Littleville Fair this weekend, August 6th, 7th, and 8th. It has been posted on the website and thought maybe it should be placed on Facebook on the Chester Forum if it was not already. He stated that they have done a lot at the fairgrounds with a lot of effort and invited everyone to come. Rich asked how Kinnebrook Road was doing after the wash out during the rainstorms. John stated that all of the damage had not been repaired as of yet but was close to the Worthington town line and would not directly impede people getting in and out of the fairgrounds. Angelique commented that the Chester Blandford Police Department would have a booth at the Littleville Fair.

Liz wanted to comment on Bob's statement regarding the vaccination rate. She stated that she had been contacted and spoke with the Boston Globe as our vaccination rate is high among small towns. Rich commented that it would be great if we could reach eighty percent. Liz also mentioned that on July 30th it was recommended by Governor Baker to resume wearing masks when indoors due to the new cases of the Covid-19 variant which is infecting people, even those who are vaccinated. This was strongly suggested for anyone with compromised immune systems. Jessica asked if the clinic that would be happening is for ages fourteen and up, Liz said that she would check and hopefully have all of the details to post on the website by the end of the week.

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

Meeting adjourned 7:04 PM.


Respectfully Submitted



Jill Strong, Administrative Assistant

8/5/21

Date Signed



John Baldasaro, Chairman

8/9/21

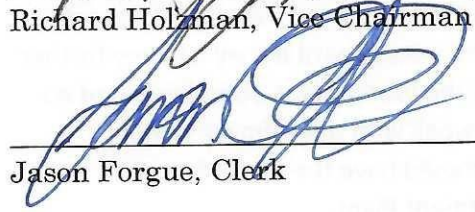
Date Signed



Richard Holzman, Vice Chairman

6/9/21

Date Signed



Jason Forgue, Clerk

8/9/21

Date Signed