



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

**Monday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

Open Meeting – This meeting is held in the Chester Town Hall auditorium with a remote option.

Selectboard members John Baldasaro and Richard Holzman present, Jason Forgue is out of town and participated remotely, also present was Ann Marie Visconti from the Middlefield Select Board. 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. Janice Boucher from Accountant Eric Kinsherf's office and Treasurer Sara Hunter participated remotely. Also present was CMELD Commissioner Duane Pease, with Andy Myers, Bob Daley, Jessica Sakaske, and Sister Judith Dalesandro from the Finance Committee. Erica Johnson from PVPC was present as well as Kim Savery representing Hilltown Community Health Center, HCHC, as the Director of Community Programs, Michelle Kenny representing Southern Hilltown Adult Education Center, SHAEC, as well as Laura Gavioli who is the Director of the Huntington food pantry. There were a few residents present as well as participating remotely.

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

- **Conversation with Eric Kinsherf Town Accountant and Sara Hunter Town Treasurer for monthly updates including reports.** Janice Boucher opened the discussion representing Eric Kinsherf's office. Janice had emailed the latest expense report to Kathe who had distributed it to the Select Board. Currently there is not a revenue budget as this does not get posted until the tax recap is approved. Andy thanked them for putting this together and John commented that this was good data for us to have. Janice stated that they were currently working on FY21 books as there was some money that had been posted incorrectly so they are going through the accounts to make the necessary corrections. John asked when we should have free cash certified this year. Janice answered that it should be certified by the fall, end of October, and that her and Sara were working together to get the fourth quarter completed. John commented that he had met with the Chair of CMELD and discussed ways to streamline what they are doing. Sara stated that Mary Ann and herself were working on things together to ensure any money that is moved between accounts is done properly to have less room for error. Janice discussed that what they are currently working on issues that they have found relating to health insurance



and other benefits. She also stated that in attempting to streamline things with CMELD the possibility of doing quarterly reports rather than weekly. Jason asked if there could be a member of the Select Board present when they were discussing any changes within CMELD, Janice answered yes. Janice is going to email Kathe a copy of the Chesterfield report that they have completed to show as an example of the final report. Kathe will forward this to the Select Board once she has received it.

- **Town of Chester, with Huntington, and Middlefield FY 2021 Southern Hilltowns Regional CDBG application.**

Erica Johnson was with us from PVPC to discuss the Prospect Street project. Erica had a sign in sheet for everyone to add their name and had handouts of her discussion for everyone. She stated that grants were typically done in March and have now moved to the summer, the Covid-19 pandemic has made various changes on how things are being done. This grant will be a total of \$1.3 million for the towns of Chester, Huntington, and Middlefield. Erica commented that typically Russell has also been apart of this grant but this year they are sitting out due to money that still needs to be spent from a previous grant. The grant includes money for the Propsect Street paving project, housing rehabilitation, as well as Social Service programs. Erica discussed that working through this we have completed phase one which is to have the project funded. Phase two is the first round of applications as well as bidding which for the paving project will tell us how far we can go on the road. Rich asked if we would be ready to go for the fall, Erica answered that being funded in the spring it would be nice to have things ready for fall. She stated that however it may be better to do in the spring. Currently we still need to put everything out to bid as well as get the proper permitting and starting in the fall would be a race against the snow. Kim from HCHC mentioned that the housing rehabilitation would be highly utilized due to the Covid-19 pandemic as housing currently is at a premium. Michelle from SHAEC discussed the classes they are offering stating that during the Covid-19 pandemic they only offered virtual, but they are now open by appointment only. Michelle commented that they have a small space and that for right now they are keeping things one on one. Laura from the food pantry discussed the changes that happened with them during the pandemic, they had an influx of residents for a time, but it did go back down after money was released from the government for families. The major thing that changed was to offer things curbside which even though they are back open they will continue to offer. John thanked Erica for her work on this and everyone who has done work during the Covid-19 pandemic. Michelle asked Erica is she would send her a blurb so that she could add any information to the newsletter that is distributed by SHAEC, Erica answered that she would. Erica stated that she wanted to ensure residents were taking advantage of the housing rehabilitation program and encouraged town officials to reach out to anyone who might benefit as they know their community best. Kim also mentioned that it was within her capacity to look for beneficiaries. Rich and John thanked Erica for her work on the project, Erica stated that she had been interviewing younger people to be a part of PVPC to keep things moving in a positive direction for all involved. Bob asked if people could also be helped by the HOPE I program, Homeownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere, as well as the SHINE program, Serving the Health Insurance Needs For Everyone. Kim answered that was currently apart of their program with Hilltown Social Services. Ann Marie of Middlefield asked what was the date that Middlefield needed to submit things to be included in the grant as she stated that she did not know that they were included until she saw it in the Country Journal. Erica explained that they were already included but could submit people for



the social services and housing for assistance however the grant itself was not due until September 10<sup>th</sup>. The money for housing rehabilitation is available for people to apply now and encouraged anyone to contact them even if the list is full people can be placed on the waiting list. Erica was unsure when we will know the exact amount to be distributed but we typically would know within six months. She stated that everything had been delayed but there is an extension and thought there would likely be another. John asked Erica if all the programs were available to the other towns involved. Erica answered yes however Middlefield does not qualify for anything related to infrastructure as there is no dense development and things are very spread out. Michelle asked which or if there was a grant that was used for Middlefield to take down the old store that was in the town center. Erica answered that there was no grant that was used to take care of that for Middlefield. Kathe added to the discussion that with our current timeline we could have phase one and two submitted and out to bid at the same time. Michelle inquired if the rehabilitation could be used to rehab the library which currently has issues or the old Chester Elementary school. John stated as the town is not the property owners of either of the buildings it could not. Rich asked about the possibilities of the Prospect Street project if there could be anything done to widen the road, improving drainage, or creating parking at the Chester Railway Station. Erica stated that none of that was included in the original plan and issues could arise regarding wetlands as this area is very close to the river however, she would speak with the engineer. John then made the motion for the authorization of PVPC to submit the proposed FY21 Chester Community Development Fund grant application to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community development in an amount not to exceed \$1,300,000.00 as detailed in the public hearing and to include infrastructure improvements on Prospect Street in Chester, housing rehabilitation in the towns of Chester, Huntington, and Middlefield, as well as social service programs assisting residents in the three towns. Rich 2<sup>nd</sup>, all voted Aye. John made the second motion for authorization for the Chair of the Select Board, or acting Chair, to sign all required forms, documents and authorizations pertaining to the proposed FY21 Chester Community Development Fund grant application. Rich 2<sup>nd</sup>, all voted Aye.

There was a short recess 7:00 PM – 7:05 PM.

- **Update from John about his meeting with Deryck Savoy CMELD Commissioner.** John met last week with CMELD Commissioner Deryck Savoy to discuss any longstanding issues within CMELD. He commented that it was a good meeting and they discussed future plans CMELD has as well as their plans for rate stabilization. CMELD has been thinking about the idea of a municipal solar field that could be used for the town. They also discussed how CMELD could share the costs for the new Accounting Firm that was hired as well as the new Treasurer. John stated that this was an opportunity to work together. CMELD also stated that they were willing to work with us on solving the solar issue at the Town Garage and the Fire Station and could run the overhead for the solar project. There will be another meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM in the COA room as Tae Kwon Do classes will be starting next week Tuesday and Thursday. This will be a public information meeting with the Select Board as well as CMELD. Jason added that this all sounds wonderful the willingness to have the open discussion is refreshing but he would be unable to attend due to other meetings he has that evening. He also mentioned that thinking about any



large solar fields that are proposed disposing of any equipment falls under hazardous waste and they would need to have a meeting with the Fire Department on how to handle this. Rich commented that with the current climate challenges that we have consistency with our relationship with CMELD and thanked John and Deryck for starting this discussion. Jason stated that he was interested in the idea of what the pay back would be for using solar to the town, in Russell they pay back the entire amount while in the city of Chicopee they only pay half.

- **Town Administrator:**

- Kathe let us know that next week on Monday evening everyone in the Town Hall should shut down all computers etc. and make sure anything is turned off. We will have power shut down to have CMELD address an issue with the meter. It should take between one to four hours at the most so everyone should be prepared if they need anything during this time.

- As she mentioned before Tae Kwon Do will be starting again this week on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5:00 – 7:00 PM. She also wanted to remind everyone about the Covid-19 vaccine clinic that will be hosted in the Town Hall next week on the 25<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 – 6:00 PM. She has flyers for anyone who would like one and encouraged everyone to hang them up at various locations.

- She spoke with the new Superintendent of the Gateway schools Kristen Smidy, who wanted to stop by next week at the Select Board meeting but reminded everyone that we should be discussing the library at that meeting and could offer her another time.

- We received a quote for painting the Town Hall by Chris Gulielmetti of Pro Coat Painting. He priced for the building, trim etc. a total of \$7,800.00, Kathe asked if the Select Board would like this put on the agenda for discussion or if they would like two additional quotes. John answered that we should have the additional quotes to make a decision. Rich commented that it would be great to do this for the fall.

- Kathe mentioned that Jill and herself spent most of the day with Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, MEMA, along with Highway Foreman Carl Baldasaro to view any of the roads that were damaged during the July rainstorms. John stated that he thought that we should revisit the streets that were submitted in the report to ensure everything was done correctly and make any modifications.

- Assessors Clerk Laura Lafreniere had given Kathe to distribute a handout of real estate and personal property abatements for FY20 and FY21. FY20 for personal property was \$3,404.31 and FY21 personal property was \$2,101.57 and real estate was \$18,302.57.

- **Public Questions and Comments:**

- Rich mentioned that he was told and has seen himself the Highway Department vehicles as well as CMELD have been left running. He wanted to reiterate that this should not happen and was important to let both departments know.

- Terry discussed that the library trustees were inquiring if they would be able to use the stage in the auditorium in the Town Hall for a temporary location for the library. This would allow book display on the stage, and they could continue the children's programs. They would keep the hours that are currently used for the library, Tuesday, and Thursdays from 11:00 – 3:00 PM. Rich asked if they would occupy the whole stage and wanted to ensure the auditorium could still be used multipurpose keeping the holidays in mind. Angelique answered that there should be no problem and they hoped they would not need the space for very long. Rich asked



about what they would be doing along the edge of the stage to ensure no one would fall. Angelique answered that they were going to take care of it and Kathe suggested using the ropes that are used for elections along the edge for a barrier. Mary Ann also commented that no one would be on the stage or in the auditorium unattended. John stated that this solution was very creative, and he and Jason had no problem allowing this. Jason offered space in his office downstairs to be utilized for storage if necessary. Bob asked if the books that are listed as contaminated would be brought over, Angelique answered no only things that are from a new collection of books. Rich commented that it was important to keep our relationship with Hilltown CDC and the building that the library is in now. Rich continued to say that the library itself, but the town as a whole has a 99-year lease with Hilltown CDC in that building. Terry commented that she had met with Hilltown CDC and Servpro regarding what they would be doing to get rid of the mold. Servpro had given a quote for washing and removing the rug in the library. Hilltown CDC wants to meet with the trustees to go over the tenant landlord responsibilities next Wednesday at 3:00 PM Kathe commenting that the meeting would be held in the COA room in the Town Hall. Mary Ann added that the lease had been reviewed with Town Council and thought it ironic that there had been no discussion of the agreement until a problem was found. Jason asked if any member of the Select Board could be at this meeting, John answered yes that he would. Mary Ann asked Jason if he would like to have an email with the details of the meeting, he answered yes. The trustees were told by Hilltown CDC that they did not believe that the books were contaminated even though the report the library received when they tested for mold said that they were. Terry wanted to address that there have been comments made to the tenants of the building that they should blame the library if they lose their living space. John stated that they were doing the right thing and thanked them all for stepping up and getting this taken care of.

Bob thanked John for his conversation and being proactive with CMELD, John stating that this was the first step. Bob wanted to be sure that the information about the vaccine clinic as well as the Family Fun Day which is hosted by the Recreation Committee at the Emery Street ballfield on Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> would be posted on the town website.

Sister Judith asked if there would be any roadside mowing on Prospect Street, John answered yes, the Highway Department was working on Middlefield Road as of now. Mary Ann added that she thought that the mower was broken.

Duane stated that he had sat in on the meeting with the library trustees and Hilltown CDC and was not confident that they were qualified to do the job. Using UV lights to address the mold had been suggested as this was used during the Covid-19 pandemic as an additional way to clean surfaces, but they were not open to that option. John commented that using UV was definitely an option Rich stating that this has been shown to work and can have continued use. Duane continued saying that we could use the UV light and then maintain everything with the air purifiers.


John made the motion to adjourn, Rich 2<sup>nd</sup>, all voted Aye.

**Meeting adjourned 7:40 PM**


Respectfully Submitted

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jill Strong, Administrative Assistant

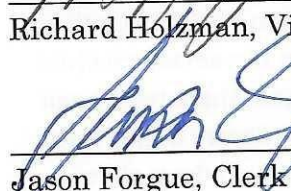
8/18/21  
Date Signed

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

8/23/21  
Date Signed

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Holzman, Vice Chairman

6/23/21  
Date Signed

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jason Forgue, Clerk

8/23/21  
Date Signed