



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

Monday, November 22nd, 2021

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

Select Board members John Baldasaro and Jason Forgue present, Richard Holzman is out of town and participated remotely. Town Hall staff present included Town Administrator Kathe Warden, Administrative Assistant Jill Strong, Town Clerk Terry Donovan, and Tax Collector Mary Ann Pease. Highway Foreman Carl Baldasaro was present as well as Water Commissioners Kathy Engwer and Bob Daley. Andy Myers from the Finance Committee and Jessica Sakaske were present, Board of Health members Elizabeth, Liz, Massa and Nick Chiusano participated remotely as well as a few Chester residents. Per the agenda Harald Scheid from RRG and Accountant Eric Kinsherf were participating remotely.

There was an issue with the GoToMeeting platform audio, Jill dialed into the meeting from her phone, and we were able to allow participation that way via speaker phone.

Warrants, minutes, and any correspondence was signed, John opened the meeting at 6:00 PM.

- **Discussion and possible vote to appoint Rosemary Dalesandro to part time clerk position for Board of Health.**

Nick discussed the candidates that applied and the Board of Health recommended Rosemary as she seemed to be the best fit out of the applicants. However, he informed us that the Board of Health will be going forward with using the Permiteyes program for all permit applications which will take the extra burden off of them and now may not need the clerk position. John stated that it was up to them, and they did have the budget for the position if they chose. Nick stated that we should table this for now so that they can see how things are working using the program and they can discuss it at the next Board of Health meeting. John made the motion to table appointing the clerk position for the Board of Health, Rich 2nd, all voted Aye.

- **Tax Classification hearing with Regional Resource Recovery and Eric Kinsherf.**

John opened the discussion asking Harald where we stood, Harald answered that he had sent a packet for the Select Board to review. The Select Board had not seen this information, Kathe asked Harald when he had sent it which he answered was a few days ago. Kathe and the

Select Board asked Harald if he would resend the information Harald answered that he would. Harald stated that we have all of the approvals for valuations and new growth and at this meeting it needs to be decided if we will put a higher tax rate for commercial properties over residential. Harald stated that this has never been done in Chester and that this would give a nine percent increase to commercial properties for only a one percent reduction for residential. Harald recommended adopting a single tax rate for all classification properties estimating a net tax rate of \$19.69. He stated that the valuations for residential would have roughly a ten percent increase which reflects the current market conditions. Next year he thought we would see an even larger bump in values estimating fifteen to eighteen percent.

Andy had different figures than what Harald and Eric were discussing which Harald commented that these were the figures that were available on Gateway when he put the report together. Andy stated that when he looked on Gateway the tax rate should have been \$19.50, Eric commented that the overlay had been changed which bumped the rate down some more. Harald stated that nothing is official until it has been submitted to the state, John commented that nothing should be submitted until they have a chance to view everything that will be submitted. Andy stated that in the future we should go over everything before we have the tax classification hearing. Eric stated that anyone with access to Gateway, the Select Board or Finance Committee should look at the numbers and let them know if everything looks correct or changes need to be made. John reiterated that we need to see all numbers to make sure nothing is missed and as of now this needs further discussion. John made the motion to set a single tax rate and to not split the rate between commercial and residential, Jason 2nd, all voted Aye.

Kathe stated that we have scheduled for the Select Board meeting on December 13th to go over all of the numbers together. Eric commented that free cash will be a separate discussion. John reminded Harald to resend the information that he wanted the Select Board to see, Harald commented that the numbers will be different John stated that he should send it anyway as a point of reference.

- **Discussion and possible signing of letter to PVPC regarding solar interconnection at the town garage.**

Jason has drafted a letter to PVPC to discuss repairing the solar that was installed on the town garage that has been a topic of discussion. The other two Select Board members had a chance to read the letter and John stated that he had no problem signing and sending the letter that Jason has written, Rich commented that he was ok with the letter as well. Jason made the motion to sign and send the letter drafted to PVPC, John 2nd, all voted Aye.

- **Highway Foreman update:**

Carl discussed what the Highway Department has been working on since the last meeting. He stated that they have finished work on Crane, Abbott Hill, Johnson Hill, and Skyline Trail. They borrowed a hot box from the Southampton Highway Department and were able to repair some potholes. The culvert that needed to be replaced on Skyline Trail has and has been paved as well as the culvert that needed to be replaced on Johnson Hill has been completed and has been paved. Carl hoped that they would be able to pave the section of Bromley Road that needs to be repaired he explained that they found some issues with water in that area that need to be addressed. The 550 is back from the repairs at Marcotte Ford where they fixed the emissions recall as well as upgraded the rear springs at no additional charge. Line painting is also

scheduled for tomorrow Tuesday the 23rd. Jason asked if a detail was necessary for painting, Carl answered no they have a supply truck that follows as they are painting, and the Highway Department would be on site as well. Jason asked what they would be addressing first, Carl answered Bromley, then Skyline, then Middlefield and hopefully moving to Blandford Road. Carl stated that he also needed to meet with the accountant to have Chapter 90 paperwork signed off.

Rich commented that most of the things Carl spoke of as completed he was under the impression that these were some of the same things that he had stated were accomplished at the last meeting. Carl stated that was untrue, at the last meeting the culvert to be replaced on Skyline had been scheduled but now has been completed and paved as well as Johnson Hill and the section of lower Skyline. Jason commented that Carl was correct Rich has been out of town and Jason has seen the work that has been completed this past week on Skyline and Johnson Hill. Rich asked where the Highway Department was on winter prep, Carl answered that it is ongoing, but the dirt roads were all in good shape. He stated that they have been behind due to the repairs that have been ongoing since the summer and the delays in funding. Rich asked if all of this was getting accomplished in the regular work week. Carl answered that they had come in early and worked late a few days because of the paving work being done and they also came in on Saturday because of the weather forecast they wanted to have equipment ready. Rich stated that they needed to pay attention to hours put in out of the regular scheduled week extra time is extra money and it is early in the season to use overtime.

- **Town Administrator update:**

Kathe had a letter that she forwarded to the Select Board from Representative Natalie Blais regarding the Main Street bridge that we have been inquiring about getting repaired. Representative Blais stated that the bridge is not rated as structurally deficient and is not on a program for replacement but thought that it would be placed on the program in the next few years. She stated that if additional funding was available through the federal infrastructure package, we could advocate for funding sooner.

Kathe reminded everyone that tomorrow the 23rd Jill and herself would be out of the office for a MEMA training. Also, reminding everyone that on Friday at 6:30 PM the Christmas tree lighting ceremony is happening. Next month we will have Select Board meetings on the 6th, 13th, and 20th.

Public Comments and Questions:

Andy inquired about the Main Street bridge and thought that if we had funds available and could complete the study it would help put it higher on the list and that we should not wait another six to seven years to have it repaired. He commented that it was good news that the tax rate will be going down and we should keep in communication to keep everything on track. He thought that we should have more continuity in the numbers from Harald and Eric. John agreed and stated that in the next few days by email numbers can be discussed, Andy stated that he would put a spreadsheet together. Mary Ann commented that she has access to the Gateway and can get information printed out for anyone that needed it. Mary Ann also mentioned to the Select Board that they should be hearing from the Hilltown Ambulance soon about their future.

Bob updated everyone on water, he stated that the Commissioners had met today with Water Operator Bernie St. Martin at the Water Plant with Elm Electric and Housatonic Testing for a few hours.

They have a start date for sampling with Housatonic for December 6th at 9:00 AM. The Commissioners also had a zoom meeting with DEP to discuss the ACO which Bob stated went very well. They are in the process of drafting a letter to DEP asking them to amend the ACO due to inaccuracies. He stated that the COA Veteran's Dinner was a success. He appreciated the work of the Chester Common Table for helping this come to fruition issuing sixty-one meals. He thanked the Select Board for their support and planned to have the event bigger and better next year.

Jason commented about some of the numbers that were given by the accountant, there is a list of accounts that were over expended that Jason believed was inaccurate. The example he gave was the Recreation Committee expenses which he knew was not the case. John agreed stating that none of the accounts made sense to be over expended. Andy commented that we should check with Eric and get the numbers accurate if nothing else it lets them know that we're looking at all the information.

The Select Board took a role call vote Jason Forgue, John Baldasaro, and Richard Holzman to adjourn to Executive Session for the purposes of M.G.L.c 30a 21(a) 6 to consider the purchase, exchange, or lease of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.

Meeting Adjourned 7:10 PM


Respectfully Submitted



Jill Strong, Administrative Assistant

12/16/21

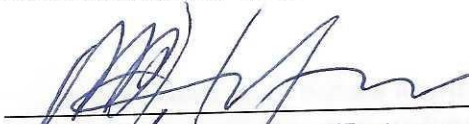
Date Signed



John Baldasaro, Chairman

12/16/21

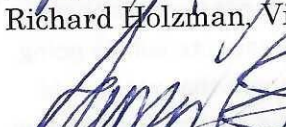
Date Signed



Richard Holzman, Vice Chairman

12/16/21

Date Signed



Jason Forgue, Clerk

12/16/21

Date Signed