



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

January 3, 2022

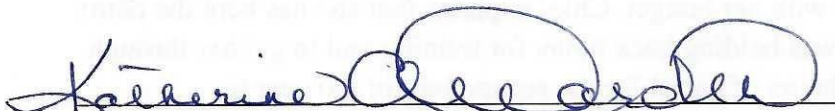
Chester Select Board attending: John Baldasaro, Richard Holzman, Jason Forgue

Blandford Select Board attending: Tom Ackley, T.J. Cousineau, Cara Letendre (attended remotely)


Tom Ackley opened the meeting and said that he feels everything is going very well. John Baldasaro said that Chester feels the same way. That there have been no issues. Cara Letendre ask Chief Weidhaas how she is doing with her budget. Chief explains that she has kept the patrol hours to 20 hours each week, for she was holding back hours for training and to get her through the year. She is going to increase the hours of patrol for the second half of the year to approximately 35 hours. For December she had received a grant to give Chester 40 hours of patrol time and gave all other time allotted to Blandford of which was 35 hours. Chief also says a resident from Blandford who isn't happy that there aren't more patrol hours and who indicated that Blandford wanted to pull out of the agreement. Cara says that's it's 1-2 individuals who are complaining and there were no worries about Blandford pulling out of the agreement. Chief suggested a meeting with the residents of Blandford to address the concerns and explain how the budget works, Cara doesn't feel that is necessary. TJ asks about training for the academy. Chief explains that two of the officers will have their training covered by their full-time jobs. The other two officers aren't scheduled to go to the academy till next year and she will talk to the other towns that they work for to see if they can share the costs of the academy. Jason asks about how much time the administrative area is taking up the chief's time. Chief says it is about 35 hours a week at least. She is implementing the policies, procedures, and grants. Chief said that the littlest of things take time as well as numerous calls. Jason has concerns about the budget, Chief explains she is concerned that she will go over budget, but would notify the selectboard beforehand, won't go over budget but that the budget is very tight. She said that she did not create the budget with which she is working. It was not considered that a full time Chief would

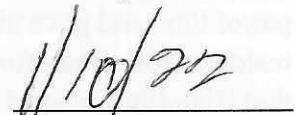
have more administrative duties to do. Jason asks how much an administrative assistant would help with the duties and Chief said at least 24-40% of the time. Chief could use an assistant and would like it to be a police officer if possible that way the person could answer calls if necessary. TJ asks about the type of calls the officers are responding to. Chief explains that in 2021 the Chester-Blandford Police Department responded to 359 calls in Chester and 74 in Blandford. there has been 359 Chester calls and 74 Blandford calls. Until January 1 all Blandford calls were going through Berkshire County dispatch then to the State Police. Chester/Blandford PD would only know about the calls if they heard dispatch talking to the troopers. Now with everything coming out of Northampton Dispatch there will be a better accountability of the calls. And a higher call volume in Blandford. Tom would like to see the budget where it should be with more patrol hours. Jason said that it wasn't thought through about the amount of time that would be out of the current budget. Chief explains that the training funds were removed, which meant no firearm or in-service training. Jason said unfortunately there was no way to qualify any of the expenses for ARPA money. Tom said where the towns need to win people over is with Community Policing. Chief said she is figuring it into her budget for next year of more hours for that. Chief said that all is good. Cara ended the meeting at 6:50pm


Respectfully Submitted

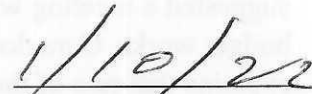

Katherine Warden, Town Administrator


Date Signed


John Baldasaro, Chairman


Date Signed


Richard Holzman, Vice Chairman


Date Signed


Jason Fergie, Clerk


Date Signed



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Monday, January 3rd, 2022

Open Meeting – This meeting is held in the Blandford Town Hall.

Select Board members John Baldasaro, Jason Forgue, and Richard Holzman present. Town Hall staff present included Town Administrator Kathe Warden and Town Clerk Terry Donovan, Administrative Assistant Jill Strong was participating over the phone. Finance Committee member Andy Myers was also present.

- **Meet with Chief Weidhaas and the Blandford Select Board to review the first half of FY22.**

There was an issue with the remote option for this meeting and people were unable to sign in. Jill Strong was able to join the meeting by phone after this portion of the meeting had been completed, therefore this will be reflected in a separate copy of minutes written by Kathe Warden.

The Select Board meeting resumed at 6:50 pm after a brief recess. Warrants, minutes, and any correspondence were signed.

- **Andy Myers – Parcel 4 Middlefield Rd. update:** Andy updated us on parcel 4 Middlefield Rd. which has been a discussion at past meetings. This piece is to be purchased by Mass Fish and Wildlife once a clean deed has been created. Andy stated that this evening he would like the Select Board to vote to approve to put the land in discussion on the warrant for a Special Town Meeting for sale.

Jason made the motion to put the written agreement on the warrant for Special Town Meeting for sale, John 2nd, all voted Aye.

Andy explained that Mass Fish and Wildlife would pay for an appraisal, John asked if the price of the property would be based on the assessed value. Andy answered no it would be based on the current fair market value. Jason commented that this should be subject to approval by our Assessing Firm RRG. Andy commented that there has been some concern regarding the Keystone Arch Trail having a right of way as we are unsure if the road was discontinued properly. John stated that we could put wording into the deed that they would be required to maintain the trail, Jason commented that these things could be negotiated. Jason

stated that he had some concern of the ambiguity of "fair market value." John stated that we do not have to accept the offer if we do not feel that it is fair but that he believed we should move forward. He continued saying that the survey of the land that Mass Fish and Wildlife is paying for would cost us approximately \$50,000.00 and between that and getting the clear title no private party would be able to take care of this.

Jason made the motion to accept and approve the warrant article as written, Rich 2nd, all voted Aye.

John thanked Andy for the work that had been put into this stating that the profit from the sale of the land would be put into free cash.

- **Town Administrator Update:**

Kathe had a few updates this evening and started by letting us know that the Fire Department had received letters of support from Senator Hinds and Representative Blais for the grants that they have applied for. Kathe commented that there were several hours of work that had gone into these grants including approximately forty hours to have the SAM number renewed. She explained that there are two grants, one is an in-kind match, and the other is a regional community grant which will allow the purchase of new Scott Air-Paks.

Kathe met with someone to discuss junk removal for the left-over furniture that is in the Town Hall as well as the things that were left in the building at 10 Middlefield Road by William Ivey Long. She was quoted \$700.00 for the Town Hall and \$3,500.00 for 10 Middlefield Road. The only concern was the amount of paint that was left which she was told any oil paints would still need to be disposed of at an alternate location. Jason stated that we should reach out to a few more people to get a quote. John commented that someone had posted on the Community Forum about junk removal who is located in town, and we should reach out to them. Jason stated that he would do that.

- *10 Middlefield Rd.* In regard to 10 Middlefield Road, Kathe stated last week she had gone to Westfield to the Registry of Deeds to have things finalized. However, there was a problem with the deed as it did not state the amount that the Town would be forgiving from William Ivey Long so that needed to be fixed. The deed would be recorded when we have this new part back from William Ivey Long. Kathe was able to get an insurance quote from our MIIA representative for the property, \$832.00 for general liability, and \$1,310.00 for excess liability per year. John stated that in a conversation with Town Counsel Tom Mullen he was told that we should pursue general liability only as our state has a maximum for liability so the excess policy would not be worth the cost.

- *Comcast buildout update:* Kathe has been working with Comcast to finalize the buildout of Chester. She stated that there are three properties up for discussion 14 Melvin Road, 148 Round Hill Road, and 800 Huntington Road. One of the properties in question Comcast explained that they will need to cross the railroad which will have an added cost. Jason asked about coverage at the Littleville Fairgrounds, John stated that he knew all of Kinnebrook should be set up as he had worked on the detail when this was being done. Andy stated that the issue at the fairgrounds was with cell coverage and thought we could look into having costs lessened for them as a town building. Kathe stated that she would reach out to Comcast about doing this for the Littleville Fair.

- *Highway update:* Highway Foreman Carl Baldasaro was not present, and Kathe did not have an update for us.

Before moving to public comment Kathe asked the Select Board when they would like to schedule to the Special Town Meeting, the end of January or early February. The Select Board agreed on the date of Monday, February 7th, 2022, for a Special Town Meeting.

Public Comments and Questions:

Rich asked if there was any update with the solar installation at the Town Garage being fixed. John stated that he has yet to hear from Kim Robinson from PVPC after the letter was sent to them. He commented that he would be having a conversation that they need to step up or we would be done with them. Jason agreed stating that he understood when they received the letter they acted as if they had no idea that there was a problem. John commented that PVPC is not paying attention to Chester and this needs to change. Rich stated that there has been success with PVPC with the LRRP grant and we need to keep the relationship and they have been crucial with the East West rail stop in Chester. Rich continued saying that in his understanding there were other people who were also responsible in the failure of this project mentioning that the linemen were responsible for the direct supervision. John disagreed stating that CMELD was unhappy in the beginning that they were not included in the project. Jason stated that we still do not have an agreement with CMELD for purchasing the power generated which also was in the RFP to be taken care of by PVPC. John stated that this is the worst grant that has been carried out with the town of Chester.

Rich stated that there are several trees in question on Maple Street and others that are dead and are dangerous remaining in place. He stated that CMELD has stated that the location of the trees in question cannot be removed by them as they are on private property, but he has the ability to pursue these being taken care of all he needs is a list.

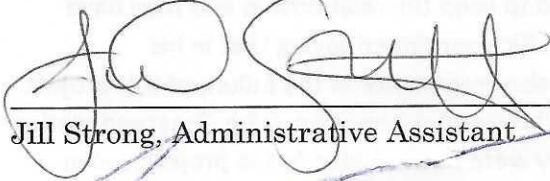
Jason asked where Board of Health was at with using the permit program, Kathe answered that she was waiting on them. There also was past pay to Greg Harrison that is being worked out from January 2021.

Andy discussed an email that he had sent to the Select Board over the weekend regarding Jason continuing on the Finance Committee as a member of the Select Board. John stated that the Finance Committee is not under the Select Board, and it should be discussed with the moderator Barbara Huntoon. John commented that he did not want to get in the middle and in years passed there were he believed two Select Board members who were also on the Finance Committee. Andy stated that best practices would be to keep the Select Board and the Finance Committee at an arm's length distance, and he was concerned because Barbara has close alliances with the people involved. Andy suggested that this be discussed at the Special Town Meeting and have the residents vote. John stated that the residents voted Jason as a member of the Select Board while he was on the Finance Committee. Andy stated that he felt being a member of the Select Board, Finance Committee, School Committee, and the ARPA coordinator was too much for one person. John stated that he was hesitant to do something that was not spelled out as against the rules or law. Rich commented that this could be created as a bylaw. John stated that just because we can does not mean that we should and felt that we should reach out to Tom Mullen. Andy stated that we need to update our bylaws as they are pretty standard. Jason commented that our bylaws never supersede state law. John reiterated that we should reach out to Tom.

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

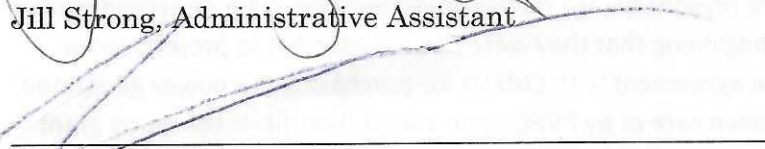
Meeting Adjourned 8:02 PM

Respectfully Submitted



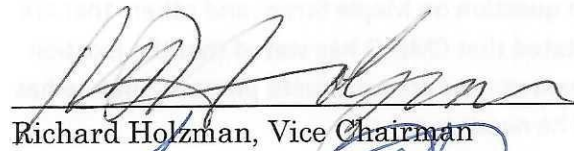
Jill Strong, Administrative Assistant

1/10/22
Date Signed



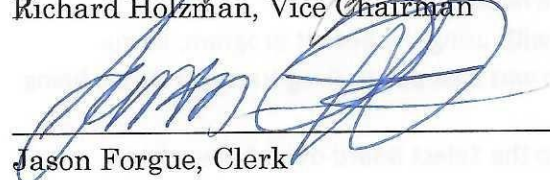
John Baldasaro, Chairman

1/10/22
Date Signed



Richard Holzman, Vice Chairman

1/31/22
Date Signed



Jason Forgue, Clerk

1/10/22
Date Signed