



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

Monday, June 27th, 2022

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

Selectmen John Baldasaro, Richard Holzman, and Jason Forgue were present. Town Hall staff present included Town Administrator Kathe Warden, Administrative Assistant Jill Strong, Tax Collector Mary Ann Pease, and Police Chief Tammy Weidhaas. Also present were Finance Committee members Andy Myers, and Andy Sutton, Library Trustee Jane Sutton, and Water Commissioners Bob Daley and Lyle Snide. A few residents were present as well as participating remotely. Per the agenda Jeana Briggs from the Chester PTA was also present.

- **Discussion and possible vote for FY22 Audit with Irwin & Associates:**

We received a quote for audit services with the same company who has performed this for us the past few years, they quoted services for the upcoming fiscal year at \$18,750.00. John asked what we were charged last year, Kathe answered that it was the same. She reminded the Selectboard that they explained at the audit that twenty percent of their time is spent on CMELD and suggested having them pay their portion of the expenses. John commented that he expected the cost to be lower in the twelve to fifteen thousand dollar range as they commented at the audit this year that things went much smoother. Jason agreed stating that he also expected it to be lower. John stated that he would like to table this for now so they could have further discussions, Andy Myers commented that we had budgeted this year again because they claimed things had gone so well for the expenses to be fifteen thousand.

- **Resignation of Chief Tammy Weidhaas:**

The Selectboard all received and had viewed the letter of resignation from Chief Tammy Weidhaas and that she was moving on to the town of Otis to be a Sergeant. Chief Weidhaas explained that she had spoken with Kathe as well as Cara from Blandford and she wanted to assist with hiring the new Chief as much as she could and would help in the transition. She will be full time with us until August 17th and stated that she would remain with us part time after that if the position had not been filled. The Selectboard also had a copy of the advertisement for the position to be posted. Kathe stated that it would be posted to the Police Chief's Association as soon as she got the ok from Blandford. In the job advertisement it states that we will be accepting applications until July 15th with a hopeful start date of September 1st. Bob asked if we could read aloud the posting as well as the letter of resignation, John answered that he would read the letter however

the posting was several pages and would be posted on the town website for people to view. Jason read the letter of resignation for Chief Tammy Weidhaas.

John made the motion to accept the letter of resignation from Chief Tammy Weidhaas as the Chester Blandford Police Chief, Jason seconded, all voted Aye.

John thanked Chief Weidhaas for her hard work and appreciated her help in selecting our new Chief.

- **Water Commission request of ARPA funds for Housatonic Basin Testing:**

The Water Commissioners were present to request ARPA funds to pay for the testing being done at the Water Treatment Plant by Housatonic Basin Testing. This is something that has been mandated by DEP outside their normal operations which resulted with them running out of their funds for the remainder of the fiscal year in April. Jason asked how long they expected to have this additional bill, Lyle answered they need to continue with the testing until told otherwise by DEP, they hoped the fall but thought they would continue until they are able to complete the engineering study they are asking for. Bob stated that the testing has shown that the Austin Brook Reservoir is twice as favorable for a water source, and they hoped this will be sufficient data for DEP to make the change to this location. The cost for this testing is \$2,319.00 per month and the engineering study they hoped to have done in the beginning of 2023.

Jason made the motion for up to nineteen thousand dollars to be spent by the Water Commissioners for the continued testing required by DEP to be paid for using the ARPA funds, Rich seconded, all voted Aye.

Lyle stated that they are getting started on the brush cutting at the plant, Bob commented that he thought they started today. Bob stated that the next critical thing that they will be focusing on is the hydrant flushing which they have been working with Mass Rural Water weekly to locate the leaks. He stated that Carl has also been spending a lot of time cleaning the filters and has been doing good work.

- **Review, discussion, and possible vote and acceptance of Debit Card Policy:**

Kathe opened the discussion explaining that the policy needed to be created when we opened the cards and had gone through the policy created by DOR and altered it to fit Chester's needs. She gave a quick run through of the policy explaining that there was a one thousand dollar limit and needed approval of the Accountant and Town Administrator to be used. Jason asked if Eric and Sara had seen it, Kathe answered yes but she would send them the final edited copy. Jason asked who set the thousand dollar limit, Kathe answered that was the recommendation from DOR.

Rich made the motion to approve the Debit Card Policy subject to the approval from the Town Accountant, Jason seconded, all voted Aye.

- **Gateway PTA request of ARPA funds for playground up grade:**

Jeana opened the discussion stating that the Chester Elementary School PTA was looking for funding to upgrade the playground equipment at the school. They had already met with Blandford and would be meeting with Middlefield on July 13th; Blandford has already contributed ten thousand dollars from their ARPA funds. Kathe asked if the playground would be open to public use, Jeana answered yes. Jason commented that his only concern is that the property is not technically owned by the town rather by the school district. Filling out the reports for ARPA could be problematic as a requirement is that funds need to be used for services provided by the town. John questioned if it would fall under the town because we are a regional school and do not have enough kids to support our own school, Jason believed that would be the case. Jeana stated that they need a total of

\$62,000.00 for the upgrade and currently have \$26,000.00 in their budget. John asked if they had spoken with the Superintendent Kristen Smidy from Gateway, Jeana answered yes and Kristen was very enthusiastic about the project pledging money from the schools ARPA funds as well. Andy Myers commented that we have developed a better relationship with Gateway over the last few years and this would be an act of good faith for us to contribute to this project.

Jason made the motion to allocate ten thousand dollars from the ARPA funds to the Chester PTA for playground equipment, Rich seconded, all voted Aye.

- **Awarding of the Theodore Steinhard and Franklin D. Hamilton Scholarships:**

Kathe read the applicants aloud for both scholarships, the Theodore Steinhard scholarship only had one applicant who was Nicole Hannigan. The Hamilton scholarship had four applicants Idona Dulude, Gabriella Salvini, Grace LeBarron, and Nicole Hannigan also applied to this scholarship. John asked if they were all enrolled in school, Kathe answered yes. The Steinhard scholarship is awarded in the amount of two thousand dollars and the Hamilton scholarship is for nine thousand dollars and will be split between the applicants in the amount of \$2,250.00.

Jason made the motion to award the Frank D. Hamilton scholarship in the amount of \$2,250.00 to each of the four applicants, Rich seconded, all voted Aye.

- **Review of Highway Superintendent job description and job posting:**

Before opening the discussion John noted that he would recuse himself as his brother is the current Highway Foreman. The Selectboard all had a chance to review the job posting, Kathe stated that it was not currently posted and was waiting for final approval. Jason commented that we should have a salary range listed, Kathe asked if the Board wanted it listed as a salary or an hourly position. Jason stated that although he knew that Rich disagreed, he believed that it should be an hourly position. Jason stated that when the budget was created the Superintendent was factored at twenty-nine dollars per hour, he suggested that the posting have the current salary plus benefits. Kathe asked if the Board would like the position posted on anything other than the town website, using Indeed or other job search sites. John stated that DOT has a place to post positions that we could use. Bob asked that if we are posting the position if we would be continuing with the current Highway Department model and not looking to review it as was discussed at previous meetings. Jason stated that he has thought about this but no matter the model used a Superintendent is necessary. Kathe agreed stating that for allocating Chapter 90 funds a Superintendent or Foreman is necessary.

- **Appointments for FY2023:**

As Jason and Rich are both in appointed positions or committees in addition to being on the Selectboard John read off the list of appointments excluding any that included either of them for an official vote. The appointments read as follows:

Animal Control – Teresa Donovan

Animal Inspector – Teresa Donovan

Cemetery Commissioner – Chris Strong

Conservation Committee – Lori Wade, Ben VanHeynigen, and John VanHeynigen

COA Director – Ann Daley

Cultural Council – Mary Ann Pease, Teresa Donovan, and Jill Strong

Electrical Inspector – John VanHeynigen

Emergency Management Director – Jill Strong

Fire Chief – Richard Small

Fire Warden – Richard Small

FRTA Rep – Robert Daley

Historical Commission – John Hultman, Fay Piergiovanni, Charles Schoonmaker, and Annette

LaMountain

Jacobs Pillow Trail Scenic By-law Committee – Elizabeth Massa

Parks and Trails Director – Elizabeth Massa

Planning Board – Robert Daley, Nicholas Chiusano, and Elizabeth Massa

Plumbing Inspector – Nicholas Chiusano

Asst. Plumbing Inspector – Aaron Poteat

Police Chief – Tammy Weidhaas

Police Officers – James Grzelak, Alexandria Capen-Parizo, Frank Murphy, and Santi Messina

PVPC Commissioner Alternate – Robert Daley

Recreation Committee – Rebecca Benson

Tax Collector – Mary Ann Pease

Town Clerk – Teresa Donovan

Wild and Scenic Advisory – Dave Pierce

Jason made the motion to appoint everyone to the prospective positions and committees as read, Rich seconded, all voted Aye.

Building Inspector – Jason Fergie

Recreation Committee – Jason Fergie

Rich made the motion to appoint Jason to the position and committee as read, John seconded, all voted Aye.

Planning Board – Richard Holzman

PVPC Commissioner – Richard Holzman

Jason made the motion to appoint Rich to the committees as read, John seconded, all voted Aye.

John discussed that we needed to appoint people to the Energy Committee that was voted to be created at the Annual Town Meeting. Andy Myers, Bob Daley, and Richard Holzman all stated that they would like to volunteer.

John made the motion to appoint Andy, Bob, and Rich to the Energy Committee, Jason seconded, all voted Aye.

- **Town Administrator:**

Kathe only had a few things to discuss, she stated that on Thursday she would be out of the office for a STAM meeting. She also let us know that she had received word from DOT that the bridge going to Blandford Road from Route 20 had been moved up the list and will be replaced. She did not have an idea of a timeline yet other than a meeting that has been scheduled to discuss the project on August 31st. John commented that this was great news as the condition of that bridge is critical.

- **Public Comments and Questions:**

Before moving to public comment John stated that this would be Rich's last meeting as a member of the Selectboard. He thanked Rich for his time and commented that he has always had the towns best interests at heart and appreciated all he has done for the town. Rich thanked John stating that he appreciated all of the people he has had the pleasure of working with. Before moving on Rich informed everyone that after years of being diligent Chester is in the plan for a rail stop with

two hundred fifty million from state legislature and an additional eleven billion for the east west rail project from the federal government. Bob also commented on Rich's time as a member of the Selectboard thanking him for all he has done for the town.

Nick Chiusano was participating remotely and volunteered to be on the Energy Committee.

Jason made the motion to appoint Nick to the Energy Committee, Rich seconded, all voted Aye.

Tim O'Brien a resident of Middlefield Road was present to discuss property he is purchasing on Lynes Road. As the property is owned by a family member Rich has recused himself. Tim was inquiring about the property as it is just passed the point where the road is maintained by the town. He wanted to know at what point the town starts to maintain this section again, if it was after a building permit, occupancy permit, and if he needed to do maintenance himself in the meantime. The Selectboard stated that they would contact Town Counsel and get back to him in a few days with an answer.

Andy let us know that he was notified by Janice Boucher in Accounting that there had been a mistake on the budget spreadsheet for the landfill monitoring. It actually should be four thousand less than what it is. He also added that Kathe had done the work so that the solar monitoring was coming up on the reports for all three sites. He mentioned that there was data missing from the last few months which Kathe mentioned that she thought it was from being shut down but last week she had alerted Carl and Richie to reboot everything.

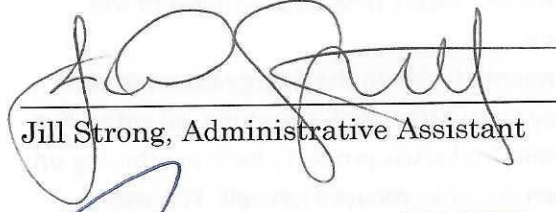
Bob stated that he had been discussing with Superintendent of Gateway Kristen Smidy about creating a state recognized teaching model to encourage younger people to become involved in municipal roles. He discussed the critical need for a Water operator as well as other roles.

Terry stated that she encouraged anyone who was newly appointed to come see her to be sworn in and get paperwork completed. She stated that Andy Sutton had completed everything necessary to start as a member of the Selectboard. She mentioned that she needed to get an official letter of resignation from the Finance Committee from Jason as the bylaw had been accepted by the Attorney General that was voted on to no longer permit members of the Selectboard to be on the Finance Committee. Jason stated that she did not need anything official from him as the bylaw makes him no longer eligible to be on the Committee. Before closing Terry also had paperwork to give the Selectboard that needed to be signed as the Animal Control Officer regarding a nuisance dog bite. The Board all viewed the document and signed it.

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

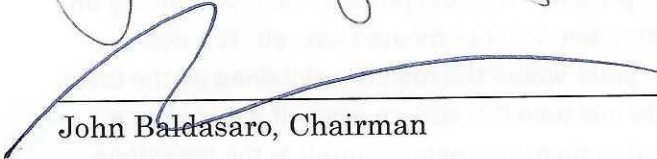
Meeting Adjourned 7:08 PM

Respectfully Submitted



Jill Strong, Administrative Assistant

7/6/22
Date Signed

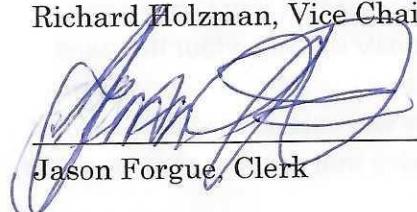


John Baldasaro, Chairman

Date Signed

Richard Holzman, Vice Chairman

Date Signed



Jason Fergie, Clerk

7/6/22
Date Signed

