



TOWN OF
CHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
15 MIDDLEFIELD ROAD CHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01011

Selectboard Meeting

August 22, 2022.

Attending:

Selectboard members John Baldasaro, Jason Forgue, (Absent Selectman Richard Sutton)

Administrator New Hire Don Humason, Tax Collector Mary Ann Pease, Town Clerk Terry Donovan, Water Commissioners Tom Bean, Robert Daley, Lyle Snide, members of the public

Selectboard Chair John Baldasaro called the meeting to order at 6:05.

First on agenda is Discussion and possible vote to approve interim Town Administrator. John stated this was no longer necessary as Don Humason had been hired as Town Administrator and accepted the position.

Second item was discussion and possible vote to approve ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds for Water Department. Chester Water Commissioners requested \$9360 to cover the supply of potable water needed during the recent town water shutdown. They also requested \$5000 for flowmeter parts, which does not include labor. This part will be repaired Tuesday, 8/23/22. Upcoming requests include \$9500 to clean/dredge Austin Brook with an additional \$4000 if the two sediment dams are cleaned also; \$4000 to replace three chemical treatment pumps, including labor (based upon a January 2022 estimate); \$2000 to inspect/repair three reservoir pumps, valves, and vacuum pump (this is an estimate and assumes no issues); \$10,000 to finish the SCADA upgrade; \$15,000 (estimate) possible engineering study to reactivate reservoir. No quotes yet, but also requesting funds to repair Horn Pond intake and possible wet well repairs. This needs further investigation, but hypothesis is disconnected intake pipe could be causing excess organics.

Potential future requests include Asset Management Plan grant (\$26,105 out of \$113,500 grant total if approved); Engineering Study required by State Consent Order (rough estimate, \$15K - \$30K); Water plant metering replacement – turbidity, pH, chlorine (\$60K, Jan2022 estimate, not including labor); Hydrant replacement as needed (\$3500 each); Water Plant solar installation (\$54K).

Jason asked if the Horn Pond pipe was repaired, how will it affect the numbers? Answer was “they should be better”. Jason continued if the pipe is reconnected and the numbers go down, will DEP require more study? Lyle said at that point the town could negotiate. Comment was made Austin Brook is the main reservoir and Horn Pond is backup. Water Commissioners said five leaks in town were fixed and the flow is down.

The funding request also included the already approved funds for Housatonic biweekly sampling for a total of \$6813, which will continue for about a year, “until DEP is satisfied”. Sampling started December of 2021.

Jason made a motion to use \$15K from this round of ARPA funding for the Water Department’s requests. John seconded and both voted in favor.

The third agenda item was Review of Applications for Highway Superintendent. The Town has received one letter of interest and one attend at this meeting expressed interest. He will get the packet and apply. This item was tabled until next Monday, 8/29/22 (meeting to be held then due to Labor Day holiday the following Monday).

John introduced Don Humason, newly hired Town Administrator and stated previous Administrator Kathe Warden is will to “show him the ropes”. Don appreciated the offer and will start in the position on Monday, 9/6/22.

Cannabis business owners Sherif Osman and Kevin Koszarek introduced themselves to discuss a proposed cannabis business at 475 Route 20. They have not purchased the property yet and said it is larger than they need, but it does have the potential for additional businesses including wind power and camping. The camping would be geared toward veterans as both men are US Air Force vets. Their primary business would be a 5000 square foot greenhouse with a glass top for growing medical marijuana. They would like to explore the possibility of such a business in Chester. John explained Chester is familiar with cannabis businesses and has parameters in place. He stated there is one cannabis business in town that’s not up and running yet. He also said the town has zoning in place and would want to keep the aesthetic of the property intact. Mr. Osman and Mr. Koszarek said they will have plan to present at a future meeting and this was just an introduction.

Ron Ouimette of Maynard Hill Road began by letting the board know he has “a friend” who has three stainless steel bodies and three highway plows for sale “inexpensive” if the town is

looking for a back. John thanked him but said probably do not have a use for them. Ron on to state his main reason for attending the meeting was that a highway employee cut a branch of his catalpa tree and Ron believes it was unnecessary and “malicious”. He debated where town property ended and his began; John explained town property expanded 16.5’ from the center line on each side. Ron asked in absence of highway superintendent, who is in charge. John answered the laborers are for the time being. Ron complained the tree was “destroyed” by the branch cutting – which highway said they cut because it was hanging over the road. Ron insisted it was “encroachment” on his property. John asked what he is looking for and Ron said “restitution” in the form of a new 8’ catalpa tree. Discussion ensued as to who was responsible for cutting tree and if there was in fact, encroachment. Ron then stated he has contacted an attorney and John asked if he planned to sue the town because if so, the conversation was over. Ron said no. John then said since Andy Sutton spoke with the highway worker involved and the board did not have the results of that conversation, they will defer further discussion until Andy is back. Ron said he wants the cut branches and the board said they will see if that’s possible. Ron also asked who tree warden is, John responded highway. Ron said law requires tree warden to be certified. Law was checked after Ron left and only towns over 10,000 population need certified tree warden.

John brought up a section of Lynes Road that had been thought to be discontinued. Research proved that the 1.284 miles (distance from Mass DOT website) of Lynes was never discontinued, and that mileage is still a public road. In 18 months, it will be eligible to be on the list for Chapter 90 projects.

John signed the new police chief’s contract and will be signing the MPV grant.

Jason stated there are currently nine school committee members, the quorum is eight. Jason also didn’t realize he was up for reelection this year so was not on the ballot. Discussion about special election, since there are two school members for Chester but only one attends meetings, but Jason said he didn’t want to put the town through the expense. He will check to see if he can be appointed.

Citizen’s Comments:

Rich Holzman asked to have John Gould be added to the agenda RE: the old elementary school. The board said when Andy is back, and full board is there.

Bob Daley

- He has a new neighbor who is the assistant attorney general and interested into looking into old elementary school, too. Suggested that both he and Mr. Gould be on the same agenda to combine the discussion.
- Water Commissioners appreciate all the help Mass Rural Water gave to the town during the water crisis. The Water department would like to present a citation to MRW as well as Reps. Boldyga and Blais for their help. Tentative plan is do so at Chester RR Station sometime in September. Will keep the board informed.
- West-East Rail – the governor has signed off and the project is going forward. Have asked to have Natalie Blais on W/E board but haven't heard back yet.
- Reached out to David Neal RE: water – waiting to hear back. Said water is better at Austin Brook.
- Stated Tom Bean has been using his own vehicle for water-related travel and wanted to know if he could get gas from Highway Dept. pump. John said difficult to do that, but suggested Tom keep track of mileage and turn in receipts. Jason suggested standard IRS reimbursement.

Tom Bean wants to get the boat in the water building taken out. Board agreed.

Andy Myers:

- Presented sheet (attached) on ARPA grant receipts and expenditures. For two items, both Northeast IT expenditures, suggestion made to with those to IT grant. For playground equipment, the group needs to form a 501c3 before the grant could be used for that.
- Another \$204,601 – confirmed by Jason – should be coming from ARPA.
- Chester FD requested money for new boiler at Bromley Road station. Chief Richie Small got two quotes – one oil, one propane. He said he preferred oil, which will require Roth oil tank as underground oil tank is to be removed (\$2500). Total quote for project using oil is \$17,500. Decision tabled until 8/29/22 meeting.
- Uncollectible taxes – Assessor Admin Laura and Andy discussed with the state. There are 246 back accounts which could be solved with legislation. Andy sent a letter to Natalie Blais and asked for help on behalf of the town.
- Green Communities Grant – Still \$28,908 remaining. Can't use it in time (9/2/22) to apply for the next grant but can apply in January 2023. Among those projects mentioned for GC grants are CET (Center for Ecotechnology) audit of fire station, town hall; weatherization of same – Andy getting quotes but will need PVPC to complete. CET approved project includes connecting pole barn electric/solar but not done yet. Hopefully vendors will offer to help.
- The old elementary school is not on the plan for green energy; must get the process going to qualify the school for grant money.

- Mentioned that CMELD needs to have a plan to NET meter in town. Brief discussion of where to sell solar.

Town Clerk Terry Donovan stated two upcoming elections will put her overbudget due to extra hours and mail-in voting.

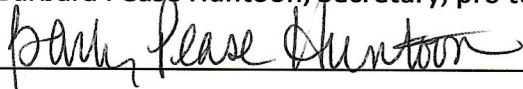
Terry (in Animal Control Officer role) needs to inspect fencing on 12 Campbell Road that is supposed to be completed. Polic Chief will accompany her.

Jason – housing court update: courts are still behind.

There being no further business, John motioned to adjourn; Jason seconded, both voted aye. Meeting adjourned at 8:00.

Respectfully submitted,

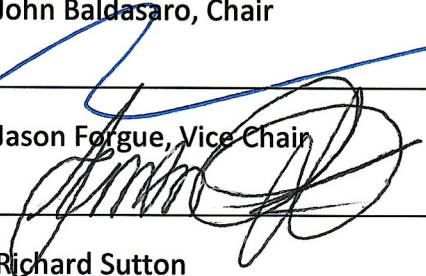
Barbara Pease Huntoon, Secretary, pro tem



8/29/22

Chester Selectboard

John Baldasaro, Chair



8/29/22

Jason Fergue, Vice Chair



8/29/22

Richard Sutton

ARPA GRANT

8/22/2022

ARPA Receipts

7/31/2021		\$71,645.63
8/31/2021		<u>\$132,956.10</u>
Total Receipts		\$204,601.73

ARPA Expenditures

4/12/2022	Northeast IT Systems	\$1,643.00
4/26/2022	Hilltown Community Ambulance	\$3,000.00
4/26/2022	Northeast IT Systems	\$1,999.99
6/30/2022	Atlantic Recycling	<u>\$15,150.00</u>
Total Expenditures		\$21,792.99

ARPA Balance

7/30/2022 **\$182,808.74**

Committed

GRSD - Playground Equipment	\$10,000.00
CWD - Housatonic Sampling	<u>\$6,813.00</u>

Total Committed **\$16,813.00**

New Balance

\$165,995.74