



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

Monday, August 8th, 2022

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

Selectmen John Baldasaro, Jason Fogue, and Andy Sutton were present. Town Hall staff present included Administrative Assistant Jill Strong, Town Clerk Terry Donovan, and Tax Collector Mary Ann Pease. Police Chief Tammy Weidhaas was present with Highway Department Admin. Assistant Kathy Engwer and Water Commissioner Bob Daley, Finance Committee member Andy Myers, Library Trustee Jane Sutton, and Planning Board member Rich Holzman. Per the agenda Ira Brazinski was participating remotely as well as State Representative candidate Anthony Russo who was present. There were also a few residents present as well as participating remotely.

John opened the meeting at 5:33 PM, warrants, minutes, and any correspondence was signed.

- **Possible vote and discussion with Ira Brazinski to hire him as Interim Town Administrator.**

John opened the discussion with Ira stating that he knew he had spoken with the previous Town Administrator Kathe Warden about the position and asked about his willingness to help temporarily with the Town Administrator position. Ira confirmed that was correct and stated that he thought on a temporary basis of fifteen to eighteen hours per week, not more than twenty hours. John asked about his experience in this type of position. Ira answered that he has a general knowledge of Chester as he currently works with PVPC and has helped Chester with the recent LRRP grant. Ira also has experience within town government as he has served on the Selectboard in South Hadley, School Committee, Cultural Council, as well as works on bylaw reviews.

John asked the other members of the Board if the position although Interim should be officially posted. They agreed that it was better to be safe than sorry and the position will be posted on the town website as well as with MMA as advertised until filled and would speak with Ira again in a couple weeks.

Ira stated that in his filling the position he would be mostly remote with no more than one day per week in the office. John did not think there would be much issue with that as budget season is over. John asked if the salary Kathe mentioned of sixty dollars per hour was correct, Ira answered yes. John commented that this would be a part time non-benefited position. Jason asked if he had an idea of a schedule mentioning that Monday nights are our Selectboard meetings which are the second and fourth Monday of the month as of now, Jill mentioned that payroll is due on Thursdays and has been the Town Administrator's job to submit. Ira mentioned that Monday may be difficult as he has previous

Chief Weidhaas's contract in the office, Jill believed so, but Chief Weidhaas stated that she did have it and would get her a copy.

- **Discussion with Highway Department Admin. Assistant Kathy Engwer about her role and expectations going forward.**

John opened the discussion with Kathy addressing that there was an incident at the Town Garage Thursday night last week. Andy Sutton stated that they would be changing the locks at the entrance gate. John commented that it may be worth looking into an automatic gate with key cards considering the amount of traffic in and out with the Highway Department, CMELD, as well as the others who use the gas pumps, Police, Fire, and the other towns who use them.

Kathy went on to discuss her role and asked the Board what expectations they had from her. She discussed the numerous problems getting bills organized when things are split between departments and the transfers to clean up accounts that was voted on at a previous meeting that has not happened yet. She stated that she has spoken with Barbara and there they are working to make things more efficient, and she is currently the only person who still submits their warrant through the Sofrite program. Kathy went on to discuss that her position if being offered in the town of Middlefield at eighteen dollars per hour and would be interested in a raise and adding more hours as there is so much more that she could do. All past Highway Superintendents have had issues keeping up with paperwork or roads and commented that it is difficult to accomplish both. Jason stated that the idea going forward would be to have the Superintendent as well as a Foreman which is what is currently budgeted to get a better handle on both. John asked about the accounts that needed to be caught up and Kathy stated that she was working on it. Mary Ann asked Kathy if she would like to be included in the upcoming Finance team meeting on the 16th, she answered yes, Jason asked if he could also be included. Mary Ann stated that she would send the information to both of them for the virtual meeting.

Andy stated that Fire Chief Richie Small was also having issues with his accounts and was hoping that we could have the accounting group come in for a discussion. Kathy agreed that this would be a good idea and stated that everyone should get together before hand to discuss suggestions.

- **Discussion with State Representative candidate Anthony J. Russo.**

State Representative Anthony Russo joined us for this Selectboard meeting to discuss what he could offer as a candidate. He stated that he is currently on the Agawam City Council and has a background on the Planning Board in addition to being a private contractor and part of the Brick Layers Union. He stated that every State Rep has office hours, and he would like to continue this by making himself available to each of the towns every month. Having monthly meetings with town officials he explained can better put him in understanding of all of our needs as a town. He stated that his main reason for entering this race is that he recognizes a lack of presence in our communities and wants to make a difference. John commented that Representative Natalie Blais who we will be losing due to re-districting has been very accessible to us and we are not shy about reaching out when there is something that we need. Anthony answered that was great and was what he wanted. So far, he has met with several of the towns Selectboard and although he would be new in Beacon Hill, he has many friends who are endorsing him. He went on to discuss another round of ARPA funds that he was aware that will be made available come January and wants to focus on our communities needs so that we can get the ball rolling. He stated that all he can give is his word that we will not be forgotten about and that he plans to work hard and that if elected we will see him in the community. John commented again that we are not shy as a community and appreciated him coming to see us.

- **Public Comments and Questions:**

Andy discussed that CMELD rates were going up, John asked how comparable Eversource was. Andy answered that Eversource was higher however they only changed their rates twice per year not on a monthly basis. John was concerned about the solar project as we have reached out on multiple times and have had no results.

Bob asked for a status on the Prospect Street project which the Board did not have at this time. He discussed that there has been movement on the East West rail project and Amtrak is part of the Rail Authority Plan and three hundred seventy-five million has been secured for the project with Chester listed as a stop. He asked Jason about a grant he heard about that Gateway has received for the welding program, Jason commented that he was correct and that the school received two hundred seventy-five thousand dollars to be put into the program.

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


Meeting Adjourned 7:56 PM

Respectfully Submitted



Jill Strong, Administrative Assistant

11/1/22
Date Signed



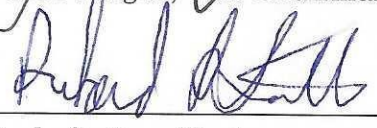
John Baldasaro, Chairman

9/12/20
Date Signed



Jason Forgue, Vice Chairman

9/12/22
Date Signed



Andy Sutton, Clerk

Date Signed