



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

Monday, September 12, 2022

In attendance: Selectboard members John Baldasaro, Jason Fogue, Andy Sutton; Administrator, Don Humason; Tax Collector Mary Ann Pease; Water Commissioners Bob Daley and Lyle Snide; Town Clerk, Terry Donovan; Finance Committee Chair Andy Myers, Members of the public

John called the meeting to order at 6:14 PM. Jason signed onto Virtual Meeting.

Minutes read and signed.

Agenda issues:

- 1. Discussion of applicants for highway superintendent and possible restructuring of department:** There is one official applicant for highway superintendent, and two other interested parties who did not fill out applications. Discussion – two of the interested parties were formally Chester highway superintendents. Andy asked if there were reasons to not revisit them. John stated there were issues, but he would entertain speaking with them again. Andy and Jason agreed to interview all three. John asked Don to set up half-hour interviews for 9/20/22 beginning at 6:00. John moved onto the second part of the agenda item and asked, “Do we want to change highway structure?” Andy suggested waiting for the new highway superintendent to be hired and include that person in any discussion. All agreed. Jason suggested to come up with a basis of what the town would like to do in-house vs. contract out.
- 2. Discussion of bid proposal for forestry services from New England Woodland Management, Inc.:** NE Woodland Management sent a proposal to the Town in August of 2021 for cutting timber at the watershed property, but it was not followed up on. John read their rates. Andy asked if the Town “really wanted to cut trees?” Lyle Snide was recognized and said DEP requires cutting periodically. He detailed proposal by Baystate Forestry, whose rates were less and who would start the project after winter. Lyle said the Water Commissioners recommend Baystate Forestry. The Board read their bid for services; John asked why only 85 acres? Lyle said Baystate said that’s what they identified in stand one and stand two. Jason

made a motion to accept the bid for services from Baystate Forestry; Andy seconded; all voted "aye". Don will reach out to them to get the process going.

At this point, Lyle continued a discussion of water issues stating as of 9/8/22 new primary water operator Jim Gobielle, who hold a T-2 license, has been hired as well as second water operator Peter Conselina, who holds a T-1 license. Jim will train Peter since he wants to get his T-2. Lyle also mentioned Gateway Regional School District is working to establish a career path for future water operators. Water Department is continuing to work with Blandford on fulltime shared water operator. John congratulated the Water Commissioners on the excellent work they've done with the department. Bob Daley said water is use in now 30K a day instead of 100K and they are still upgrading equipment.

3. **Discussion with Hilltown CDC regarding upcoming Chester Commons renovations:** This was moved to 9/26/22 due to illness.
4. **Appointment of new Assessor:** Kendall Bennett, new Assistant Assessor's Clerk, would like to be appointed to the vacant third Assessor position. Jason motion to appoint Kendall Bennett to the Board of Assessors; Andy seconded; all voted "aye". Kendall is in-training to be Assessor's Clerk by 2024.
5. **Discussion to update hourly rate for Highway Dept. Administrative Assistant:** Highway AA would like increase in salary from \$15/hour to \$18/hour. She does not have set hours. After some discussion, Jason made the motion to update the hourly rate for the Highway Administrative Assistant from \$15/hour to \$18/hour; Andy seconded; all voted "aye".
6. **Vote to approve new heating system at Bromley Road fire station:** Selectboard discussed different options and compared prices for new heating system. Jason made a motion to accept the proposal from Archimedes for \$7734.79 for new propane heating system, 1000-gallon propane tank for \$5300 from George Propane, and \$2500 from Bolduc Mechanical to remove the existing oil tank. He added to use \$16K from ARPA monies to cover the cost; John seconded; all voted "aye". Don will check area propane prices once need is determined for other tanks the Town uses.

Administrator Update: John explained there was usually an Administrator's update at this point, so Don shared the following:

- Update to minutes to reflect Jason was appointed to School Committee until May 2023.
- Selectboard answering machine has been updated but he is still using previous Administrator's email until IT sets him up with a new one.
- Tai Kwon Do wants to renew their rental of Town Hall for weekly classes. John said it's been a successful and doesn't see the need for any changes. Board agreed.
- There will be a ZOOM meeting Tuesday with the Finance Team at 2:00.
- Don has spoken to Dan Kane, leader of the Dan Kane singers, and they would like to do a Holiday Concert at Town Hall with any proceeds donated to "whoever the Board

wants” – possibly COA or Rec Committee. Only cost will be \$200 equipment rental, the rest will be donation.

- Rec Committee wants to do a Parent’s Night Out on Friday, December 9th from 6:00-9:00 in the Town Hall Auditorium for children five and older. Idea is to give parents a night off while kids do fun things under guidance of Rec Committee.

Other Business:

- Jason discussed the Selectboard and Administrator having access to the Town website.
- John asked Don if he had any questions for the Board. Don replied he still needed to meet with former Administrator Kathe Warden in person.
- Jason will help Don with ZOOM access, etc. Jason also said the Blandford Town Administrator wants to connect with Don.
- John got an email regarding the MVP (Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness) grant to kick off a meeting. He will forward to Don to follow-up.
- Andy RE: sand/salt. FRCOG (Frankline Regional Council of Governments) needs an answer tomorrow on the amount of sand and salt Chester needs. John said use last year’s numbers.
- Andy got email RE: Opioid Settlement money for ADA (Americans with Disability Act) and wasn’t sure what to do about it. John said forward it to Don and further stated the elevator needs work and this may help with financing it.
- Andy asked about the Blandford Road bridge project. John stated work should begin on it within the next two years.
- John gave some outstanding invoices to Don and told him to reach out to Highway Administrative Assistant Kathy Engwer to resolve.

Citizens Comments:

- Richard Holzman said per his view it should be made clear to the new Highway Superintendent that Highway helps with water, cemetery, etc. Jason said that is not an expectation and John said highway is not responsible for water. Rich disagreed. Discussion followed. Selectboard agreed there is a comprehensive job description for Highway workers already in place.
- Rich shared Jon Gould, Community Liaison for Sen. Adam Hines will come to Chester on 9/26 to discuss uses for old elementary school. John asked Don to add him to the agenda.
- Rich asked when work would be done on Middlefield Road. John said not this year and Rich suggested when it is done to save the millings. Noted.
- Chris and Evie Martensen will be having 300 people from “all over” camping at their home on Johnson Hill this weekend. Just wanted to let Board know for increased traffic.
- Andy Myers – Shared handout (attached) on solar and New England solar monitoring. Discussed electricity usage, solar usage, accounting info. Said in the past two years, the Town garage has seen 20% relief and the Fire Station 35% due

to solar. He said CMELD owes the Town credit and the Town needs to “sit down with CMELD and go over” it. Town needs to put together a net metering plan but needs CMELD numbers to do so. Discussed contract with NE Solar monitoring and renewable energy credits. He also stated NE Solar discussed connecting the pole barn solar to the Town garage, but there needs to be a discussion with CMELD to use the existing poles. Andy M. said the Town need to close out the Green Energy grant to get future Green Energy grants. He discussed administration of the Green Energy grant with PVPC and Ira Brezinski of PVPC will oversee it for \$3200. Board read over the contract and Andy M. advocated “going that direction”. Board agreed; contract signed.

- Andy M. brought up uncollected taxes and stated our former Representative, Natalie Blais passed this to the next representative.
- Andy M. said grant money from the Rapid Recovery Grant is “coming in” and some has been received.
- Bob Daley shared the MRW (Mass Rural Water) had been in Chester weekly and provided much support during water issues and he feels that should receive a citation for their efforts on Chester’s behalf. MRW can’t be in Town on 9/29/22, but Bob asked Nick Bodyga, who was in Town Hall, if he could be there a different day when MRW could be.
- At this point Don introduced Nick Boldyga, our new Representative who then shared some background on himself including his work in law enforcement, serving as a selectman, and serving twelve years in the State House. Representative Boldyga welcomed Chester to the 3rd Hampden District and said he “looks forward to working for Chester”. Don has his contact information and Rep. Boldyga said while he has a full-time office in Southwick, “feel free to contact him anytime”. He also told Bob to give him some dates for the MRW presentation and he would be there. John welcomed Rep. Boldyga to Chester.
- Bob Daley advocated for solar at the water plant and said Andy Myers is getting quotes.
- Animal Control Officer Terry Donovan did an inspection of the fence in question of a dangerous dog complain. She said the fence was inadequate and suggested and gave instructions on tie-outs to dog owners. Jason, as Building Inspector, has issued a vacate order to the owners of the dog for the issues with their property so the dog may not be an issue in the future. Jason said if the order is not followed, there will be fines and Board of Health steps. He stated the owner is aware that the process has started. Discussed violations and actions, exclusive of Animal Control. John told Jason to schedule another hearing on the property for October 3rd.
- Terry, as Town Clerk, asked if the Christmas Tree Lighting would be happening and the Board said yes. Barbara Huntoon said it was always the Friday after Thanksgiving. She asked if the Board would be in favor of doing refreshments after in Town Hall and they agreed. Barbara will check to see if Rec Committee would like to participate.
- Terry said King Info Systems can be hired to help organize the records in the vault. They can digitize and store the records. Mention was made of using ARPA funds. Will check into it.

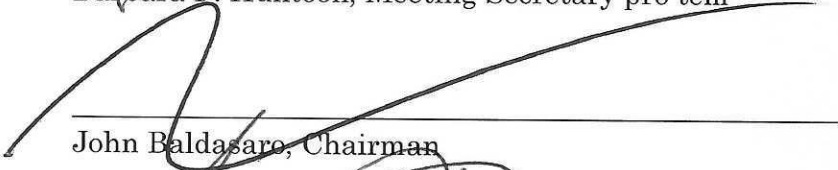
- Mary Ann Pease as Library Treasurer asked if oil has been out to bid. Response was no, but John believes there is enough already locked in from last year for this year. Mary Ann went on to say as Assistant Treasurer she needs medical and dental insurance forms. Don will check with Kathe Warden to find them.
 - Mary Ann noted the Finance Team Meeting will be with the contracted Accountant and Treasurer.
 - Police Chief Jennifer Dubiel said the PD has been doing a lot of road detail jobs - tree cutting, paving – but the department doesn't have enough people so she would like to hire. Jason said be cognizant of the budget and John pointed out the Selectboard does the actual hiring. Chief said she knows some candidates. She also said she has applied for some grants.
- **Motion made to adjourn by John; seconded by Jason; all voted "aye".
Meeting adjourned at 8:30.**

Respectfully Submitted



Barbara P. Huntoon, Meeting Secretary pro tem

9/26/22
Date Signed



John Baldasaro, Chairman

9/26/22
Date Signed



Jason Fogue, Vice Chairman

9/26/22
Date Signed



Andy Sutton, Clerk

9/26/22
Date Signed