



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

Monday, October 17th, 2022

Open Meeting – This meeting is held in the Chester Town Hall Auditorium with a remote option.

Selectmen John Baldasaro, Jason Forgue, and Andy Sutton were present. Town Hall staff included Town Administrator Don Humason, Administrative Assistant Jill Strong, Tax Collector Mary Ann Pease, Town Clerk Terry Donovan, and Police Chief Jen Dubiel. Water Commissioners Bob Daley, Tom Bean, and Lyle Snide were present along with Finance Committee member Andy Myers. Highway Department Admin. Assistant Kathy Engwer participated remotely along with a few residents. Per the agenda Gateway Superintendent Kristen Smidy was present along with Police Officer applicants Thomas McCabe and Peter Dudas. Rene Senecal participated remotely for a short period to discuss the Highway Department.

John opened the meeting at 6:01 PM, warrants, minutes, and any correspondence was signed.

- **Chief Dubiel – Appointment of new police officers.**

Chief Dubiel opened the discussion explaining that we received a grant for speed enforcement which we did not meet the amount of patrol hours necessary and will need to give back sixteen hundred dollars. She explained that it is never good to have to give back money through a grant because the next time a grant becomes available, we may not be picked because we did utilize all the funds. With this in mind, she would like to bring on two additional officers. Thomas McCabe and Peter Dudas were with us this evening and have the endorsement for hire of Chief Dubiel. She explained that Peter is full certified through the bridge academy and Tom will have completed bridge shortly. John asked if she had a copy of their resumes, Chief Dubiel answered yes and provided them for the Select Board to review. Jason asked if each of the officers would like to introduce themselves.

Peter started and stated that he has worked for the jail for fifteen years as well worked for the Russell Police Department for seven years and newly West Springfield. Peter commented that he enjoys the small towns and community policing. John stated that with our Police Department being one of the first to combine community policing is a big part of the department. He asked Peter how he felt his communication skills were, Peter answered strong.

Tom continued stating that he has worked for the Russell Police Department as well for two years in addition to working for a few of the colleges in the area. He also added that he enjoyed the small-town communities. John commented that working for the colleges is great as it is such a diverse

in negotiations with two additional students from Chicopee and Pittsfield. Kristen stated that they wanted to keep the program small but have the option to grow if the demand grew.

We went on to discuss the teacher negotiations which will begin next year and how many schools are facing a staffing shortage. Kristen stated that it has been hard to find agreements with the staff and the increase given by the state is not enough. Select Board member Roger Booth of Huntington has volunteered to be part of the negotiations and Kristen offered the members of our Select Board the opportunity to be as well. Kristen also discussed that they have been working with our local police departments on safety protocols for the district and are working on a grant for school safety. Jason agreed with Kristen about negotiations and that even our substitutes are on the low end of pay.

Kristen provided the Select Board with the enrollment numbers for the district, which will be made available on the town website. John asked what the plans were to help in the drop in enrollment between the eighth and ninth grade. Kristen discussed the vocational programs that they are working on as another tuition option, the welding program, and an early childhood program. They have created a position at the school whose sole job is to find kids and keep kids in the district. Kristen commented that they are working on how they can market what Gateway has to offer, and they have a job fair coming up. Jason stated that the enthusiasm behind this new position is great with improvements even in sports enrollment this year. The Select Board thanked Kristen for joining them and looked forward to their next meeting.

- **Highway Department Superintendent:**

John opened the discussion stating that Chipper Dazelle of Huntington who was offered the Highway Superintendent position has turned it down. John commented that they needed to brainstorm what to do and if they should repost the ad with the salary adjustments. He asked Rene to join their conversation and if he had any ideas.

Rene opened with a comment regarding the Water Department and their discussions on cleaning Austin Brook, he thought from his knowledge of the last time it had been cleaned that it is a few weeks process. As far as the Highway Department his suggestion was to continuously advertise, and we needed to make the job attractive to find someone who would be successful in the position. Rene stated that he would be willing to work as a sub-contractor but not as an employee to the town. He would be happy to meet this week to get a look at what the state of the supplies and equipment is for the winter. He also stated that we should be actively looking for a third employee. John stated that having him come down to look at the equipment is a good start and could explore options after that. The all agreed to meet Wednesday morning at 9:00 AM at the town garage.

The Select Board discussed former Highway employee Corey returning as a laborer instead of the Superintendent position which he had applied for. They also discussed reaching out to the people who have helped plow in the winter in the past to make a plan for this year. Mary Ann stated that in the sand and salt report we would be able to find the names of any contractors who were used. Don asked how many plows the town has available to us, John answered that there are two big trucks and two small trucks as well as a plow for the grader.

Jason stated that he had been contacted by Paul at the Highway Department that they need to purchase tires for the F-250. The Highway Department already has an account at Al's Tire in Westfield and wanted to make sure it was ok for him to bring the truck down and take care of it. The Select Board all agreed that the Highway Department was ok to move forward with purchasing new tires for one of the trucks. Jason asked Don to let Paul know at their meeting tomorrow.

- **Scheduling a Special Town Meeting:**

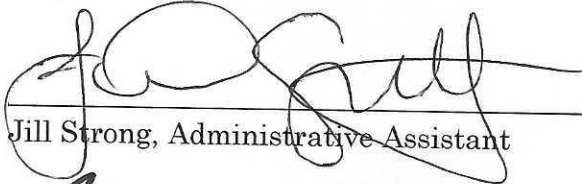
Terry informed us that the ACO vehicle needs some repairs. It is currently at Northampton Ford and there is a crack in the fuel line as well as the gas tank and quoted \$2,900.00 for the work. John and Jason agreed that was a little high and thought that she should check around. BTA in Huntington was suggested Terry said she would look into it.

Bob asked the Board if they had seen the Train Station since the landscaping and façade improvement had been completed, and asked Jason if the second payment of ARPA money had been made available to us. The Board had not seen the improvements to the station yet and Jason answered he did not believe we had received the ARPA funds yet. Bob also wanted to let everyone know that the Veteran's Day luncheon will be planned again this year with hopes to increase the number of attendees.

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

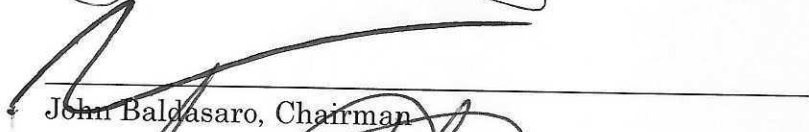
Meeting Adjourned: 8:45 PM

Respectfully Submitted



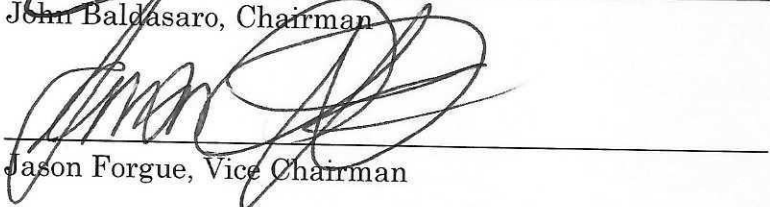
Jill Strong, Administrative Assistant

10/24/22
Date Signed



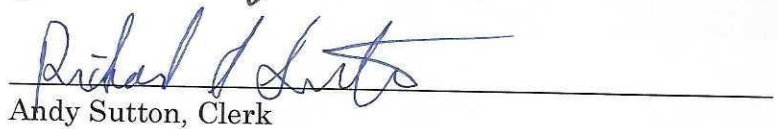
John Baldasaro, Chairman

10/24/22
Date Signed



Jason Fogue, Vice Chairman

10/24/22
Date Signed



Andy Sutton, Clerk

Date Signed