



CHESTER BOARD OF SELECTMEN
and ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
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CHESTER BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

MEETING: Monday, May 8, 2023, 6:00PM in the Town Hall Auditorium

PRESENT: Selectmen John Baldasaro and Andy Sutton were present.
Town Administrator Don Humason was present and taking the meeting minutes.
Also in attendance were Water Commissioners Lyle Snide, Bob Daley, and Tom Bean, Board of Health Commissioners Nic Chuisano and Liz Massa, Tax Collector Mary Ann Pease, Library Trustee Jane Sutton, Finance Committee Chair Andy Myers, and Town residents.

Chair John Baldasaro called the meeting to order at 6:00PM.

Water Commission Update

Water Commission Chair Lyle Snide gave the Board of Selectmen an update on the **shared water operator proposal with Blandford**. He indicated the Blandford Board of Water Commissioners claimed to have some concerns with the plan and voted not to approve it. This had come as a surprise as everyone thought conversations between the boards were going well. This also means that both towns miss out on the **Efficiency and Regionalization grant** and the revenue they were going to receive. Our commissioners met with Ira Brezinsky and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission to discuss options.

Andy Myers made some suggestions.

John Baldasaro asked if there was a deadline and Lyle indicated there was but he wasn't sure when the drop-dead date was. John said both Selectboards were meeting on Monday, May 15, in



Blandford and they would raise the issue at that meeting. All agreed it was time sensitive and very important. Nobody wanted to turn down a state grant for fear of putting both towns in a weaker position for applying for future grants.

Lyle also reported that BayState Forestry was ready to go to bid for **harvesting lumber on Town watershed property**. Expected to be completed by end of summer. Mostly Red Oak and White Ash.

Lyle said they met with Tighe & Bond about their **Asset Management Plan Grant**. Bob Daley said it was the second largest grant in the state. It will need to be approved at Town Meeting in June.

Lyle continued with news that DEP was requiring Chester to complete an expensive engineering study to address treatment plant issues. It was going to be \$55,705, which they hadn't planned for but had to do since it was mandated by DEP.

John and Andy agreed that the Town would use ARPA funds to cover the cost.

Highway Department Update

Chipper Dazelle, Chester Highway Superintendent, gave the Selectboard an update. It is attached to these minutes.

Andy Sutton asked about **Baystate Road flooding** under the railroad overpass. The Chester on Track parade begins on that road. Chip said they had been monitoring the problem and would address it before Chester on Track. They could pump it out if needed.

Chipper spoke about a student intern to help with the department. He had one in mind.

Don Humason said that he, Mary Ann Pease, and Terry Donovan had spoken at Gateway High School recently about internship opportunities in municipal government and that tonight one of those students, first name Dakota, was in attendance at the meeting to meet and connect with Chipper because of his interest in working with the department.

Chipper went on to say that WRAP money would be used to pay for culvert work and guardrail replacement work.

John mentioned cemetery work and also installing cameras at the highway garage and yard. Chipper will look into it.



Planning Board Update

Planning Board Chair Liz Massa handed out their proposal for **new Short-term Rental Bylaws**. These regs will cover anything less than 30 days. The part pertaining to "**Glamping**" is new.

John suggested changing the 10-acre requirement to include flexibility by special permit. He asked Liz to get the Selectboard the final language. Liz told him the next step would be a public hearing.

Steve Salvini of 128 Prospect Street spoke and talked about the language. He suggested establishing a campground ordinance. Liz said those bylaws are coming after Glamping.

Town Administrator Report

Town Administrator Don Humason reported that Clerk Terry Donovan is out this week. **Shredding of the old documents** from the basement is scheduled for Thursday, May 18.

Don indicated Jessica Sakaske had contacted him about **using Emery Park** and had asked about usage policy and rental fees. The Selectmen discussed it briefly and said the park is available for every resident to use and share. There was no fee to use the field or the pavilion and grill. Jessica was online using Zoom and said she and the Rec Committee could publicize and promote its use. She reminded people there is a SaniCan toilet there until Fall.

He said he met with MA DOT about a proposed **ADA sidewalk Improvement Project** scheduled for next year at the corner of Main Street and Route 20. John asked to see the plan and had some concerns. He and Andy asked if Don would communicate their concerns with MA DOT and have them come in to answer some questions and speak more about the project. Don will set that up.

Don indicated the **MVP Grant Resilient Dirt Roads public listening sessions** are scheduled for Wednesday, May 10 at 1PM and 5PM in the Town Hall Auditorium. Meredyth Babcock is the Town's Liaison to the PVPC concerning the Dirt Roads project. The public is invited, and input is welcome, especially from those who live on or drive on dirt roads. Half of Chester's 66 miles of road are dirt or gravel.

Don reported that he and Andy Myers had met with a representative from King Information Systems about the **Town's cemetery records** and how to best organize, store, and utilize them. King will make a proposal soon.



Don reported the **Finance Committee** has been meeting and will present their FY24 budget to the Selectboard on Monday, May 22, 2023 at 6PM.

He also asked the Selectboard if he could be out on Thursday afternoon to have a medical procedure done for his knees. John said yes.

Don said Sonya Kinch, the agent from Colonial Life Insurance, will be at Town Hall Thursday from 9AM to 1PM to meet with Town employees and offer supplemental insurance, as well as demonstrate the **new HR and Benefits Portal** she has been working on with Don to provide improved Human Resources and Benefits services to people who work for the town.

Don said agents from **Aflac and the state SMART Plan** would also be coming to meet with Town employees.

He made some announcements about **Chester on Track, the Chester Theatre Company, and the Memorial Day parades** in Chester and Russell.

Gage Laurie of 22 Ed Lebleau Road introduced himself and said he is a Boy Scout. For his Eagle Scout Project he would like to **place the American Flags on the veteran's graves**. He will get in touch with Jessica Sakaske to make arrangements.

Highway Laborer PayRate

When Don had finished his report, Andy Sutton said he wanted to raise the topic of salaries for the Highway Department laborers again. He said he felt they should be increased. John suggested the individuals get all their licenses first.

They agreed the rate would be \$26/hour for fully-licensed laborers. They decided not to take a formal vote until they had discussed with Chipper Dazelle and the laborers had all their licenses.

Fines and Taxes for Blighted Properties

Board of Health Chair Nic Chuisano asked if it was possible to reduce fines for some of the blighted properties the Board of Health was involved with. The Health Agent Charlie Kaniecki had raised the issue.



Tax Collector Mary Ann Pease said we had to decide on this because she can't sign off if taxes are owed. She suggests the Building Inspector, Assessor, Board of Health, and Health Agent have a meeting with the Selectboard to work this out.

John and Andy both agreed to waiving the Demolition Permit fee.

Marissa Kratovil of 12 Emery Street asked about the **property at 8 Emery Street** and whether cleanup would be done there as well. She said the neighbors were concerned and tired of the conditions and being harassed by the owner.

Liz Massa said the court had ordered the front lot to be cleaned up.

Steve Salvini said they may become one lot.

John said they knew this had been a long time coming but said it would be resolved soon.

Mary Ann Pease said she would check the Excise Tax records to see the number of cars registered at 80 Route 20.

Signature Collection for Special Election

Brian Fogue of 23 Bromley Road said there was a group collecting signatures to petition the Town to hold a Special Election to fill the vacant seat on the Board of Selectmen. He said he thought they were up to 215 collected signatures.

John said that he was pleased to hear that and said that he and Andy Sutton had signed the petition as well. They supported the effort and agreed there should be a special election. Their only concern had been that the vacancy was unexpected so there had been no money budgeted for a Special Election. But now it would be held in the new fiscal year so there could be funding allocated for the election.

Sister Judith of 117 Prospect Street asked a question about **police details for elections**. She asked why the police didn't pay it out of their budget instead of charging the Town Clerk. Sister Judith said she didn't pay for police details when she was the Clerk. John replied that is the way it has always been. It is an elections expense.

John indicated the next step would be for the Clerk to certify the signatures and then set the date for the Special Election. Anyone who is interested in running can take out nomination papers and collect 25 signatures to get on the ballot.



Mass Association of School Committees Day on Beacon Hill

Brian Forgue said he, Superintendent Smidy, and his father, Jason Forgue, attended the Mass Association of School Committees Lobby Day on Beacon Hill in Boston recently. He reported on the legislation and budget issues discussed that day. He said he spoke with Senator Paul Marks' office and Senator John Velis' office to get their support for education. He also spoke with the state Auditor about the **PILOT Program** and increasing funding for payments to municipalities in lieu of taxes. Brian said it was a very productive day in Boston.

Littleville Lake Federal Government PILOT

Andy Myers said he has been doing research into Littleville Lake which is about 1500 acres and was created by the Army Corps of Engineers for a reservoir. He said the Federal Government is supposed to make a PILOT payment to towns impacted. He is also working with MA Fisheries and Wildlife.

He stated the final-Finance Committee meeting was this Saturday, May 13, and then they would present their budget to the Selectboard on Monday, May 22.

Hydrant Flushing and Valve Exercising

Water Commissioner Tom Bean stated that they would be conducting fire hydrant flushing and valve exercising around town. They will try to post locations on the **Town website TownofChester.net** and will also try to use the Robocall System whenever possible.

John said to contact Police Chief Dubiel.

Factory Village Cemetery Wrought Iron Fence Painting

Joy Salvini stood up and asked for permission to paint the fence at the Chester Factory Village Cemetery.

Andy and John gave her permission and thanked her for volunteering to do that.

Bylaw Proposals for the Annual Town Meeting Warrant



Liz Massa said Sister Judith, Brian Forgue, she, and others had collected signatures and wanted to make sure they would be certified in time to get them on the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting on June 12.

Don said he would give the petitions to the Clerk when she returned, and she would certify the signatures and they would work to get everything on the warrant. There shouldn't be a problem.

John asked if anyone else had any questions or comments, either in person or on Zoom. Seeing none,

John Baldasaro made the motion to adjourn.

Andy Sutton seconded it.

Both selectmen voted AYE.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald F. Humason, Jr.
Don Humason, Town Administrator

5/22/23
Date signed

[Signature]
John Baldasaro, Chair

5/23/23
Date Signed

[Signature]
Andy Sutton

5/23/23
Date Signed