

CHESTER BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
and ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS  
15 MIDDLEFIELD ROAD  
CHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01011

(413) 354-7760

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**Monday, December 2, 2024**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Open meeting – This meeting was held in the Chester Town Hall Auditorium with a virtual option.

Selectboard members present were John Baldasaro, Andy Sutton and Craig Gauthier. Also present were Town Administrator Don Humason, Town Clerk Terry Donovan, Finance Committee member Andy Meyers, Police Chief Jen Dubiel and members of the public.

*John Baldasaro opened the meeting at 6:00pm. Warrants, minutes and all correspondence were signed.*

Town Business

- Police Cruiser

The new police cruiser is ready, but Jen Dubiel said the Town Accountant said it cannot be finalized without a Special Town Meeting. She said she's not sure why it would need a town vote because the police department has the money budgeted for this already. There is a cruiser revolving account which has about \$60,000 in it. John Baldasaro said he doesn't agree with having to do a town vote for that either. He said it has already been approved by the selectboard. Jen said the Accountant said she will not release banking information because according to Massachusetts state law there needs to be a 2/3 vote from the town. There was some discussion about how the police department is shared with Blandford which means they would need to be involved in the meeting and the vote.

John asked to call Eric Kinsherf, the owner of the town's accounting firm, to discuss this right now. Don Humason called Eric and explained this is a lease contract, not a cruiser

being purchased outright. Eric said that even if it's a lease, there needs to be a town vote. John Baldasaro asked about making it a short-term rental until the town can come together to hold a 2/3 vote. Eric said that it would be fine if the dealership is okay with drawing up an agreement to reflect that. Jen said she will contact the dealership to have them make those changes.

Jen also mentioned she has another cruiser at Marcott Ford with repairs needed estimating about \$7000. She said the department has that amount in their revolving account and she thinks it's worth fixing. John and the rest of the selectboard agreed with her on paying for the repairs.

- Special Town Meeting Date

In a previous meeting, CMELD mentioned they would need a Special Town Meeting to switch purchasing power providers, but that request has been rescinded. However, there will be one needed for the police cruiser and to replenish funds into the Fair Share account. Funds from that account were used to pay for bottled water purchased during the boil water order and a vote is needed to replace that money with free cash.

Will work towards setting a date for that in the new year.

- Conflict of Interest Training

Terry Donovan has a list of people from multiple departments that are due for their Conflict-of-Interest training. This training needs to be completed every two years for all public employees. Terry said she has reached out to them multiple times and has gotten no response and/or push back.

- Joe Ryan and John Gilonna from the Finance Committee
- Terry Murphy from CMELD
- Annette Lamountain from the Cultural Council
- Chelsea Girton and Rachel Symski from the Library
- Frank Pero from the Water Department

Terry presented the following appointments:

- Annette Lamountain and Kim Fox to the Cultural Council
- Maryann Pease to the Council on Aging.

***John Baldasaro made a motion to approve these appointments, Andy Sutton seconded, and all were in favor.***

- Security Assessment at First Entry SAFE Town Hall

Prior to the Presidential election, the state Elections officials toured Town Hall to evaluate security measures. From that assessment, the biggest recommendation is to install security cameras at the entrance points of the Town Hall. John Baldasaro said it is



something that will be talked about with the renewal of the town's Comcast contract. The town needs cameras outside and inside. Andy Meyers recommended having the doors locked on the weekend, even if there are people working in the building.

- Unappoint Assessor Dalesandro

***John made a motion to remove Rosemary Dalesandro from the Assessors' Board. Andy Sutton seconded, and all were in favor.***

### Town Administrator's Report

- Review/Approve Surplus Property

Don Humason made changes to the town's surplus property disposal policy. This includes items like old or broken computer monitors, keyboards, furniture, etc. These revisions say that anything valued at \$10,000 or more will go through a bidding process. Any tangible assets of lesser value will be offered to all town departments and the public before disposing of the item to charity or recycling. This revised policy better follows the Massachusetts state guidelines.

***John made a motion to approve the new surplus property disposal policy. Andy Sutton seconded, and all were in favor.***

- Update on the Brooks Lawsuit

Attorney Lawless has filed a motion to dismiss the case and the plaintiff has until Friday December 6<sup>th</sup> to respond. Don mentioned Mark Brooks has sent emails to the Highway Superintendent recently, which he has not responded to. John agreed that no contact should be had with the plaintiff and instead should be through the attorney.

- The old elementary school has been winterized by Nicholas Chiusano.
- Kendall Bennett will be presenting a tax classification meeting during the December 16<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting
- State Representative Nicholas Boldyga will also be attending the December 16<sup>th</sup> BOS meeting
- Town Hall will be closed on the following holidays:
  - Wednesday, December 25<sup>th</sup>
  - Wednesday, January 1<sup>st</sup>
- There are issues with the Town Hall septic pump. Dave Pierce had the float and other parts replaced, but there's still an issue with the pump working on its own. An electrician is scheduled to look at the power panel to see if that's causing the problem.

## Public Comments

- Terry Donovan said she has a potential new assessor to be appointed to the board. John said the job will be posted on the town website to allow people an opportunity to see the responsibilities and apply if interested.
- Rosanne McClafin mentioned that Marcella Phelps offers cleaning services in the area and may be interested in performing those services at Town Hall.
- Andy Sutton mentioned the need to start thinking about who would step into the Town Administrator role before Don Humason steps down from that role.
- Brian Fogue said his younger brother is interested in being part of the Conservation Commission.
- Andy Meyers offered his old fridge to replace the one damaged at Emery Field. Don said he is not sure if it is damaged enough to need replacement.
- Rosanne McClafin brought up a \$15,000 deficit in the Highway department payroll account that was mentioned at a previous meeting. Rosanne said that she feels that having someone leaf blowing dirt roads is a waste of taxpayer money and doesn't think it's a necessary service.

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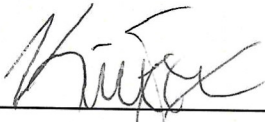
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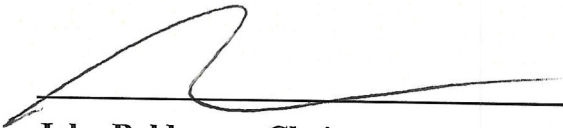
**Respectfully Submitted**



**Kim Fox, Administrative Assistant**

12/17/24

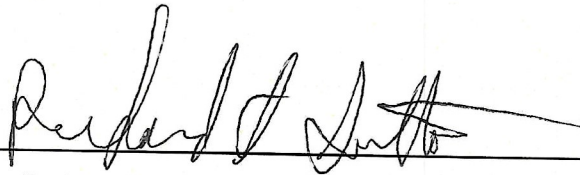
**Date Signed**



**John Baldasaro, Chairman**

12/16/24

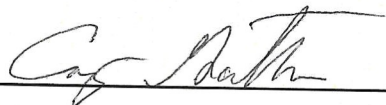
**Date Signed**



**Andy Sutton, Vice Chairman**

12/16/24

**Date Signed**



**Craig Gauthier, Clerk**

12/16/24

**Date Signed**