



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

(413) 354-7760

TownofChester.net

Monday, February 24th, 2025

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 was Town Administrator Don Humason, Finance Committee member Brian Forge, COA member Jane Sutton, CMELD Manager Diane Hall and members of the public.

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

Town Business

- Blandford/Chester Shared Police Agreement

Blandford's Chair of the Select Board, Cara Letendre, along with the other Select Board members, opening the meeting. Blandford Town Administrator, Cristina Ferrera, presented a drafted amendment dated July 1st, 2022, for vehicle and property use for the police department, stating both towns could use police equipment no matter who is under ownership. John Baldasaro said that was during discussions about the Animal Control vehicle and agreed that it should be in the new agreement. Otherwise, there would be no other changes. Police Chief Jen Dubiel was in person at the Blandford town hall and agreed to all the terms and conditions of the shared police agreement. Five years was the agreed upon term. There was also an agreement to meet twice a year between the towns.



John asked about Blandford's incentive program for their volunteer firefighters. Cara said they had a program that no one really used. Cristina said the state legislature is implementing a program in the next few months with a cap on \$250 off real estate taxes and a second decrease in excise tax, though no amount was mentioned.

John Baldasaro made a motion to accept the shared police agreement terms for the next five years, Andy Sutton seconded and all voted in favor. Cara Letendre made a motion for Blandford to accept the shared police agreement terms for five years, Ted Cousineau seconded and all voted in favor.

- CMELD Introduction of New Lineman Dan Moriarty

Dan introduced himself and gave an overview of his experience with areas all over the Northeast region. He expressed excitement and gratitude for his role with CMELD in Chester. He said he's met a lot of people already and really enjoys the area and the systems the town of Chester has.

- Frank Pero Response

In recent months, after multiple emails, calls and letters, Frank Pero has been absent from many Water Commission meetings. A written request asking if he still wanted to be a Water Commissioner went unanswered after a two-week waiting period.

Craig Gauthier made a motion to remove Frank Pero from the Water Commission. John Baldasaro seconded and all voted in favor.

- Comcast

Don Humason said there was no response from Comcast about the contract renewal agreement. John confirmed the Select Board wants a one-year agreement and not ten years and felt that there wasn't proper communication from the sales rep. Matt Skane, the sales rep from Comcast, was present at the meeting via Zoom. He said that he has not heard anything back from the town since he sent over the documentation to move forward with a public hearing and a new agreement. Matt said he understands they were not able to provide WIFI full time at Littleville fairgrounds and a one-year contract is typically not something the company does and wanted to know why that was being requested. John said that they were under the impression that there was no follow through on Comcast's side. Don said last time he had heard from Matt was to confirm they are unable to provide security cameras. Matt said he sent documentation to Don after that to prepare for the public hearing and hadn't heard back. Matt also said he was willing to share information about contractors that could provide security systems and WIFI for Littleville



fairgrounds. He said the Comcast agreement is strictly for cable services for the town and the other aspects were being looked into as a courtesy. Matt said he was very clear that security cameras and internet services are not something they're able to help with, other than providing information for third party companies. John said there was a miscommunication and thanked him for explaining. John asked when the current contract expires and where the town stands. Matt confirmed they are hoping for a ten-year agreement moving forward. John said he would like to have a negotiation meeting set up and would like to sit in on that as well. Matt said he will follow up to request some dates and times.

Town Administrator Report

- Custodian candidate Carlos Flores

Carlos had submitted his resume to fill the open custodian position from Dave Pierce's retirement. Don, Dave and Craig Gauthier met with Carlos to discuss the role. Carlos lives in Chester and is currently in school towards working in the medical field. Andy Sutton expressed concern about how long Carlos would stay in the role seeing as his education is for a completely different field. Don confirmed Carlos didn't commit to a very long term, but the position has been listed as open for a few months, and he is the most qualified candidate of only a few who applied and didn't have an issue with any of the areas of the job role.

Diane Hall asked if cleaning was also included in Carlos's job description, or would it be a separate crew? Don confirmed Carlos would take over cleaning. Diane said that there should be more effective cleaning around town hall, especially in the bathrooms. Don said that is something that female employees have stated in the past. John agreed there is improvement needed there as well.

John made a motion to hire Carlos as the new town hall custodian. Andy Sutton seconded and all voted in favor.

- Sonya Kinch Benefits Consultant Proposal

Sonya Kinch sent in a proposal to become the town's official benefit consultant for an amount of \$8,200 a year. This would include handling any onboarding processes for new hires, monitoring payroll, setting up full-time employees with health benefits, making any policy changes for employees and ensuring people receive their benefits as expected. John asked that Don send a copy of Sonya's proposal to CMELD for their review as well.



Andy expressed concern at the price since these are things Sonya has been helping the town with for free in the past. He also mentioned that surrounding towns do not have a separate HR person and is typically handled by the Town Administrator. Don said that he is not qualified in HR and there have been many benefit issues and complaints since working for the town. He said that Sonya has offered to come to a BOS meeting to explain her proposal and advise them on what the town could be doing better.

Andy asked Diane if CMELD would pay for half of the cost. Diane said maybe they could since they do have the a number of benefited employees. Brian Forgue said that Gateway Regional School is searching for a new treasurer who would also provide HR support to all of the hilltowns one day a week for no cost to the town. Both Brian and John agreed that Sonya could be the town's consultation for the upcoming FY and then see how things move forward with Gateway's new treasurer process.

Jessica Sakaske said her cousin does HR consulting full-time and could ask her to submit a proposal as well.

- North Chester Road Property

There is a family on North Chester Road who want to donate their property to the town. John said if the town accepted it, it would then probably go to a public auction. John recommended that the property owners ask their abutting neighbors if they want it before giving it to the town.

Public Comments

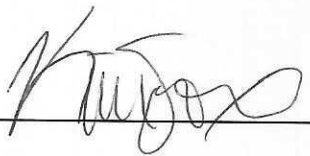
Andy asked Brian for an update on Chapter 70 funds. Brian said according to the state, there is surplus money from having 11% more revenue from taxes than expected. There may also be a tax on pharmaceuticals which will bring in more money.

Brian shared that the finance committee presentation meetings with town department heads will start on Thursday, 2/27. The finance committee is considering how to break down the stabilization fund differently and expresses the desire for cheaper insurance for town employees.

John Baldasaro made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Andy Sutton seconded and all were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:57pm.



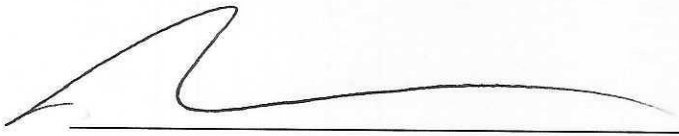
Respectfully Submitted,



Kim Fox, Administrative Assistant

3/10/25


Date Signed



John Baldasaro, Chairman

3/10/25

Date Signed



Andy Sutton, Vice Chairman



Date Signed



Craig Gauthier, Clerk

3/10/25

Date Signed



CHARLES "CHIP" DAZELLE, HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT
CHESTER HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
2 TOWN ROAD
CHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01011

(413) 354-2276

Highwaysuper@townofchester.net

***2-25-25 Selectboard Report
from the Highway Department***

- 1] Been busy month with storms every Thursday and weekends. Been plowing and sanding almost every day. I think everyone was happy.
- 2] Salt and sand deliveries almost daily
- 3] Red Freightliner went down because of a DEF sensor to do with Deisel system.
- 4] Cleaned downtown, storm drains opened for melting
- 5] Trying to get a revised budget in but mother nature had other plans should be this week
- 6] If anything has come up that needs my attention, please let me know

-Charles "Chip" Dazelle,
Chester Highway Superintendent

Cell 413-393-8946



TOWN OF BLANDFORD

Select Board
POSTED February 20, 2025, by 6:00 pm

Blandford Town Hall
1 Russell Stage Road, Suite 1
Blandford, MA 01008

JOINT SELECT BOARD and CHESTER/BLANDFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT MEETING AGENDA

February 24, 2025

6:00 pm

Members of the public who wish to dial-in or participate virtually, may do so by visiting either of the following options:

- Zoom Video Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82168083073>
- Meeting ID: 821 6808 3073
- Phone Dial In: 1-929-205-6099, dial in meeting ID when prompted.

If you have any comment regarding items that are on the agenda, please forward to Joann Martin, Administrative Assistant, at Selectboardadmin@townofblandford.com or 413-848-4279 x206.

Meeting held in the Select Board Chamber, Town Hall

1. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS
 - a) *Examination of the Select Board Meeting Minutes of December 09, 2024*
 - b) *Examination of the Tax Rate Meeting Minutes of December 18, 2024*
2. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT*
3. DEPARTMENT REPORTS
 - a) *Highway Superintendent – Rene Senecal*
 - b) *Town Administrator – Cristina Ferrera*
 - c) *Board of Health – Jennifer Girard*
4. ACTION ITEMS
 - a) *Approve Warrant #18 Payroll for payment*
 - b) *Approve Warrant #18 Town of Blandford Accounts Payable for Payment*
 - c) *Approve Warrant #18 Town of Blandford Wired Accounts Payable for Payment*
5. NEW BUSINESS
 - a) *Joint Meeting Chester/Blandford Police Department*
 - b) *Temporary Liquor License for fundraiser – Gateway Education Association*
 - c) *All Departmental Expenditure Report*
 - d) *Town of Blandford Caucus March 03, 2025 – Town Clerk*
 - e) *Highway Superintendent Interview – Raymond Hultay*
 - f) *Highway Superintendent Interview – Brad Curry*



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CHESTER SELECTBOARD MEETING AGENDA

Monday, February 24, 2025, 6:00PM, in the Town Hall Auditorium

This meeting will be held as a hybrid meeting, but it is at the Select Board's discretion to allow participation for those attending remotely.

-Meeting minutes and warrants may be signed.

Report from Town Departments/Town Business:

- Joint Zoom Meeting with Blandford Selectboard to review Shared Policing Agreement and Extending Police Chief's Contract
- CMELD Introduction of New Lineman Dan Moriarty
- Frank Pero response
- Comcast

Old Business:

New Business:

Town Administrator Don Humason report:

- Town Hall custodian candidate Carlos Flores
- Sonya Kinch Benefits Consultant Proposal

Anything that should come before the Selectboard that was unanticipated within the 48 hours of posting:



Public Comments or Questions:

Next Meeting: Monday, March 10, 2025, 6PM
Special Town Meeting, March 10, 2025, 6:30PM

Meeting Adjournment

*This meeting is being held in person at the location provided on this notice.
Members of the public are welcome to attend this in-person meeting.*

Please note that while an option for remote attendance and or participation is being provided as a courtesy to the public the meeting/hearing will not be suspended or terminated if technological problems interrupt the virtual broadcast, unless otherwise required by law.

Members of the public with particular interest in any specific item on this agenda should make plans for in-person vs. virtual attendance accordingly.