



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

(413) 354-7760

TownofChester.net

Monday, March 10, 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 and Craig Gauthier. Also present was Town Administrator Don Humason, and members of the public.

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

A moment of silence was held in honor of CMELD Commissioner and Board of Health member Duane C. Pease who passed recently.

Town Business

- CMELD candidates Lori Fieldstad and Beth Lansing

John Baldasaro said we are within 60 days of appointments and wasn't sure if it made sense to make an early appointment when the town vote is upcoming. Derek Savoy asked if appointment papers are needed since the position opened suddenly due to Duane Pease's passing? John said yes and the term of the appointment would be for the remainder of his term which is one year. There will now be two positions open and available for electric commissioners on the ballot.

- BOH Proposed Textiles Shed

Liz Massa and the Board of Health have met with a rep from Saint Pauly's textiles about having a clothing recycling shed placed in town. The company would come weekly to empty



the donations. Saint Pauly's are also responsible for cleaning and removing any items that are not allowed in addition to picking up all the donations. The town would receive payment monthly based on the weight of recyclables. The size of the shed is about 8x14ft, and it was proposed to have it at the fire station on Route 20. Fire Chief Nate Bolduc said they do have the room. Craig brought up a concern of vandalism to the shed. John said being at the fire station would likely avoid any issues with that.

- Sonya Kinch Benefits Proposal

Sonya Kinch joined the meeting via Zoom to explain what would be included in her proposal for benefits consulting for the town. Sonya said there is a disconnect with health insurance and how to get it. She said she has identified many areas of opportunity for the town and wants to put proper systems in place not only for a health insurance change but to be maintained correctly going forward. She said the biggest issue with HGCIT, the current insurance company, is that they have a specific set of rules that don't follow what the town employee handbook states. She said it's not easy to just purchase another insurance policy. Sonya said she would make sure to get the right insurance for the town's needs and monitor payroll deductions to make sure they match up with employee benefits. She said there are duplicate policies the town is paying for that she would rectify. The proposal she provided was originally for only finding a new health insurance carrier, but there is a lot of clean up to do and she wants to set the town up for success in future years. She wants to make sure payroll and benefits are connected well.

John Baldasaro said the board is very unhappy with HGCIT and asked what her thoughts are. She said she has sent out a request for quotes from MIIA, Berkshire Health group, Blue Cross and United Healthcare, who have declined to provide a quote. She said the town would need to let HGCIT know by 4/1 that the town is cancelling and will have coverage with them through 7/1/25. John brought up Andy's previous concerns about Sonya's proposal cost. Sonya said she didn't think that there was as much to do until she did a full review and she's hoping to put the proper systems in place. She also puts herself at risk with her work license in doing things like this for the town at such a low rate. She said the process will be very timely. John asked if the proposal amount will increase going forward? She said she doesn't see that happening because more of the time consuming things will be done this year. She said having new systems in place will save payroll costs now and going forward.

John said he understands the cost and she said she's worked with the town for the last 16 years and has seen a lot of these issues come up many times. John said they will discuss and get back to her. John and Craig discussed their thoughts and because of the upcoming 4/1 deadline, they were under pressure to decide how to move forward.



Brian Forgue asked Don when Sonya would be paid since her fee was not in the budget for this FY. He asked if she could wait until 7/1 for payment to make it into the budget for next FY. Don said he would confirm with Sonya on that.

Brian provided the board with the Gateway Regional Treasurer's job description and mentioned that having the systems in place with Sonya's help could make that transition easier.

John made a motion to accept Sonya's proposal at a cost of \$8200 for HR Benefits work. Craig seconded and all voted in favor.

Town Administrator Report

- Town Hall Custodian

Carlos has officially started and is getting up to speed, training alongside Dave Pierce.

- Updated Phone System

Phones have been installed in most town departments. The next round of phone installs will be 3/26/25 for the remaining departments.

- CMELD Safety Talk

Dan Moriarty approached Don about possibly doing a safety talk for town residents. Don also mentioned his thoughts on having a "touch a truck" with CMELD, the Highway Department, the fire station, and the police department.

Public Comments

Lori Fieldstad asked if there would also be an open spot on the Board of Health since Duane Pease is no longer in that role. John said yes that it will be available to be filled as well.

John Baldasaro made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Craig Gauthier seconded and all were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:30pm so the Special Town Meeting could begin.



Respectfully Submitted,

Kim Fox, Administrative Assistant

3/24/25

Date Signed

John Baldasaro, Chairman

3/24/25

Date Signed

Andy Sutton, Vice Chairman

3/24/25

Date Signed

Craig Gauthier, Clerk

3/24/25

Date Signed



CHARLES "CHIP" DAZELLE, HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT
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***3-10-25 Selectboard Report
from the Highway Department***

- 1] Mud season has begun, put stone on Ingell road others are still ok.
- 2] Spot sanding ice spots most days
- 3] Patching potholes
- 4] A couple road minor washouts, Crane, Maynard and Round Hill all set
- 5] Wind storms a few trees down. Had to cut out of the road and for Power Co. on wires
- 6] Freightliner is at repair shop for DEF system, Turbo and Brakes, Sticker and oil change to be ready for sweeping and gravel season.
- 6] If anything has come up that needs my attention, please let me know

-Charles "Chip" Dazelle,
Chester Highway Superintendent
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