

Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen Meeting
Thursday, November 14th, 2013
Municipal Complex
Approved Minutes

I Preliminaries

1.1 Call to Order

Chairman Landau called this meeting of the Town of Chester Board of Selectmen to order at 7:46pm.

1.2 Roll Call

Selectmen present:

Stephen Landau - Chairman
Jack Cannon
Joseph Castricone
Joseph Hagan
Richard LeBlanc

Members of the Public present, at various times:

Carrie Hadik
Chris Hadik - BC
Rhonda Lamphere - BC
Matt Rittenhouse, Tri-Town Times
Leroy Scott

1.3 Agenda

OLD BUSINESS:

Approval of Minutes

NEW BUSINESS:

Compensation
Roundtable
Adjournment

1.4 Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Landau led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

46 1.5 *Additions and Deletions* - Chairman Landau stated that the BOS meeting was starting late
48 because there was a 50th Anniversary celebration for the Lions Club at Stevens Hall prior to
this meeting.

50 Chairman Landau added several quick non-public sessions under reputation and one non-
52 public session on compensation. Selectman Castricone added two non-public sessions under
reputation.

54 Chairman Landau stated that the update on the WP ball fields is that the project is
56 completed and the grass is growing however the Recreation Committee and Field of Dreams
need to meet to work out the funding for the additional costs incurred above the \$92K
58 already raised.

60 Chairman Landau stated that he had been contacted by the T/S operator this week
62 expressing thanks for the skid steer and how helpful it has already become moving the old
appliances - it has already saved a lot of time.

64 Chairman Landau read out a thank you note from Mary Miriam O'Brien expressing gratitude
for the wonderful Boston Post Cane ceremony.

66 1.6 *Public Comment* - none.

68 1.7 *Member Comment* - none.

70 **II Old Business**

72 2.1 *Approval of Minutes:*

74 The BOS reviewed the minutes from the following dates: 09.12.2013; 09.19.2013;
76 09.26.2013; 10.03.2013; 10.17.2013 and 10.24.2013.

78 Selectman LeBlanc made a motion to accept the BOS minutes from 09.12.2013 as written.
Vice-Chairman Hagan seconded; Selectman Cannon & Selectman Castricone abstained; the
80 rest of the BOS were in favor; so moved.

82 Vice-Chairman Hagan made a motion to accept the BOS minutes from 09.19.2013 as written.
Selectman LeBlanc seconded; Selectman Cannon abstained; the rest of the BOS were in
84 favor; so moved.

86 Chairman Landau made a motion to accept the BOS minutes from 09.26.2013 as written.
Selectman LeBlanc seconded; the BOS was unanimously in favor; so moved.

88 Selectman Castricone made a motion to accept the BOS minutes from 10.03.2013 as
90 written. Selectman LeBlanc seconded; the BOS was unanimously in favor; so moved.

92 Chairman Landau stated that there were no official minutes from 10.17.2013 because there was no quorum.

94 Selectman LeBlanc made a motion to accept the BOS minutes from 10.24.2013 as written.
96 Vice-Chairman Hagan seconded; Selectman Castricone abstained; the rest of the BOS were in favor; so moved.

98 *2.2 Tax Rate Update:*

100 Chairman Landau stated that the BOS does not normally discuss the tax rate in such an
102 open forum; however after receiving tax rate information yesterday and meeting with the
104 BOS, it was decided that the BOS would revisit this matter tonight. The rate discussed
106 tonight could still be changed by DRA. Selectman Cannon asked if there is a planned overlay;
108 the proposed tax rate increase is large however by removing funds from the unreserved
110 fund balance, as an overlay, it simply delays the rate going up to the level needed to fund
112 the Town and the School. There are no abatements listed in the calculations. Removing
114 \$100K from the unreserved fund balance would still leave a healthy 8% in the fund and
116 **reduce** the tax rate increase by \$77 on a \$350K house. Mr. Hadik and BC Chairwoman
118 Lamphere joined the BOS for this discussion. Chairman Landau stated that the BOS took
120 \$150K from the unreserved fund balance in 2012-13 to fund the CIP. Selectman Cannon
122 does not feel this was the best use of that money because it may or may not get used on
124 CIP projects and therefore it sits in an account not helping at all. Selectman Cannon feels
126 there are too many critical projects that need funding now rather than money being held in
128 the CIP account. The School did not return much of a surplus this year; \$194,883 was added
to the school fund balance account established after a vote this year. If that money had
been returned it would have reduced the tax rate increase by \$0.42c. If the tax rate is
temporarily reduced by an overlay, new families moving into Town are not getting the real
picture when it comes to the taxes needed for the education system and services however
the Town needs to have enough funding to provide the services being demanded as the
population grows. Voters must understand that taxes have to increase if the demand for
services increases. There is a bond retiring this fiscal year. Vice-Chairman Hagan stated
that he would like to use \$100K from the unreserved fund balance to reduce the tax rate
increase a little. The school has lost over \$470K in revenues for 2013-14 hence the tax rate
jump. The BOS agreed that the School and Town need to work together to look at the big
picture; there were 40 attendees at the SB meeting where an \$11 million budget was
passed! Selectman Cannon agreed to the \$100K overlay which means that on a \$350K house
there will be an additional \$535 in taxes due for 2013-14.

8:20pm

130 Vice-Chairman Hagan made a motion to use \$100K of the unreserved fund balance to offset
132 the tax rate for 2013-14. Chairman Landau seconded for discussion; the \$100K overlay
134 would reduce the tax rate increase. The BOS agreed that Town departments and the School
136 need to find ways to save money and hopefully lower the tax rate increase. Chairman Landau
stated that the Town is expecting \$20K back from the insurance reimbursement which can
be put back into the unreserved fund balance. Vice-Chairman Hagan quoted Robert Heinlein
"taxes are not levied for the benefit of the taxed"--they are levied for the benefit of those

138 in need. At the rate stated above, with the \$100K overlay, taxes would be up by \$460 on a
139 \$350K house. The BOS was unanimously in favor of this motion; so moved.

140 **2.3 Tax bills:**

142 Chairman Landau stated that he received a letter from the tax collector regarding the late
143 setting of the tax rate by DRA which would mean the bills for Chester would be due on or
144 during the Christmas vacation week (which is when the tax collector is on vacation).
145 Therefore the tax collector is requesting the BOS sign this letter extending the due date
146 by 5 days so that residents have time to pay their bills when the office is open. There is a
147 tax collector drop box that is available 24/7 outside the Town Hall. Therefore the tax bills
148 will now be due 35 days from the date of mailing rather than 30 days.

150 **8:30pm**

151 Chairman Landau made a motion in favor of signing the tax collectors letter of request to
152 extend the tax collection period from 30 days to 35 calendar days after the mailing date.
153 The tax rate will be reviewed by DRA and then it will be sent to the printers with the bills
154 potentially going out November 25th making the final due date December 30th, 2013. The
155 BOS was unanimously in favor of this motion; so moved.

156

III New Business

158

3.1 Compensation:

160

161 Selectman Castricone asked if the pay raises given to the rest of the Town employees apply
162 to the volunteer firefighter's rate too. Selectman Castricone thought the Fire Chief gave
163 out the raises for the volunteer firefighters however he does not. The BOS discussed the
164 time when Chief Antoine revamped the entire pay structure for firefighters based on
165 experience and training. If the Supervisors of the Checklist want a raise for their clerks
166 they meet with the BOS. The Fire Chief needs to meet with the BOS to suggest raising the
167 rate then there can be a discussion. Selectman Cannon does not think the salary pool was
168 funded to cover seasonal salary increases and volunteer positions. To increase the volunteer
169 firefighters at the same rate as the rest of the Town employees would cost the Town
170 \$2200. Some firefighters received a pay increase because they are employees of different
171 Town positions. Chairman Landau expressed appreciation for the volunteer firefighters
172 however as a volunteer on the BOS he did not receive a raise; in light of the tax rate
173 increase, he would like to see some budget items stay the same and not increase right now
174 however he is not against a raise for the firefighters - he would like to have a discussion
175 with the Fire Chief first.

176

177 **4.2 Public Comment:** Mr. Scott stated that social security is supposed to be raised by 1.5% and
178 he has to meet the tax rate increase too.

180 **4.3 Roundtable**

182 *Selectman LeBlanc* - the oil tank at Stevens Hall has been replaced and installed in a
184 different location away from the moisture that has caused so many rust problems before;
the furnace is hooked up and running.

186 *Selectman Cannon* - asked if there would be an inspection of the roof fasteners in the MPR
188 room by the roofing company prior to Tony installing the netting. He is concerned there
could be broken pieces that could fall and injure people.

190 *Selectman Castricone* - he was asked by Jean Packard if she could place a giving tree in
192 hallway for donations to Brandon's Bounty; the BOS agreed with this idea. *Selectman*
Castricone asked if any of the BOS have reviewed the mission statement for the ambulance
194 committee -they will look at it this week. The contracts are out for the 2013-14 snow
plowing season; the Highway department will advertise for a full-time employee beginning
196 tomorrow.

Chairman Landau - stated that over 2700 items were donated during the Scouting for Food
198 program this year. Thank you to the residents of Chester for their generosity.

200 **The next meeting of the BOS will be Thursday November 21st at 7:00pm.**

202 4.4 *Non-Public Session*

204 **8:48pm**

Chairman Landau moved that the Board go into several non-public sessions under RSA 91A:3
206 II (c) reputation; one non-public session under RSA 91A:3 II (a) compensation and one non-
public session under RSA 91A:3 II (j) Consideration of confidential, commercial, or financial
208 information that is exempt from public disclosure. *Vice-Chairman Hagan* seconded the
motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; so moved.

210

9:58pm

212 *Selectman LeBlanc* moved that the Board come out of non-public session; *Vice-Chairman*
Hagan seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; so moved.

214

Chairman Landau moved that the minutes from all of the non-public sessions be sealed
216 indefinitely. *Selectman LeBlanc* seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the
affirmative; so moved.

218

V Adjournment

220

Vice-Chairman Hagan moved to adjourn the meeting; *Selectman Cannon* seconded the motion.
222 The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; so moved.

224 The meeting was adjourned at 10:00pm.

226 Respectfully Submitted,
Sarah E Scanlan