

**Town of Chester  
Board of Selectman Meeting  
Thursday, March 11, 2010  
Town Hall  
Approved Minutes**

**I Preliminaries**

*1.1 Call to Order*

Chairman Hassam called this meeting of the Town of Chester Board of Selectmen to order at 7:00 pm.

*1.2 Roll Call*

Members present:

Jack Cannon, Vice Chairman

Joe Castricone

James Hassam, Chairman

Robert Brown

Stephen Landau

Members of the Public present, at various times:

Barbara Hatch

Police Chief, Bill Burke

Fire Chief, Richard Antoine

Road Agent, Mike Oleson

Rhonda Lamphere, Budget Committee Chair

Chris Hadik, Budget Committee Member

Babara Gagnon, Town Clerk

Stephen Tunberg, Emergency Management Director

Jean Methot, ZBA Chair

Steve Moltenberg, Recreation Coordinator & Maintenance Supervisor

Jean Packard, Assessor

Cynthia Robinson, Planning Board Coordinator

Don Forsythe

Pat Martin, BOS Administrative Assistant

Matt Rittenhouse, Tri-Town Times Reporter

Leroy Scott

Carolyn Scott

Barbara Dolloff

Midge Gould

Michael Weider

And other persons unknown to the Recording Secretary

### 1.3 *Pledge of Allegiance*

Chairman Hassam led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### 1.4 *Chairman's Additions or Deletions*

No additions or deletions.

### 1.5 *7:04 pm Public Comment*

#### **Selectman Landau has comments regarding recent School District Meeting - Voting**

Selectman Landau makes comments regarding the Tri-Town Newspaper articles, and he finds Matt Rittenhouse from Tri-Town Times to be very exacting and a very good reporter. Selectman Landau comments are regarding School District Meeting and the results of the amount of people in the Town who showed up to vote. He commented that out of the approximately 3,300 residents who are registered to vote, only a little over 300 voters showed up. Selectman Landau comment to the Town is: If you want the Selectmen to approve certain matters and want to have things passed that are in the Town's favor, then show up to vote!

Selectman Landau also speaks to the comments in an article regarding the Board of Selectmen March 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting and the discussion between Mr. Chuck Myette and Selectman Landau relating to not wanting to lead the people to a false sense of what we were saying and giving a true figure on the Wason Pond Dam matter.

The other article concerning the Budget Committee Meeting and a "real world" comment and his point is that we are all here for a purpose. The voting public is the necessary deciding factor of how the money is spent. It is an absolute abomination when less than one-tenth of the voting public comes to tell us how to spend 87% of the budget. The Selectmen are going to make some decisions that will change some things relating to people's salaries, benefits, what is going to be spent for a dam, what we are going to spend for roads, going to spend for a flood and/or we have damage and have to call people out on a 24-hour basis.

Following Selectman Landau's comments, no members of the public wished to speak and so Public Comment was closed at 7:06 p.m.

## **II Appointments**

### **2.1 Bob Flanders, Interim Building Inspector, Proposed Non-Public**

Interim Building Inspector Bob Flanders approached the Selectmen and requested a motion to go into non-public session under a personnel matter. Vice Chairman Jack Cannon made a Motion to go into non-public under RSA 91-A:3,II(a), Selectman Joe Castricone seconded the Motion. No further discussion, the Selectmen voted unanimously in the affirmative. Public Session was closed at 7:10 pm and the public departed the Meeting Room.

Public Session re-opened at 7:35 pm. Motion was made to seal the non-public minutes for one (1) year, seconded, and voted unanimously. Motion carried.

## **2.2 Department Heads Meeting**

The Department Heads appeared before the Board to discuss budget matters.

Bill Burke, Police Chief, stated that he does not expect to be over budget. There was a little overtime during the storm. The budget is right where it should be at this time.

Rich Antoine, Fire Chief stated that budget wise, we are on track right now. We should not be over budget. We had one vehicle damaged in the storm. We received a call from the State that we are still in the running for a heart safe community based on the training that we do. We are hoping that we get qualified.

The ambulance contract is pending and we have negotiated with two (2) other ambulance services. The contract is for Chester and Auburn and would service both towns; it will be a package deal. We have tentative deals in the works, if something falls through. We did sign a contract with Comstar. We have eight (8) paramedics on staff. Our truck was licensed with the State at an advance paramedic level. Half of the department is fire and medical certified together. 5% is just fire certified and 5% just EMS.

Selectman Landau asked what the training thoughts are regarding continuing to do a little of both training for fire and EMS training.

Fire Chief Antoine responded that the training grant is in for two (2) years, so a lot of the training is being paid by the grant to get basic fire and EMS training, so we are hoping to have everybody who is interested be trained in both.

Mike Oleson, Road Agent reported that if we eliminate the storms we have had, we are way within our budget for the year. Road Agent Oleson does not anticipate any overages on the budget. The backhoe needs a new fuel tank. We will have to spend some of the budget for equipment. There is about 30% left on the budget for the year. In the process of setting up GPS for all the tree sites, we have reviewed some plow contractors for clean up. Getting the trees cleaned up from the storm, putting band-aids on the roads, as the roads deteriorate, we will have to do more. The majority of the washouts are the culvert areas that we have asked the Town to repair over the past three (3) years. We are in budget except for the recent storm event.

Rhonda Lamphere, Budget Committee Chair, stated that the budget has been approved for the next fiscal year. The collective bargaining agreement for the next two (2) years and other warrant articles that came before the annual School District Meeting, which was held this week. The results of the annual School Meeting of having an increased tax effect by each home with an assessed value of \$350,000 of \$405.00, which is \$357.00 for the whole budget and \$48.00 for the collective bargaining agreement. The 2010-2011 proposed town budget received from the

Selectmen of January 22<sup>nd</sup>, meeting, some of the town departments will be meeting with Board of Selectmen next Thursday, March 18<sup>th</sup>. The finalized proposed budget will be sent to all of the departments soon after the meeting. The committee is also reviewing the proposed warrant articles that have been submitted to them by the Selectmen, only articles with sufficient supporting documentation will be considered for recommendation. All of the budget committee meetings are public meetings and we welcome input from any Chester resident and all of the Town employees. All meetings are held in the Town Hall unless otherwise noted.

Selectman Brown asked why the entire Budget Committees Meetings are not televised in full.

Budget Committee Chair Lamphere responded by stating that when we are deliberating our budget and there are discussions of changes going back and forth between the Committee, the statements are taken out of context when we are on the television, only a piece of it is given to the public and every one is upset that the Budget Committee has made a decision. We never have private meetings and we never go into non-public, we always welcome anyone, town employees, residents, non-residents, the Selectmen, everyone is welcome. However, when we are deliberating (not regular business on the school or town budget), we just do not think it is in the best interest to televise because there is too much room for confusion. For example, when you take one or two little "what ifs,?" it usually goes in the wrong direction.

Selectman Cannon addressed Budget Committee Chair Rhonda Lamphere stating that the Committee had a 3-hour, 11-minute meeting on March 1, 2010, but out of that time, there was only three (3) items that were all business and then you went into a workshop.

Bill Burke, Police Chief, expressed that he would like to go on record by saying that he disagrees with the Budget Committee not televising the full meeting. It is no different than a Selectmen meeting; people are paying their taxes to know what is going on and what is being said. Those meetings should be fully televised and the townspeople should be informed about what their money is spent on and make comments on whether the Budget Committee is out of line so that it can be corrected.

Selectman Brown responded that the Budget Committee is a committee and if there is a quorum, the public has a right to know. Since it was not happening, we as a Board, voted that all meetings held in the Meeting Room are to be televised unless a motion is made to go into non-public.

Chris Hadik, Budget Committee Vice Chairman goes on record by saying on March 1<sup>st</sup>, this room was taken, and we met in room 20.

Barbara Gagnon, Town Clerk, reported that she expected to be within her bottom line budget. We will require five (5) new voting booths and the cost is approximately \$1,100 per booth. We will have elections this fall in September and November. They are usually bigger than the recently held School Meeting. I do not anticipate any new equipment. I had a chance to put in place the credit/debit cards for payments toward registrations and on the Internet. We are not set up to take credit cards for tax payments. There have been small changes with the State but nothing that will take a big expense.

Stephen Tunberg, Emergency Management Director, reported that the only thing in the budget that is way off is money spent that we received from FEMA on changing the generator around at the School. Otherwise, I am within my budget line and the rest of the impact from the storm will have very little impact on the Town and the budget will not go over.

Jean Methot, ZBA Chair, reported that the ZBA budget is on track; however, revenue is down at this time. We will have an application next month for a business, potentially a salon. There is nothing going on at this time with Southern New Hampshire Planning.

Steve Moltenbrey, Recreation Coordinator & Maintenance Supervisor reported that Wason Pond has a few minor things on the budget, which can be absorbed through the maintenance budget. The maintenance budget is over on electric. Truck maintenance is at 32%. Stevens Hall should be completed soon, the floors should be done by Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, and the ceilings are done. There is a short discussion of the status of the generator for the town and the status is the generator is likely to be up and running by next Thursday.

Police Chief Burke has comments regarding an article in the newspaper and believes the matter of benefits for Town Employees should be revisited before benefits are decreased or contribution costs for the employees are increased. Some of the Selectmen indicated that the Town has been shopping around for a better benefits package that will keep the budget in line and also benefit the employees. Selectman Landau stated that he believed people who work in government are drawn to the job because of the good benefits offered and that he is pleased with the Town employees and would not want to see the Town lose them.

Cynthia Robinson, Planning Board Coordinator, reported that the Planning Board has received two (2) grants. There is a CETA Grant with Southern NH Planning. Storm Water Managing. The budget is right in line. Ms. Robinson also reported that subdivisions are down.

Jean Packard, Assistant Assessor reported that the Town has a case going on now with the Superior Court regarding NH Electric. Other than that, no major issues and nothing is needed to purchase.

Department Head Manager Meeting Ends at 8:42 p.m.

#### ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Selectman Landau - I looked at the area where the generator is to be installed and the trees overhanging based on Mr. Leroy Scott's comments at last week's meeting that one of us should go look at the area. Selectman Landau agrees that the area the way it is now appears to be a widow maker and requires repair.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Leroy Scott - Has questions regarding the generator and the moisture around slab holding the generator.

Selectman Hassam has talked to the building inspector and the slab should be fine, there should not be any issue with corrosion. The pad is a little short; unfortunately, we are going to go with that, it should not cause any problems in the future.

Leroy Scott – The moisture problem has been addressed, correct?

Selectman Hassam – Yes, the building inspector brought that up and said the pad would be fine.

Don Forsythe – Has questions regarding the debris of the trees from the storms near the town road and what the procedure is for removing them.

Chairman Hassam responds that he should inquire with the Fire Chief regarding burning and go to the Road Agent for issues regarding removal of the trees.

Selectman Hassam closes public comment at 8:55 p.m.

Vice Chairman Jack Cannon made a motion to go into a non-public session under RSA 91-A:3,11(c). Selectman Joe Castricone seconded the motion. There being no discussion, vote was unanimous. Chairman Hassam announces that following the non-public session, the Board will adjourn the Meeting. The public leaves the Meeting Room at 8:56 pm.

Selectman Hassam Makes A Motion to Adjourn the Meeting at 9:15 pm. Vice Chairman Jack Cannon seconds the Motion. No discussion. Vote was unanimous. Meeting is adjourned at 9:15 pm.

**IV 9:15 pm Adjournment**

Respectfully Submitted,

Coleen Finneral