

**Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen Meeting
Thursday, March 12th, 2009
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 7:03pm.

1.2 Roll Call

Selectmen present:

Jack Cannon
James Hassam
Stephen Landau

Selectmen absent:

Robert Brown
Mark Harris

Members of the Public present, at various times:

Rich Antoine, Fire Chief
John Lamphere
Joe Lessard, MRI
Tom Malley, Building Inspector
Scott Marsh, MRI
Jean Methot
Michael Oleson, Road Agent
Jean Packard, Assessing Department
Bob Pepper
Daniel Ramage
Bryan Remillard
Matt Rittenhouse, Tri-Town Times
Cynthia Robinson
Carolyn Scott
Leroy Scott
Angela Sherwood, Finance Director
Brian Sullivan, Planning Board
Alana Wentworth
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 *Additions and Deletions*

A meeting with Jean Packard and MRI , and a meeting with Fire Chief Rich Antoine, have been added to the schedule.

1.5 *Public Comment*

As no members of the Public wished to speak, the Board closed Public Comment at 7:04pm.

II Appointments

2.1 *Brian Sullivan, Tom Malley – Driveway Inspections*

Mr. Sullivan appeared before the Board to ask that they allow Building Inspector Malley to perform driveway inspections, rather than contracting with an outside firm. They had solicited a quote from Dubois & King, and the cost was significantly higher than what the Town currently charges homeowners/contractors - \$500 vs. the current cost of \$100 to perform a driveway design review. They had also considered asking the Auburn Building Inspector to perform the work, but Building Inspector Malley was willing to do it.

Building Inspector Malley asked what the purpose was of the budget line for driveways. Apparently it was a stipend for years previously when the Road Agent performed those inspections, considering that his is an unpaid position; it should be at zero at this point. Mr. Sullivan stated that they could certainly revisit the issue should Building Inspector Malley become overwhelmed.

Selectman Landau stated that the Planning Board should re-notice the situation, even at the cost of \$180, and post this information on the Town website.

John Lamphere stood and was recognized. He stated that he had attended the last Planning Board meeting of March 4th, and would like a copy of the minutes. He had been unable to procure them today, which he believed was contrary to the RSA. He was pleased to see Building Inspector Malley in attendance, and had been concerned when he had heard that the cost of driveway review was being outsourced and going up from \$100 to \$500. He had inquired of, and been told by, the Planning Board Administrative Assistant that Building Inspector Malley was unwilling to perform the driveway reviews, and wanted to know why inaccurate information had apparently been given. He thanked Building Inspector Malley.

Vice-Chairman Cannon suggested that Mr. Sullivan take Mr. Lamphere's concerns to the Planning Board.

Bryan Remillard stood and was recognized. He stated that the Planning Board should be obligated to get bids from other Engineering Firms for all services, not just Dubois & King; in his opinion, asking them to perform the driveway inspections was just another carrot being offered to Dubois &

King.

Selectman Landau moved to add to Building Inspector Malley's job responsibilities the ability to work with the Planning Board on the inspection of driveways; to wit, to be the Planning Board designee; Vice-Chairman Cannon seconded the motion. The vote was three in favour with Selectmen Brown and Harris absent; so moved.

Mr. Sullivan was also informed that it was only necessary that the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Planning Board sign off on invoices; the entire board does not need to do so.

Mr. Sullivan departed the meeting at 7:25pm; Building Inspector Malley remained at the table.

Building Inspector Malley recently discovered that the insurance company had sent a Forensic PE to Stevens Hall to determine whether it had actually been struck by lightning. He was unaware of this situation and would like to be kept in the loop.

Bob Pepper stood and was recognized. He stated that the Board had been misled last week into re-opening Stevens Hall – the Building Inspector had been sidestepped. Chairman Hassam stated that Fire Chief Antoine had signed off on the re-opening.

Building Inspector Malley departed the table at 7:27pm.

2.2 Jean Methot – Energy Advisory Committee

Jean Methot appeared before the Board with Cynthia Robinson and Alana Wentworth of the Energy Advisory Committee (Bob Boynton (sp?) and Daniel Ramage of A+ Energy Services, Inc. are also members, although were not present at that time). The committee's goal is to cut energy usage in Chester. They have contacted the utility companies, asking for three years of data; the Fire Department owns Thermal Imagers, which will be helpful. They also plan to do an energy audit, and need a letter from the Board authorizing them to enter and inspect all Town buildings, which Ms. Robinson will draft. The Board will gladly sign the letter, but informed Mr. Methot that they have no authority over the School, and as such the committee will need to visit the school board to get the authorization to enter the School. Vice-Chairman Cannon would also like to see a payback analysis with all recommendations.

Ms. Robinson and Ms. Wentworth departed the meeting at 7:37pm; at this time, Mr. Ramage became present, and joined Mr. Methot at the table. He gave a brief synopsis of his experience in the energy business, and believes that he can expedite matters for the committee. Mr. Methot and Mr. Ramage departed the meeting table at 7:40pm.

2.3 Mike Oleson – Roadside Cleanup

Road Agent Oleson appeared before the Board to discuss the need for roadside cleanup from the ice storm in April, once the snow has melted. FEMA will pay 75% of incurred costs; the State will pay 12.5%. This leaves Chester with 12.5% of the cost. The State will handle any brush on Routes 102 and 121.

Road Agent Oleson estimates that the total cost of the job could easily be in the \$150k range. The winter maintenance fund may need to be tapped to cover the upfront costs.

After much discussion, it was decided that the Town would be responsible for removing dangerous hanging limbs and roadside/culvert brush only; residents will be responsible for removing and disposing of brush on their own property. To facilitate this, one suggestion was to have "Brush Days" at the Transfer Station, perhaps every other Saturday. The brush could be burned, or a chipper brought to the Transfer Station, so that residents can bring in and chip the brush from their property. The chippings, as organic material, could be disposed of on Town owned land, or perhaps offered to residents. Also, for residents who do not wish to take their brush to the Transfer Station, there might be other residents with appropriate equipment who would offer their clean-up services for a fee.

Road Agent Oleson will be out of town for a week; while he is gone, Andy Heim (sp?) will act in his stead.

Road Agent Oleson departed the meeting at 8:10pm.

2.4 Jean Packard with Scott Marsh and Joe Lessard of MRI

Ms. Packard has drafted a Warrant Article, asking for \$25k to be put aside for each of 3 years to fund the State-mandated property evaluation update in 2011. Another approach to updating is the cyclical re-evaluation method, where a quarter of the Town's ~2100 properties are re-evaluated each year for 4 years, at the cost of ~\$15k each year (~\$30 per property), and then updated after all evaluations are done; however, there is not enough time for this process to be completed at the present time, as all properties must be updated by 2011.

Selectman Landau asked why the Town needs to pay Visions ~\$35 per property to confirm that Ms. Packard's work was correct, and if MRI could perform the work. Mr. Lessard stated that staffing might be an issue, and suggested that the Town put out an RFP for the update work. Selectman Landau also asked if it was possible to do the updates without the second drive-by; Mr. Lessard stated that it was unadvisable. Unfunded mandate or not, it is not wise to buck the State.

The budget has a \$15k line item for cyclical re-evaluation; the Warrant Article is for \$25k for three years for the update. The new MRI contract begins July 1st. Mr. March and Mr. Lessard departed the meeting at 8:43; Ms. Packard remained.

Ms. Packard asked the Board to sign an intent to cut, which they did; she departed the meeting at 8:45pm.

2.5 Rich Antoine – Ambulance

Fire Chief Antoine appeared before the Board at the request of Finance Director Sherwood. The Ambulance Warrant Article has been changed to make it a 6-year lease, with the first payment pushed out a year. It cannot have an escape clause, and the capital fund wording must be changed.

The dollar amounts remain the same.

He also wanted to confirm that he himself did not "open Stevens Hall"; he merely gave a letter to the Board stating that the fire suppression system was acceptable.

Insofar as burning brush at the Transfer Station was concerned, the Fire Department sends a truck and fire fighter down to the transfer station on a volunteer basis to assist with the burning. The Fire Department also has handouts on burning permits and regulations; residents should call the Fire Station. They are always willing to help.

Fire Chief Antoine departed the meeting at 8:52pm.

2.6 *Angela Sherwood, Finance Director*

Finance Director Sherwood appeared before the Board to go over existing Warrant Articles. She will be adding the tax impact to each one.

1. Winter Maintenance fund. Road Agent Oleson, who had returned to the meeting, stated that if the Town plans to tap into the Winter Maintenance fund for roadside cleanup, a Warrant Article may need to be drafted to add to it, as the plowing line is already well over budget. Finance Director Sherwood stated that plowing was over by \$40k, salt over by \$5k, and sand over by \$1.5k. The Winter Maintenance fund currently holds \$170k. Nothing will be done tonight.
2. Generators for the Municipal Complex. This article was re-worded.
3. Boilers for the Municipal Complex. Selectman Landau wished it to be made clear that the Town was not replacing four boilers with four boilers; there will be fewer new ones, as they are now more efficient.
4. Wason Pond Dam. This Warrant Article should be adjusted down at Town Meeting. Vice-Chairman Cannon would like Dubois & King to rebid the job in June at no cost.
5. Two Full Time Police Officers. These two positions are also in the budget, as the grant timing is awkward. The grants will cover 3 years of salary at 100%; the Town must guarantee the 4th year. This wording will be on each Warrant Article. Vice-Chairman Cannon and Police Chief Burke will be making a presentation at Town Meeting.
6. Community Center Well. Vice-Chairman Cannon queried the need for a 2/3 vote; he thinks that it's only a simple majority needed. Selectman Landau was under the impression that it was similar to a bond issue, which needs 2/3 vote; they will ask Soule Leslie Kidder.
7. Planning Board - Recreation Capital Reserve Fund. They would like \$1 put into this fund, and have the Board of Selectmen allow the designee to expend from the fund.
8. Planning Board - Road Improvement Capital Reserve Fund. They would also like \$1 put into this

fund. Selectman Landau believes that there might already be a fund in place; Finance Director Sherwood will investigate. Selectman Landau would like a line added to the Warrant Article, stating that the BOS should be consulted in all cases. He also would like \$10,000 to be placed into the fund, which will be taken from an Engineering Warrant Article.

Other issues:

- Vice-Chairman Cannon asked Finance Director Sherwood to draft a Warrant Article for the 5-year lease with the Post Office. It should specify that the Post Office is leasing the first floor of the Ruth Ray building. Bob Pepper suggested that the square footage be added. Finance Director Sherwood will check with Administrative Assistant Pat Martin.
- She will also draft a Warrant Article for \$1 each year for a 10 year period for the rental of Gary Welch's property, as long as the present occupant is in residence. Again, Administrative Assistant Martin should be consulted.
- She will leave the Management Letters for the Board to read and discuss next week. Selectman Landau has already read the one from Mason + Rich, and had some comments. He stated that their assertion that Chester needs a Town Administrator is not an audit finding, and should not be in there. He believes that Finance Director Sherwood and Administrative Assistant Martin handle the day-to-day operations well and the Town should not have to pay to establish a Town Administrator position
- She has created a mileage expense sheet, and would like the Board to implement a new policy on mileage. The Town should not be paying for multiple trips to the same location on the same day. Selectman Landau suggested, and Vice-Chairman Cannon agreed, that the Town might keep an old Town-owned vehicle available for errand running, which would avoid paying personal vehicle mileage altogether. In any case, the mileage policy must be posted, and Administrative Assistant Martin will be consulted.

Vice-Chairman Cannon moved to accept the mileage policy as written, and the form as the official form for reimbursement; Selectman Landau seconded the motion. The vote was three in favour with Selectmen Brown and Harris absent; so moved.

- She believes that the Town is about 20% behind in Real Estate tax collections. Town Clerk Barbara Gagnon was not in the office today, but she will talk to her tomorrow and update next week. This could result in a \$1.2M gap. Vice-Chairman Cannon asked what would happen if the Town ended up being short \$1M, and Selectman Landau stated that a special Town Meeting would need to be held, and taxes would go up; Finance Director Sherwood stated that the tax impact would be ~\$2.00.
- She attended the last New Hampshire Municipal Association meeting. There will be no revenue sharing (a loss of \$22-23k for the Town). Room & Meals Tax will not be touched, but the State is considering increasing it, and taking all of the increase for themselves. The same strategy is being discussed with motor vehicle fees. She has all the House bill numbers to watch. Vice-Chairman Cannon suggested having Gene Charron come in and talk to the Board.

- She has researched the vending machine issue, and it is not losing money.
- She passed out a copy of the Police Earned Time policy.

Finance Director Sherwood departed the meeting at 9:57pm.

III Meeting Business

3.1 Approval of Minutes

This subject was not discussed tonight.

3.2 Roundtable

Selectman Landau

- Nothing to report.

Chairman Hassam

- Nothing to report.

Vice-Chairman Cannon

- Nothing to report.

3.3 Public Comment

Leroy Scott stood and was recognized. He asked why Selectmen Brown and Harris were not in attendance. Chairman Hassam stated that Selectman Harris was working, and Selectman Brown had a personal commitment, to the best of his knowledge. Mr. Scott stated that he did not understand the absences, as it is a very important part of the year.

As no other members of the Public wished to speak, Public Comment was closed at 9:58pm.

3.4 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:58pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra H. Doda