



Town of Chester
Selectboard
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Charles F. Myette, Chairman, '25
Stephen O. Landau, '24

Steven M. Couture, Vice-Chairman, '24
Dana Theokas, '26

Richard S. Trask, '26

SELECTBOARD MEETING AGENDA

Date of Meeting: March 14, 2024 @ 6:00 PM – Meeting Room
Broadcast on Channel 6 and streamed on [Government \(cablecast.tv\)](https://www.governmentcablecast.tv) – click "Watch Now"

I. PRELIMINARIES:

- 1.1 6:00 PM Call the Meeting to Order
- 1.2 Roll Call
- 1.3 Pledge of Allegiance
- 1.4 Chairman's Additions or Deletions
- 1.5 Public Comment (10 minutes)

II. APPOINTMENTS

2.1

III. BUSINESS:

- 3.1 Budget Final Review
- 3.2 Warrant Review
- 3.3 Vacation Retention Personnel Policy

IV. CONSENT AGENDA:

- 4.1 Minutes February 15, 2024 and February 22, 2024

V. SELECTBOARD'S ITEMS:

- 5.1 Chairman's Announcements
- 5.2 Roundtable
- 5.3 TA Report
- 5.4 Action Items
- 5.5 Potential Non-Public Sessions

VI. ADJOURNMENT:

PLEASE NOTE: *To be added to the next agenda, please contact the Selectboard's office by phone, in-person, or by email by 12pm Thursday prior to the next meeting. Please include any applicable documentation at this time for the Board's review. Agenda items may be added or deleted without notice.*

**Town of Chester
Selectboard’s Meeting
Thursday, February 15, 2024
Municipal Complex
Draft Minutes**

I. Preliminaries

Call the Meeting to Order
Roll Call
Pledge of Allegiance
Chairman’s Additions or Deletions
Public Comment (10 minutes)
Solar Working Group
Budget Review
Warrant Article Review
Hiring Policy Review
Consent Agenda
Chairman’s Announcements
Roundtable
TA Report
Action Items
Potential Non-Public Sessions
Adjournment

1.1 Call to Order

Chairman Myette called the meeting of the Chester Selectboard to order at 6:00pm.

1.2 Roll Call

Selectboard Present:

Chuck Myette
Steve Couture
Stephen Landau
Dana Theokas
Dick Trask

Town Administrator Debra Doda

Members of the Public Present at various times:

Aaron Berube, Police Chief
Paul Cavanaugh, Maintenance Director
Patrick Connelly, Solar Working Group
Phil Gladu, Fire Chief
David LaVita
Stacy Manfrates, Transfer Station Foreman
Nancy Myette

James Piper, Supervisor of Roads (SOR)
Brent Richardson, Solar Working Group
Maria Veale, Solar Working Group

and other persons unknown to the Recording Secretary.

1.3 Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Myette led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.4 Chairman’s Additions or Deletions

Chairman Myette has one nonpublic on reputation.

1.5 Public Comment

Mr. Lavita, 235 Raymond Road, is against a solar farm in Chester. Mr. LaVita asked a series of questions: who it benefits, what price the Town is going to pay, is there a power purchase agreement, what happens at the end of contract, who owns the panels, maintenance, and information on the company. Mr. LaVita opined that solar panels are an eyesore, and dangerous to wildlife and ecosystems.

As no other Members of the Public wished to be heard, Public Comment was closed at 6:03pm.

II. Appointments

2.1 Solar Working Group

Ms. Veale thought the group would be updating the board on the Warrant Article proposal. The group gave the board updates on the financials and answers to questions that came from the last meeting.

Mr. Connelly stated the solar would be placed on about three acres of land. In the packet is a detailed listing of the savings to the Town on energy generated by the solar panels and the lease payments. The solar array will generate \$2.5M in revenue for the Town over the next 35 years. Ms. Veale mentioned there are two options at the end of the agreement: end the agreement and ReVision will decommission the panels, or the Town can take ownership of the panels at a fair value.

Mr. Richardson mentioned that as the agreement phases out, the panels will still produce 86% of the original output from the panels. They lose a half percent of efficiency a year.

Mr. Richardson asked for permission to address a few of the comments made by Mr. LaVita in public comment. A lot of the questions are answered in the document. Mr. Richardson stated that currently the panels are manufactured in South Korea and assembled in Georgia. The company that is producing the panels is looking to procure the panels in the United States.

Mr. Richardson stated the company the Town would be using is an energy company out of Brentwood, NH. Ms. Veale pointed out the first-year revenue is approximately \$30K and goes up from there with no upfront costs. The reason this parcel was chosen is the close proximity to three phase power.

Mr. Connelly stated the Solar Working Group is at the meeting this evening to recommend the Warrant Article be presented to the Town. The role of the group would be to get information out to the community and answer questions.

Vice Chairman Couture motioned that the Selectboard support the Solar Working Group’s recommendation and place it on the Warrant Articles for consideration and authorize the Solar Working Group to conduct outreach and education to the Town. Selectwoman Theokas seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – nay, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – abstained. With three in favor, the motion passed.

Selectwoman Theokas thanked the group for all their work.

III. New Business

3.1 Budget Review

3.1.1 Ambulance, Fire, Forest Fire, Emergency Management

Fire Chief Gladu presented the Fire Department budget with a 2.58% increase.

Chief Gladu mentioned the Lieutenant’s line increased now that there is a Lieutenant in the Department. Selectwoman Theokas wanted clarification on the line item and asked for more criteria on what it is given for. Chief Gladu advised this is a discretionary amount given to the lieutenant for going above and beyond. It is not a stipend.

Granite State increased their pricing for the phone lines. The line was increased based on the new rates.

Inspections increased as there are more materials needed for Fire Week. Selectman Trask asked if schools other than Chester Academy participated. Chief Gladu answered yes, they visit local daycares and other schools in Town along with the 4-6 events per day at Chester Academy. Selectwoman Theokas asked if the items were tangible. Chief Gladu passes out bags filled with items to the kids.

Chairman Myette pointed out that last year \$29K was spent from the on-call budget and the line was not decreased. Chairman Myette asked how much has been spent so far this year. Town Administrator Doda stated \$14K has been spent. Chairman Myette feels that line is heavy. Chief Gladu does not feel that line is heavy, everything is based off how many calls come in, hours spent on a call, etc. Vice Chairman Couture suggested a decrease of \$15K unless Chief Gladu brings back justification to the board.

Chief Gladu mentioned the salary line for the Office Manager was reduced from what was submitted. Town Administrator explained the salary increase from last year is one step and the COLA increase approved by the Board. She was promoted to Office Manager/ EMT within the last three years and is not eligible for the longevity increase. Chief Gladu advised it was not a promotion; she was taking on additional responsibilities and also attended 160 hours of education for the position. Chairman Myette asked if it was paid training and if it was approved in advance. Chief Gladu pointed out most of the training was done in addition to her work schedule and not paid. Chairman Myette stated the salary line on the budget sheet is according to the policy and needs to be consistent in all the Departments in Town.

Selectwoman Theokas asked for clarification on what maintenance vs repairs are in the budget. Chief Gladu stated maintenance is oil changes, and repairs are when something breaks.

Chief Gladu mentioned the oil line decreased; currently there is 65% left in the budget. Chairman Myette felt this was an appropriate reduction.

Chief Gladu presented the Ambulance budget with a 3% increase. This is a contract with Derry.

Chief Gladu presented the Forest Fire Budget with a 0% increase. Town Administrator Doda pointed out there has been zero expenditures from the current budget. Chief Gladu just turned in an invoice for \$800.00.

Chairman Myette asked if the fireworks should be under the Fire Department. Chief Gladu stated he only applies for the permit and signs when it comes in.

Chief Gladu presented the Emergency Management budget with a 5.99% decrease. There is one electronic sign that needs to be fixed.

3.1.2 Government Buildings

Maintenance Director Cavanaugh presented the General Buildings budget with a 15.25% increase. It is a 2.8% increase without salaries. The salary increase for part-timers is due to hiring a new part time employee working 30 hours per week. The water line services all the Town buildings. There was discussion on whether the water bubblers should be discontinued. Water in the buildings is tested and usually comes back safe to drink.

The heating line increased due to more maintenance needed on the systems. The average boiler is 25-30 years old. The replacement of the boilers is on the CIP in future years.

The Dam Maintenance line increase is due to increased requirements by the state for the spillways, and general cleanup by a vendor with specialized equipment.

3.1.3 Highway Department

SOR Piper presented the Highway budget with a 9.86% increase. SOR Piper will be coming to the board at some point to ask for an increase for the contracted plow drivers. Rates have yet to be determined. Selectman Trask mentioned the transition plan. If more work is done in house vs contracted plow drivers, the increase would be significantly higher. Vice Chairman Couture suggested flat lining the salt line with the understanding there is the \$105K for Winter Road Maintenance. Selectman Landau asked how many contractors the Town has for plowing. SOR Piper stated there are five contractors and some have more than one vehicle. Selectman Landau asked if we had our own trucks what would we do with them in the summer. Chairman Myette pointed out the best deal for the Town is to have contracts with plow drivers.

SOR Piper explained there are many dead/dying trees that need to be dealt with around Town. He is asking for the roadside cleanup line to be brought back to what it was before the Board cut it last year. Selectman Trask mentioned with the tree trimming a bucket truck and sometimes a crane are needed for the tree removal. There are multiple emails every week about unsafe trees in the right of way.

Chairman Myette asked about projects for next year. Town Administrator Doda stated the Warrant Article review is after budgets.

3.1.4 Police Department & Animal Control

Chief Berube mentioned Sgt. DiPerri will be joining the Chief tonight to gain some experience this evening.

Chief Berube presented the Police Department budget with a 7.30% increase. As most know, Chief Berube is frugal with his budget. He tries not to overspend but he needs to get the job done. There is a hiring crisis in all aspects of public safety. It is cheaper to retain than to train. Chief Berube pointed out 99% of his budget is salary based.

Chief Berube pointed out the Police Department works 24/7 and we need to pay appropriately and let them know we appreciate them. Chief Berube explained the new shift differential pay scale and how it works. The scale was worked on with collaboration from the patrol staff.

Chief Berube explained the holiday coverage was calculated with the increased salary and coverage on holidays. In the past earned time was used but that was taken away. There is 22% left in the budget for this year. There are still a couple more holidays.

There is an increase in the phone bill and the increase is due to an additional MDT in use.

Chief Berube mentioned he put in a new line for post-secondary education. The board has discussed this in the past. It will be for hourly employees only. This stipend would be given out twice a year. It is to let the employees know we appreciate what they are doing and entice others to get an education. Chief Berube had it broken down by post-secondary degrees. Vice Chairman Couture asked if it was a yearly stipend. Chief Berube replied yes. Selectwoman Theokas asked how many employees would be getting the stipend in the department. Chief Berube has five employees that would be eligible.

Chairman Myette asked if it would be a conflict with the pay matrix. The Town pays more for having a degree. Chief Berube stated an education degree is not built into the matrix. Selectman Landau is in favor, but would like the degree to be relevant to their position. This line item will not go forward on this year’s budget. A policy will be developed, and it will be Town-wide, not just for one Department. Vice Chairman Couture was asked to make the Budget Committee aware that this is being discussed for future budgets.

Chief Berube mentioned some of his lines have zero spent so far because he purchases everything when they have sales closer to the end of the fiscal year.

Chief Berube presented the Animal Control budget. The ACO bi-weekly amount is going up \$25.00 or 4%. Selectwoman Theokas asked how many hours this covers. Chief Berube explained it could be anywhere from 2-30 hours. ACO Wright takes care of all the calls involving horses, cats, dogs, and ferrets. Having ACO Wright in Town saves the Town kennel fees and time spent traveling to and from Deerfield Vet.

The Park Ranger line increased due to the salary increase. It’s 24 hours for 28 weeks, but Chief Berube mentioned Mr. Wright is active all year round.

Vice Chairman Couture thanked Chief Berube for all his work and providing supporting documents for the budget.

3.1.5 Zoning Board of Adjustments (moved to later in the meeting)

3.1.6 Transfer Station & Landfill

TS Foreman Manfrates presented the Transfer Station budget with a 17.49% increase. She was asked for justification on any line with more than a 3% increase.

Chairman Myette asked why the salaries line was overspent: are there more people working, or if it was higher rates. Chairman Myette would like clarification on the salary line.

Chairman Myette asked what the increase is on site work. Ms. Manfrates wants to have the mold power washed on the barn doors and siding. She has reached out to a local company and received a quote. Selectwoman Theokas asked if this would be needed every year. Ms. Manfrates feels it will be an expenditure every few years. Selectman Landau suggested purchasing a power washer. Vice Chairman Couture suggested the line be cut to \$1000.00 and purchase a power washer.

Selectman Trask asked the reason for the increase in the supplies and equipment line. Ms. Manfrates mentioned the increase is due to the pump repairs, wood wall installation, skid steer repairs, tires for the golf cart, yearly service for the skid steer, cleaning supplies, safety equipment, office supplies and uniforms. Selectman Trask suggested \$150.00 for sitework and \$4800.00 for supplies and equipment.

Household Hazardous waste days are costing the Town roughly \$9K for both spring and summer.

Ms. Manfrates mentioned she would like to paint the buildings this year. This would be done every few years, and Ms. Manfrates can do the work.

Chairman Myette pointed out the Diesel line has no expenditures for the year. Ms. Manfrates stated the diesel tank is 300 gallons and it is shared between Maintenance and Transfer Station. The tank is filled up once per year. As of December, 135 gallons have been used, and the skid steer has been out of service. The line will be dropped to \$800.00.

Ms. Manfrates explained the mileage line is for use of her personal vehicle to run and grab supplies for the Transfer Station.

Ms. Manfrates mentioned the signs at the Transfer Station are out of date and/or broken, and need replacing.

With the changes to the budget, it is now 16.82% or 12% without salaries. Selectman Landau pointed out that some residents might question why the Town spends so much on trash when there are more and more dumpsters around Town.

3.1.5 Zoning Board of Adjustments (moved from earlier in the meeting)

Town Administrator Doda presented the Zoning budget with a 28% increase.

The ZBA Admin has been asked to add more hours to her schedule, which accounts for the increase in the salary line. They must post in the newspaper for their public hearings and the Union Leader is more expensive. They tried Derry News but some of the pertinent information was being left out of the ads. The office supply line was cut last year, and they do have expenses for the line.

Office Equipment is for a color printer. Selectman Landau asked when the contract is up for the large printer - should that printer be changed to color? The Board decided to flatline the office equipment line.

3.2 Warrant Review

Selectman Landau inquired if a Warrant Article could be created and funded with \$10K to \$15K for vacation carryover for the employees. This would be limited per employee to either 80 hours or 120 hours. Chairman Myette mentioned the carryover the past few years for vacation were by exception only. The actual policy is to use it or lose it. This will be moved to a separate agenda item at a future meeting.

Chairman Myette asked SOR Piper about the plans for roads in the next budget. SOR Piper went through the list on Table 10. Some items were already pushed out. SOR Piper mentioned the permits for Cole Road are almost finished.

They discussed the list on the Warrant Article. Items moved from the list include Road & Gun Club Road, Twin Fawn Run, and Cole Road Culvert. Selectman Landau asked that Dump Road not be done until the other projects are completed.

Charman Myette asked for a follow up on the grant submitted for Halls Village Road. Vice Chairman Myette mentioned there are annual grants from FEMA. Projects need to be under \$1M and can qualify on an annual basis.

Chief Gladu updated the Board on the pumper. In early March, Chief Gladu has asked a few of the members to check one out at another station for reference. Selectman Landau asked if he could go as well. Chairman Myette asked for updated numbers for the Warrant based on what will be needed for the purchase and by when.

3.3 Hiring Policy Review

The Board had no edits for the policy and thanked Ms. Jalbert for creating the policy.

Vice Chairman Couture motioned approve the Hiring Policy as written. Selectman Trask seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette - aye, Trask - aye, Theokas - aye, Couture - aye, Landau - aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

IV. Consent Agenda

None

V. Selectmen’s Business

5.1 Chairman’s Announcements

Chairman Myette announced the following meetings:

348
349 Monday February 19, 2024 Winter Fest Working Group Meeting at 6:00pm (Rangeway)
350 Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee Meeting at 7:00pm
351 (Rangeway)
352 Budget Committee Meeting at 7:00pm (Meeting Room)
353
354 Tuesday February 20, 2024 ZBA Meeting at 7:00pm
355
356 Wednesday February 21, 2024 Planning Board Meeting at 7:00pm
357
358 Thursday February 22, 2024 Selectboard Meeting at 6:00pm
359
360 Chairman Myette announced the following events:
361
362 Monday February 19, 2024 Town Offices closed for Presidents’ Day.
363
364 Saturday February 24, 2024 Winter Fest 12pm-5pm.
365
366 Thursday February 29th Register to Vote by this date in order to participate and vote
367 at the School District Meeting
368
369 Wednesday March 6th, 2024 School District Meeting at 6:00pm in the Chester Academy
370 Cafeteria.
371 *5.2 Roundtable*
372
373 Selectman Landau mentioned the Boy Scouts would like to use the MPR and the outside grounds to
374 work with the Cub Scouts. They will be using a contained archery/ BB unit. Town Administrator Doda
375 will check with Primex if it is allowable on Town property; Selectman Landau noted that the Boy
376 Scouts carry their own insurance as well.
377
378 Selectwoman Theokas stated the Town Fair Committee met and they have some great ideas to build
379 on past successes. Reach out to Recreation Director Reishus for more information on the Town Fair.
380 Selectwoman Theokas mentioned more volunteers are needed if anyone is interested.
381
382 Selectman Trask congratulated the girls’ basketball team on winning the Tri County Championship.
383 This is their first time in Division 3, and they won. Thank you to the Police Department for the escort
384 from the Town line to Chester Academy.
385
386 Vice Chairman Couture
387 *Nothing to report.*
388
389 Chairman Myette has two nonpublic on reputation. Vice Chairman Couture has one on personnel.
390
391 *5.3 Town Administrator’s Report*
392 *Nothing to report.*
393
394 *5.4 Action Items*
395 *None*
396
397 *5.5 Non-Public Session(s)*

Chairman Myette announced non-public sessions on reputation and employment.

Selectman Landau motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to 91-A:3(II) (b) Reputation. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

The meeting was closed to the public at 9:23PM. Fire Chief Gladu remained in the Meeting Room.

Fire Chief Gladu departed the Meeting Room at 9:56 PM.

Selectman Landau motioned to come out of non-public session Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

The meeting was reopened to the public at 10:38 PM.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the first non-public session, on Public Employees. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the second non-public session, on Public Employees. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the third non-public session, on Reputation. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the fourth non-public session, on Reputation. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the fifth non-public session, on Public Employees. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the sixth non-public session, on Public Employees. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the seventh non-public session, on Employment. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the eight non-public session, on Reputation. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the ninth non-public session, on Reputation. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the tenth non-public session, on Property. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

VI. Adjournment

Selectman Landau moved to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janis A. Jalbert
Recording Secretary

**Town of Chester
Selectboard’s Meeting
Thursday, February 22, 2024
Municipal Complex
Draft Minutes**

I. Preliminaries

Call the Meeting to Order
Roll Call
Pledge of Allegiance
Chairman’s Additions or Deletions
Public Comment (10 minutes)
CIP Table 10 Review
Great Hill Cemetery
Budget Review
Warrant Article Review
Consent Agenda
Chairman’s Announcements
Roundtable
TA Report
Action Items
Potential Non-Public Sessions
Adjournment

1.1 Call to Order

Chairman Myette called the meeting of the Chester Selectboard to order at 6:00pm.

1.2 Roll Call

Selectboard Present:

Chuck Myette
Steve Couture
Stephen Landau
Dana Theokas
Dick Trask

Town Administrator Debra Doda

Members of the Public Present at various times:

Chris Carolan, Great Hill Cemetery Trustee
John Colman, Great Hill Cemetery Trustee
Kathy Dircks, Seniors
Mike Ebbett, Block5
Andrew Hadik, Town Planner
Mark Keddy, Great Hill Cemetery Trustee
Kandy Knowlton, Library

Rhonda Lamphere, Treasurer
David LaVita, Seniors
Nancy Myette
James Piper, Supervisor of Roads (SOR)
Darrell Quinn, Great Hill Cemetery Trustee
Saul Shriber
Beth Swanson, Library Trustee

and other persons unknown to the Recording Secretary.

1.3 Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Myette led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.4 Chairman’s Additions or Deletions

Chairman Myette deleted the Village Cemetery Budget Review and added the release of impact fees for Fire Department PPE.

1.5 Public Comment

As no other Members of the Public wished to be heard, Public Comment was closed at 6:03pm.

II. Appointments

2.1 CIP Table 10 Review

Town Planner Hadik reviewed Table 10 of the CIP. All the documents can be viewed on the Planning Board webpage. It is the Selectboard’s responsibility to look at the projects timeline and bring forward the items they wish to fund in the upcoming fiscal year.

Town Planner Hadik pointed out the impact fees have a deadline to utilize them. He suggested using some of the impact fees for general buildings projects and PPE for both Fire and Police.

The Planning Board will be holding its public hearing to adopt the CIP on March 13th, 2024. Town Planner Hadik has worked with SOR Piper on the roadwork and has brought the number down on Table 10.

Town Planner Hadik mentioned the Wason Pond Causeway bridge repairs are being funded by the Conservation Commission. There is a Warrant Article for funding the repairs on the red listed bridges. Also, the 80/20 grant from the State for one of the red listed bridges is slated for 2029. Town Planner Hadik suggested having the funding available in 2028.

Chairman Myette thanked Town Planner Hadik for all his hard work on Table 10.

2.2 Great Hill Cemetery

Mr. Colman mentioned there are more and more green burials happening in the state. A green burial is when there is no service, they wrap the person in a rug and bury the person with no markers or

coffin and plant a tree over the body. Chairman Myette asked if the Town is required to have green burials in the cemeteries and if they are allowed on personal property.

Selectwoman Theokas asked why Great Hill Cemetery is not an option for green burials.

Mr. Colman asked if he could stockpile dirt from the Highway Department for future endeavors at the cemetery. Chairman Myette is ok if there is room.

The ledge study was discussed. Chairman Myette inquired if there were available funds for test pits and borings. Mr. Colman feels they will have the funds available for this.

Mr. Colman mentioned the paving that has been done in the last couple of years is holding up very well. Mr. Colman mentioned they would like to do more in the spring. They were given an estimate for the next section but also an estimate if they would like the entire job finished. The Trustees understand the policy is to go out for bid on anything over \$5K but this vendor has been doing the work and also helps the cemetery with burials.

Selectman Landau motioned to approve the whole project if they have the funds. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion.

There is a difference in amounts between the Trustees and Town Administrator Doda’s report. Vice Chairman Couture suggested waiting for the issue with funding to be resolved. Selectwoman Theokas feels the bidding process needs to be followed.

With all the confusion on the funding, the motion was withdrawn.

III. New Business

3.1 Budget Review

3.1.3 Great Hill Cemetery (moved from later in the meeting)

There is a mistake with the amount requested by the Great Hill Cemetery Trustees. The actual amount requested is \$3,700.00 not \$8,700.00. The funds are used for grub control and insurance.

3.1.5 Patriotic (moved from later in the meeting)

Mr. Quinn presented the Patriotic budget. The funds are used for the upkeep of five flagpoles in Town and flags. Mr. Quinn has a few spare flags and does not foresee purchasing flags in the next budget.

II. Appointments

2.3 Fire Department Impact Fee Release

Selectman Trask motioned to approve the release of \$6,500.00 of Fire Department Impact Fees for portable radio replacement batteries. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

III. New Business

150
151 *3.2 Budget Review*
152

153 *3.1.1 Highway Redux*
154

155 SOR Piper is requesting an increase to the salary line for the next fiscal year. SOR Piper has been
156 interviewing and has lost a few qualified candidates. This candidate has the experience needed for
157 the position and SOR Piper would like to offer him more than the starting rate.
158

159 ***Vice Chairman Couture motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to 91-A:3(II) (b)***
160 ***employment. Selectman Trask seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye,***
161 ***Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.***
162

163 The meeting was closed to the public at 7:35PM. SOR Piper remained in the Meeting Room.
164

165 ***Vice Chairman Couture motioned to come out of non-public session; Selectman Trask seconded***
166 ***the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye,***
167 ***Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.***
168

169 The meeting was reopened to the public at 7:47 PM.
170

171 *3.1.2 IT*
172

173 Mr. Ebbett mentioned there has been no service increase. The Board showed Mr. Ebbett what they
174 have included in the Block5 portion of the budget. The Blue Beam software is not an item provided
175 by Block5. Vice Chairman Couture would like a breakdown of the contract, what they are providing,
176 the percentage of increase on services, and the recommended capital expense.
177

178 Chairman Myette inquired if the Town would be spending the \$10,250.00 on replacement
179 workstations. Selectman Trask suggested using the CIP for the workstation replacements. Ebbett
180 mentioned the recommended items for replacement such as firewalls are not part of the services.
181 Selectman Trask suggested some of the items should be moved to the CIP. Selectwoman Theokas
182 suggested having Mr. Ebbett work with Town Planner Hadik to get some of the recommended
183 upgrades on the CIP and not in the budget. Selectman Trask suggested the budget drop to \$71K and
184 the rest of the items can go on the CIP.
185

186 Selectwoman Theokas asked why we are using LogMeIn vs a VPN. Mr. Ebbett explained the difference
187 and advised they are not apples to apples.
188

189 *3.1.3 Great Hill Cemetery (moved to earlier in the meeting)*
190

191 *3.1.4 Library*
192

193 Ms. Knowlton presented the Library budget with a 3.91% increase. The increases are due to inflation
194 for phone lines, post office box, museum passes, materials, and programs. Also the employees will be
195 receiving a 4% increase in their wages. Selectwoman Theokas asked how many hours the library is
196 open. Ms. Knowlton stated it is open 38 hours.
197

198 The Board thanked Ms. Knowlton.
199

200 *3.1.5 Patriotic (moved to earlier in the meeting)*

201
202 *3.1.6 Senior Citizens*

203
204 Mr. LaVita, the new president for the Seniors, joined Ms. Dircks to present the budget.

205
206 Ms. Dircks mentioned the money from the Town helps with senior lunches, trips, and Tuesday
207 morning coffee hour. Chairman Myette pointed out the coffee hour was moved to the MPR because
208 the group outgrew the community center. Ms. Dircks stated there are 135 members.

209
210 Selectwoman Theokas mentioned part of the Recreation impact fees will be used for chairs with arms
211 for the MPR.

212
213 *3.1.7 Treasurer*

214
215 Ms. Lamphere presented the Treasurer’s budget. The stipend has increased with the increase in
216 money being taken in. Ms. Lamphere was unaware of the decrease in office supplies. The \$200.00 in
217 that line is used for ink and paper. The Board increased the supplies line from \$0 to \$200.00. Ms.
218 Lamphere purchased a currency counter and folding table with this year’s supply line.

219
220 Ms. Lamphere mentioned the interest rates for last year were higher than planned and the accounts
221 have fared well.

222
223 ~~*3.1.8 Village Cemetery*~~

224
225 *3.1.9 Street Lighting*

226
227 Town Administrator Doda presented the Street Lighting budget. The budget is based on the actual
228 amount. Infinity Lighting might be able to help with the street lighting. Charman Myette asked where
229 the funding would come from for LED lights with the budget flatlined.

230
231 *3.3 Warrant Review*

232
233 Town Administrator Doda pointed out the Master Plan Warrant Article has been dropped to \$7K
234 based on the recommendation from Town Planner Hadik. Also, the Selectboard has suggested that
235 PPE for the Fire Department and Police Department can be taken out of the Warrant and purchased
236 using impact fees.

237
238 There is no update on the fire truck, so that Warrant Article is still pending.

239
240 Selectman Landau mentioned a possible special Warrant Article for an expendable trust fund to be
241 called the *Vested Benefit Expendable Trust Fund*. This would be used for a one-time payment for
242 unused vacation hours to employees who are terminating their employment with the Town. The
243 Selectboard would like to change the allowed carryover for vacation to a max of 80 hours, not the
244 suggested 120 hours.

245
246 Vice Chairman Couture asked why the need for \$30K. Selectman Landau explained the amount is
247 based on who is employed currently, their salary, and amount of vacation weeks available. Vice
248 Chairman Couture asked for justification to be provided.

Selectman Landau reminded the Board this would be a policy change and it will need to be posted for a certain length of time. Vice Chairman Couture asked for the Policy and warrant be drafted. Town Administrator Doda will draft the requested documents.

IV. Consent Agenda

4.1 Veterans Credits and abatement

4.1 Intent to Cut

Selectman Trask motioned to approve the consent agenda without the abatement. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – nay, Couture – aye, Landau – abstain. With three in favor, the motion passed.

The abatement will be discussed during nonpublic.

V. Selectmen’s Business

5.1 Chairman’s Announcements

Chairman Myette announced the following meetings:

Wednesday February 28, 2024 Planning Board Meeting at 7:00pm

Thursday February 29, 2024 Selectboard Meeting at 6:00pm

Chairman Myette announced the following events:

Saturday February 24, 2024 Winter Fest 12pm-5pm.

Register to Vote by February 29th in order to participate and vote on the school budget and school Warrant Articles at the School District Meeting. Visit the Town Clerks office now until February 29th or The Supervisors of the Checklist are hosting a Voter Registration Session: Thursday, February 29th in room 6 at the Town Hall from 10:00 am to 10:30.

Wednesday March 6th, 2024 School District Meeting at 6:00pm in the Chester Academy Cafeteria.

Saturday, April 13th, 2024 The Town Clerk’s Office in conjunction with Ark Animal Homecare will be hosting a Rabies Clinic from 9:00-12noon at Town Hall. \$20.00 for 1 year rabies vaccine and \$25.00 for microchip. Please contact Ark Animal Homecare (603-860-9855) for an appointment and to pay in advance. Town Clerk’s Office will be open during the clinic to process dog licenses.

5.2 Roundtable

Selectman Landau mentioned March 7th is the day the Alamo fell.

Selectwoman Theokas mentioned the Recreation Department would be hosting fun activities on Wednesday February 28th. Watch the website and Facebook for details.

Selectman Trask
Nothing to report.

Vice Chairman Couture thanked Recreation Department, Coach Trask, and Coach Ricardi for the girl’s 7th and 8th grade level recreation basketball team for an undefeated season. The coaches developed that age class well and their efforts led to not only the recreation championship but also contributed to the middle school basketball championship.

Chairman Myette has two nonpublic on reputation and finance.

5.3 Town Administrator’s Report
Nothing to report.

5.4 Action Items

Town Administrator Doda mentioned Ms. Manfrates, Transfer Station Foreman, applied and was awarded a grant to help with the cost to remove the contaminated oil from the Transfer Station.

Selectman Landau motioned to accept the \$2500.00 grant for the removal of the contaminated oil at the Transfer Station. Selectman Trask seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

5.5 Non-Public Session(s)

Chairman Myette announced non-public sessions on reputation, finance, and employment.

Chairman Myette reminded the Board that what is talked about in nonpublic stays in nonpublic. Selectman Landau stated, “Board members are required by law (RSA 42:1-a) to maintain the confidentiality of matters discussed in non-public session if the minutes are sealed or if the information is otherwise confidential, and disclosure of such information constitutes a violation of their oath of office, for which they are subject to removal.”

Selectman Trask motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to 91-A:3(II) (a) Public Employees, (b) Employment, and (c) Reputation. Selectman Landau seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

The meeting was closed to the public at 8:36PM. Fire Chief Gladu remained in the Meeting Room.

Fire Chief Gladu departed the Meeting Room at 9:06 PM.

Selectman Landau motioned to come out of non-public session. Selectman Trask seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

The meeting was reopened to the public at 9:18 PM.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the first non-public session, on Employment. Selectman Trask seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the second non-public session, on Public Employees. Selectman Trask seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the third non-public session, on Public Employees. Selectman Trask seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the fourth non-public session, on Reputation. Selectman Trask seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the fifth non-public session, on Reputation. Selectman Trask seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

VI. Adjournment

Selectman Landau moved to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask – aye, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janis A. Jalbert
Recording Secretary

Town Administrator's Report
February 28th – March 11th, 2024

1. Administration: I was out March 4th – 8th, 2023 - no other plans now until after Town Meeting.
2. Budgets: Joanne has made the changes requested after last week's meeting and as of today the budget increase has been reduced from its original 7.66% (\$439,150) to 7.16% (\$410,341). Pay and Benefits is a 7.72% increase while "everything else" is a 6.04% increase. I know that you wanted to re-look at the Village Cemeteries budget, and the EEs are currently discussing other ways to either shift funding from the Operating Budget to CRFs or ETFs, or trim lines that aren't being spent fully. The further we get into the year, the more accurate our spending projections become, of course.
3. Electricity: Still waiting for an update from Affinity LEDs (the company that is auditing Town-owned buildings for electricity savings).
4. Employee Items: Employees had some questions on the Vacation Retention Personnel Policy change which we should address this week.
5. IT: Thanks again to Janis who did an incredible amount of research to reduce the Block 5 portion of the IT budget from its original \$85,288 to \$76,695 – a savings of almost \$8,600.
6. PACT: Thanks for signing the new Comcast agreement – we await countersignatures from Comcast.
7. Recreation: The Busche Academy basketball coaches and students held an event in the MPR on the morning of February 28th; visitors watched the Busche students play basketball, and then ran some drills with them. It was well attended and residents responded enthusiastically.
8. Warrant: I've drafted a WA, as requested by Chief, to utilize funds from the PD Special Detail Fund for detail-related vehicle maintenance/fuel. Although I absolutely approve of the concept, I have some concerns with how it will work, accounting-wise, which we should discuss this week.