

**Town of Chester
Selectboard’s Meeting
Thursday, June 1, 2023
Municipal Complex
Approved Minutes**

I. Preliminaries

Call the Meeting to Order

Roll Call

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman’s Additions or Deletions

Public Comment (10 minutes)

Highway Summer Plans

Chester Baseball and Softball Association (CBSA)

Appointment to Conservation Commission: M. Cejtin

Conservation Easement – Pomp Road

Review and Approval of Revaluation RFP

Town Dump Road

Discussion of FY24-25 Budget Process

Requested Encumbrances

U.S. Department of Agriculture Grants

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

Dana Theokas

Dick Trask

Stephen Landau

Debra Doda, Town Administrator

Members of the Public Present at various times:

Mikael Cejtin

Victor Chouinard, Conservation Commission

Nancy Myette
James Piper, Supervisor of Roads
Jonathan Remillard
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 2.2 Chester Baseball and Softball Association (CBSA).

1.5 Public Comment

Chairman Myette opened the meeting to public comment at 6:02pm.

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

II. Appointments

2.1 Highway Summer Plans (moved to later in the meeting)

2.2 Chester Baseball and Softball Association (CBSA)

This was deleted from this meeting and will be held at a future meeting.

2.3 Appointment to Conservation Commission: M. Cejtin

Mr. Chouinard presented Mr. Cejtin for the alternate position on the Conservation Commission. He has attended the required meetings and is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Mr. Cejtin has a passion for conservation and would like to offer his expertise to the commission.

Vice Chairman Couture motioned to appoint Mikael Cejtin as an alternate member of the Conservation Commission (term to expire May 31st, 2026). Selectwoman Theokas 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.

2.4 Conservation Easement – Pomp Road

Mr. Chouinard presented the conservation easement for lot 2-28-1. This was approved at the Town Meeting on March 16, 2023, and needs to be signed by the Selectboard and recorded with the Registry of Deeds. Chairman Myette mentioned this parcel has historic value.

Vice Chairman questioned if the easement was reviewed with Town Counsel and the Conservation Commission. Mr. Chouinard stated it has been reviewed by the commission but not by Town Counsel.

Vice Chairman Couture motioned to accept the easement contingent on Town Counsel review and approval. 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.

3.5 U.S. Department of Agriculture Grants (moved from New Business later in the meeting)

Selectman Landau attended the Northeast Resource Recovery Association meeting and had discussions with Mr. Eric Law, Community Program Director (NH & VT) at USDA Rural Development, about loans and grants to communities. The USDA gives loans/grants to communities for various items that Chester could benefit from such as site work, balers, loaders, glass crushers and more. Chairman Myette thought this would line up perfectly with the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and suggested to schedule a meeting with Mr. Law.

Selectman Landau mentioned there are Congressional Directed grants and others that Chester might be eligible for. Vice Chairman Couture knows federal grants and can assist with the process.

2.1 Highway Summer Plans (moved from earlier in the meeting)

Mr. Piper mentioned the sinkhole on Wells Village Road has been repaired with the help of Mr. Oleson. The road was closed this past Saturday after Mr. Piper received a call from the Police Department. This area has not been a problem in the past.

Mr. Piper has rented a wheeled excavator for July and a boom mower from mid-August to mid-September. Mr. Piper also mentioned the culvert on Hale True Road is having issues and may need to be replaced prior to winter. This will need to come out of the budget.

The new truck is at Fairfield’s and should be going into the shop in the next couple of weeks. There still is no final cost on the truck. The Loader should be arriving in July and Mr. Piper stated he has purchased additional attachments. The York Rake, although old, works well. This can be used on the parking areas at Wason Pond and the dirt area near the school.

Mr. King (not present) started this week and is working out great.

Mr. Piper updated the Board on the Fremont Road Bridge. He submitted a proposal for the repairs and explained why the amount is so high. Vice Chairman Couture requested this go out to bid. Chairman Myette asked Mr. Piper to work with Town Administrator Doda on the funding for the project. Fremont Road Bridge is on the CIP but should be adjusted to reflect the actual cost. Mr. Piper mentioned this repair will keep the bridge off the list of red listed bridges.

III. New Business

3.1. Review and Approval of Revaluation Request for Proposal (RFP) (moved to later in the meeting)

3.2 Town Dump Road

Town Administrator Doda stated the Town received a petition from a resident per RSA 231:8. The resident feels there is an occasion to convert a portion of Dump Road, which is Class VI, to a Class V Road. After a public hearing the Selectboard can decide if the occasion exists. If an occasion exists, this will not need to go to Town Meeting to lay out the road as a Class V Road. An example of an occasion would be public safety.

Mr. Remillard has property that abuts Town Dump Road and has been working with the Town doing maintenance during the winter months. There have been occasions of bad ruts which create an issue. With more trucks and residents utilizing the road there might be a safety issue where someone might not be able to get in or out. Mr. Piper advised this has been an issue for many years. Mr. Remillard mentioned working with the previous road agent when issues arise.

Chairman Myette stated the Town would be obligated to make the road safe and bring it up to Class V Road standards. Town funds are not allowed to be used on the Class VI portion of Dump Road per RSA for improvements. Due to the fact that the Town has a building it needs to do some upkeep for access. The Selectboard would need to know the cost and where the funding would come from if upgraded to Class V Road.

Mr. Piper mentioned the upgrade would be ~1100’ feet from the Transfer Station to the gate at the salt shed. Selectman Trask asked for the cost estimate for that section. Mr. Remillard explained the proposal is for the Town to cover the material and Mr. Remillard would cover the machinery and labor. Chairman Myette has concerns with a partnership between the Town and the Remillards to upgrade the road. Selectman Landau feels upgrading the road too much would open the way for more development and increased land value. Vice Chairman Couture reminded everyone that the area is zoned commercial and not residential. Selectman Trask mentioned the next step in this process is getting a full package for the project and presenting it at a public hearing.

Selectman Trask motioned to have the full package for the improvements on Dump Road and schedule a public meeting. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion.

Chairman Myette is concerned the public hearing will be held with uncertainty of funding for the project. Town Administrator Doda mentioned the first step is for the Selectboard to decide if they want to accept the petition.

Selectman Trask amended the motion to accept the petition, the full package for improvements to the road, and to hold a public hearing. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken - Myette – aye, Trask– aye, Theokas –abstained, Couture –aye, Landau – abstained. With three in favor, the motion passed with Theokas and Landau abstaining.

Selectman Landau would like more time to review the documents.

3.1. Review and Approval of Revaluation Request for Proposal (RFP) (moved from earlier in the meeting)

Vice Chairman Couture mentioned this has already been reviewed and approved.

Vice Chairman Couture motioned to approve the RFP as presented. Selectwoman Theokas seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken - Myette – aye, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – nay. With four in favor, the motion passed.

3.2 Town Dump Road (moved to earlier in the meeting)

3.3 Discussion of FY24-25 Budget Process

Town Administrator Doda drafted the Budget and Financial Planning process with input from Vice Chairman Couture. The Selectboard will need to identify what they are looking for in an increase in

the budget. Town Administrator Doda will draft a template for the Departments Heads to utilize for their budgets and a training session will be offered.

Selectman Landau asked if the Department Heads would be meeting with the Selectboard or the Budget Committee. Vice Chairman Couture feels the current process is inefficient and the Department Heads should be meeting with the Budget Committee and the Selectboard simultaneously.

Chairman Myette agrees the process needs to change. The Budget Committee should give the Selectboard a percentage increase for the budget at the beginning of budget season and not wait for the last minute. Selectwoman Theokas believes having justification for increases is very helpful in the process. Selectman Trask asked when the percentage would be set. The Board agreed it should be set when the tax rate is set.

Chairman Myette suggested each department have a one- or two-page departmental plan turned in with the budgets. This should include information such as equipment needed, new hires needed, and promotions.

Chairman Myette will assist Town Administrator Doda with the creation of the template. The templates should be ready for Department Heads in November along with instructions.

3.4 Requested Encumbrances

Town Administrator Doda presented the encumbrances received from the Department Heads. Invoices or contracts will be needed for the requested encumbrances. Chairman Myette does not want to see the Department Heads purchasing items based on the fact that they have money left in the budget.

Chairman Myette mentioned the roof is not listed but that needs to be a priority. Maintenance Director Cavanaugh (not present) is working on getting quotes for the roof and painting the rest of Stevens Hall. Chairman Myette questioned if there would be money left in the Highway Department budget.

The invoices or contracts for the requested encumbrances will be needed by the last June Selectboard meeting.

3.5 U.S. Department of Agriculture Grants (moved to earlier in the meeting)

IV Consent Agenda

4.1 Minutes: May 18th, 2023

Vice Chairman Couture motioned to approve the Consent Agenda. Selectman Trask seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette - aye, Trask- aye, Theokas -aye, Couture -aye, Landau - abstained. With four in favor, the motion passed with Landau abstaining.

V. Selectmen’s Business

4.1 Chairman’s Announcements

Chairman Myette announced the following meetings and upcoming events:

250
251 Monday June 5, 2023 Wason Pond Meeting at 7:00pm
252
253 Tuesday June 6, 2023 Solar Working Group Meeting at 6:00pm
254
255 Wednesday June 7, 2023 Planning Board at 7:00pm
256 School Board Meeting at 6:00pm
257
258 Tuesday June 13, 2023 Conservation Commission Meeting at 6:00pm
259
260 Wednesday June 14, 2023 Planning Board at 7:00pm
261
262 Thursday June 15, 2023 Board of Selectmen Meeting at 6:00pm
263
264 Saturday June 3, 2023 Fishing Derby at Wason Pond. Registration is 8:30 fishing is
265 9:00 to 12:00 with prizes after.
266
267 *4.2 Roundtable*
268
269 Selectman Landau mentioned reenactment events happening in the towns of Derry and Exeter.
270
271 Selectman Landau attended the NRRA Annual Recycling Conference & Expo and found it very
272 informative. He mentioned the Town is spending a lot of money on hauling fees every month. It might
273 be worth looking into crushing cans and glass. There are containers that can be purchased to keep
274 the items in one place until they are full. Selectman Trask would like to see the numbers.
275
276 Selectman Landau mentioned the Town of Gilford recycles foam. The whole setup would cost \$80K
277 for the unit and setup. Chairman Myette stated the issue is the cost to purchase and run it. Also, this
278 would mean other towns would be bringing their trash to Chester.
279
280 Selectman Landau mentioned the Town was congratulated on continuing to separate recyclables.
281 Towns that have gone to single stream have seen a huge increase in pricing.
282
283 Selectwoman Theokas spoke with Town Administrator Doda about HR policies and is looking
284 forward to the review project. Chairman Myette asked for items to be sent to the Board for review
285 such as the review form, policies, vacation, CIP and annual report. Selectwoman Theokas suggested
286 one drive for the Selectboard to have access and not have to have the items sent to them.
287
288 Selectman Trask:
289 *Nothing to report.*
290
291 Vice Chairman Couture congratulated Town Administrator Doda on the detail of her Town
292 Administrator Report.
293
294 Selectwoman Theokas mentioned Town Administrator Doda was called out by the Southern NH
295 Planning Commission for being able to generate a high level of public participation compared to other
296 communities in regards to the preferred use of and access to public parks.
297
298 Chairman Myette
299 *Nothing to report.*

300
301 *4.3 Town Administrator’s Report*

302 *Nothing to report*

303
304 *4.4 Action Items*

305 *None*

306
307 *4.5 Non-Public Session(s)*

308
309 Chairman Myette announced non-public sessions on Reputation, Employment, and Public
310 Employees.

311
312 ***Selectman Landau motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to 91-A:3(II) (a) Public***
313 ***Employees, (b) Employment, and (c) Reputation. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A***
314 ***roll call vote was taken - Myette – aye, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye.***
315 ***With all in favor, the motion passed.***

316
317 The meeting was closed to the public at 8:04 PM.

318
319 Town Clerk Celentano and Ms. Ayotte remained in the meeting room; Ms. Ayotte departed at 8:16
320 PM.

321
322 Mr. Morin entered the meeting room at 8:23 PM; he and Town Clerk Celentano departed at 8:39 PM.

323
324 ***Selectman Trask motioned to come out of non-public session. Vice Chairman Couture seconded***
325 ***the motion. A roll call vote was taken - Myette – aye, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye,***
326 ***Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.***

327
328 The meeting was reopened to the public at 9:02 PM.

329
330 ***Selectman Trask motioned to seal the minutes of the first non-public session, on Employment.***
331 ***Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken - Myette – aye, Trask–***
332 ***aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.***

333
334 ***Selectman Trask motioned to seal the minutes of the second non-public session, on Reputation.***
335 ***Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken - Myette – aye, Trask–***
336 ***aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.***

337
338 ***Selectman Trask motioned to seal the minutes of the third non-public session, on Public***
339 ***Employees. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken - Myette – aye,***
340 ***Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.***

341
342 ***Selectman Trask motioned to seal the minutes of the fourth non-public session, on Employment.***
343 ***Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken - Myette – aye, Trask–***
344 ***aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.***

345
346 ***Selectman Trask motioned to seal the minutes of the fifth non-public session, on Public***
347 ***Employees. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken - Myette – aye,***
348 ***Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.***

VI. Adjournment

Vice Chairman Couture moved to adjourn the meeting. Selectwoman Theokas 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 9:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janis A. Jalbert

Recording Secretary