

**Town of Chester  
Selectboard’s Meeting  
Thursday, June 29, 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)  
Boy Scout Eagle Project Presentation  
Compost Recycling Program  
Dog Licensing Civil Forfeiture  
Roadwork Discussion, Including Dump Road  
Release of Funds from CRF for Master Plan  
Review of Assessing RFP Submissions  
Review of Budget Plan for FY24-25  
Encumbrances  
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  
Dana Theokas  
Dick Trask  
Stephen Landau

Debra Doda, Town Administrator

Selectboard Absent:

Steve Couture

Members of the Public Present at various times:

Barbara Cannon, Deputy Town Clerk  
Justine Celentano, Town Clerk/Tax Collector  
Jaden Gaudet, Eagle Scout Candidate  
Mike Gaudet  
Phil Gladu, Fire Chief  
Nancy Myette  
James Piper, Supervisor of Roads  
Ann Podlipny  
Jay Rowden, Scoutmaster

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 added 2.5, Fire Department Update with Fire Chief Gladu.

### *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 Boy Scout Eagle Project Presentation*

Eagle Scout Candidate Jaden Gaudet appeared before the Selectboard with Scoutmaster Rowden. His project was to build an informational kiosk for Spring Hill Farm. He described the design, fundraising, purchases, and work that was done to create the kiosk, with the accompaniment of photographs. The kiosk is moveable, and will be placed at a designated spot in the near future.

Chairman Myette pointed out that there is currently a need for a building permit for the structure, and Candidate Gaudet should work with Building Inspector Bunker.

***Selectman Trask moved to accept the Spring Hill Farm Informational Kiosk Eagle Project from Candidate Gaudet, contingent upon the receipt of the proper building permit;***

***Selectwoman Theokas seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Selectman Landau abstaining and Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.***

Scoutmaster Rowden stated that Candidate Gaudet will be the 83<sup>rd</sup> Eagle Scout in the Town of Chester; Selectman Landau added that the troop was started in 1941.

It was suggested that the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee write a letter thanking Candidate Gaudet for his project; TA Doda will request this of SHFAC Chair Beth Sautter.

Candidate Gaudet, Mr. Gaudet, and Scoutmaster Rowden departed the meeting at 6:14pm.

## ***2.2 Compost Recycling Program***

Ms. Podlipny appeared before the Selectboard to discuss potentially offering a curbside composting program in Town.

She touted the many benefits of composting – less waste in the compactor, keeping food scraps out of landfills thus lowering the amount of methane gas produced, enrichment for the soil, etc. The State currently has two bills pending – HB300 and HB462 - that each address the need for food scrap composting.

She had contacted two firms that pick up one’s food scraps curbside. Black Earth Composting out of Massachusetts, which is looking to expand into New Hampshire, would need 100 residents to start a pilot program; Renewal Compost, which operates on J&F Farms properties in Derry, could start with any number between 1-29.

There was some discussion about forming a Composting Working Group, but Ms. Podlipny would like to begin by doing some grassroots organizing, knocking on doors, and sending letters to residents. The Town does have a bulk rate mailing permit which she could utilize to keep costs down.

***Selectman Trask moved to authorize Ms. Podlipny to start a pilot composting program in Town within six months; Selectwoman Theokas seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Selectman Landau abstaining and Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.***

Ms. Podlipny departed the meeting at 6:41pm.

## ***2.3 Dog Licensing Civil Forfeiture***

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Celentano and Deputy Town Clerk Cannon appeared before the Selectboard to discuss the statutory Civil Forfeiture for residents who have not registered their dogs.

Dog registration is required by the State in order to establish ownership (and thus liability), and to control rabies. The Town Clerk’s office has posted registration information on the

Town website, shared it via social media, and posted it on the Town Sign at Stevens Hall. At this point in time there are 41 residents on the list and a total of 62 dogs not registered. These residents have been contacted by postcard, by email (eight times), and by personal telephone calls (four times) yet their dogs remain unregistered, and the State’s grace period has passed.

The Selectboard inquired if failure to register dogs could be tied to motor vehicle registrations; this is unclear but not likely. They also inquired if the list could be made public; this is only possible if the Town obtained a court order. TA Doda will consult with Town Counsel on both these questions.

In the past, Civil Forfeiture letters had been hand-delivered to these residents by the Police Department; during Covid the Selectboard preferred that certified letters be sent out, and the cost to do that is currently \$8.10 per piece for a total of over \$300 in taxpayer dollars. TC/TX Celentano suggested that this might be done under the aegis of the Animal Control Officer. The Selectboard did not disagree, but would prefer that the residents were alerted beforehand with a telephone call in order that they might expect ACO Wright to come to their door. That information would also be shared on the website and on social media.

Should these residents not respond to the Civil Forfeiture letter by either paying their dog registration fees or informing the Town Clerk’s office that their pet has passed on, the next step will be a summons to court.

***Selectman Trask moved to have Animal Control Officer John Wright deliver the Civil Forfeiture letters to the residents in question; Selectwoman Theokas seconded the motion. The vote was two in favor with Selectman Landau opposed, Chairman Myette abstaining, and Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.***

TC/TX Celentano and DTC Cannon departed the meeting at 7:19pm.

#### ***2.4 Roadwork Discussion, Including Dump Road***

Supervisor of Roads Piper appeared before the Selectboard to discuss this summer’s roadwork plans.

He has consulted with Finance Director Smith and they are of the opinion that there will be sufficient funds between the State’s two grants for roads and bridges and other remaining roadwork appropriations to complete the necessary work on the Fremont Road Bridge this summer. Apparently salt and water permeated the membrane and have caused the concrete to deteriorate to a point where it must be replaced. If it is not, the bridge may be placed on the State’s Red List. Unfortunately this work means the bridge will need to be shut down for up to two months, which will necessitate a detour via Shepard Home Road and Pheasant Run Drive.

***Selectman Trask moved to perform the Fremont Road Bridge work; Selectman Landau seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.***

SoR Piper is also in favor of the Dump Road work, as previously discussed. The Town would only have to pay for the materials, while Remi-Sons would perform the work. Chairman Myette would like a public-private partnership with Remi-Sons drafted before going any further; availability of funds is also an issue. It was suggested that grants be solicited. The Selectboard asked that this subject be placed on the agenda for a future meeting.

## ***2.5 Fire Department Update***

Fire Chief Gladu appeared before the Selectboard to discuss the hiring of a per diem employee. The candidate in question has all of the required certifications, but is unable to start as a full-time employee at present as he has educational conflicts. The plan would be for him to work Wednesday through Friday now, increasing to four days a week in the Spring, and then work a full schedule after the end of the school year. He would be hired as a Grade 10, Step 0.

***Selectman Trask moved to hire Logan Boudreau as a per diem employee for the Fire Department; Selectman Landau seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.***

Mr. Boudreau will be asked to attend the next Selectboard meeting, on July 13<sup>th</sup>.

The Selectboard also brought up the possibility of engaging a firm such as MRI to assist with Fire Department recruiting, especially for a second in command. Fire Chief Gladu is not in favor of spending the money, as he believes that MRI would be pulling from the same pool of candidates that he has been with limited success. He would prefer to promote from within, and has some current candidates, but they are still young and progressing. He also has some residents interested in becoming call members.

Fire Chief Gladu departed the meeting at 8:02pm.

## **III. New Business**

### ***3.1 Release of Funds from CRF for Master Plan***

Town Planner Andrew Hadik had requested that the Selectboard release funds from the Town’s Master Plan CRF in order that Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission may begin updating the Town’s current version of the Plan, which dates to 2015. Selectwoman Theokas noted that all were looking forward to this project.

***Selectman Trask moved to release the requested funds from the Town’s Master Plan CRF; Selectman Landau seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.***

228  
229 *3.2 Review of Assessing RFP Submissions*  
230

231 The Selectboard received three responses to the June 2<sup>nd</sup> RFP for the Town’s statistical  
232 reappraisal (“revaluation”) in 2024. Two, unfortunately, simply stated that they were unable  
233 to provide a bid. The third one was opened and reviewed; it met all of the required  
234 qualifications and specifications.

235  
236 ***Selectman Trask moved to award the Revaluation Contract to Municipal Resources, Inc.,***  
237 ***for a price of \$57,750; Selectwoman Theokas seconded the motion. The vote was three***  
238 ***in favor with Selectman Landau opposed and Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion***  
239 ***carried.***

240  
241 The Selectboard inquired (a) how much was paid last time the Town performed a statistical  
242 reappraisal, (b) how much was in the Capital Reserve Fund to pay for this work, and (c) was  
243 the Selectboard named as agents to expend. TA Doda will research and report back.

244  
245 *3.3 Review of Budget Plan for FY24-25*  
246

247 The Selectboard reviewed the Budget and Financial Planning memo as requested by Vice-  
248 Chairman Couture and drafted by TA Doda; some minor additions and edits were made. An  
249 increase percentage goal was discussed, as well as ways one might arrive at this figure; in  
250 the end it was determined that although a goal of 3% should be suggested when the memo  
251 is disseminated, the Board should review that figure at budget time to ensure that it is still  
252 appropriate.

253  
254 Selectman Trask is not in favor of this plan, stating that he believes that it will make the entire  
255 budget process more difficult.

256  
257 ***Selectman Landau moved to accept an increase goal of 3%; Selectwoman Theokas***  
258 ***seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Selectman Trask opposed and***  
259 ***Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.***

260  
261 TA Doda was asked to send the draft memo to the Budget Committee and Department Heads  
262 for their review and comment, but to omit the suggested 3% increase for now.

263  
264 *3.4 Encumbrances*  
265

266 The Selectboard reviewed and discussed the encumbrances that have been requested out of  
267 the current year’s Operating Budget. As of today, the projected surplus is a little over \$200k,  
268 but this is by no means a firm figure. The final figure won’t be known until the year is closed,  
269 which is likely to be late July.

270  
271 There was a great deal of discussion about whether existing items should be removed or left  
272 on, or new items added, as well as whether items should be prioritized or not. In the end it

was decided that all requests would be approved, but not prioritized; once the final surplus figure has been determined, funds will be appropriated as available.

***Selectman Trask moved to encumber funds for the following projects:***

Department	Account, if available	Amount	Legally Enforceable Obligation Paperwork?	Comments
Police	Bottom Line	\$ 54,085	Yes	Body-Worn Cameras - 50% - remainder paid for by grant already received
Transfer Station	01-4324-1-4390.58	\$ 6,666	Yes	Removal of contaminated oil and tank cleaning. Stacy pursuing grant for \$2,500
Highway	Bottom Line	\$ 121,000	Yes	Hooped Building for Sand/Vehicle Storage (\$47k foundation - \$58k building. Not recommended to split.)
Maintenance	Bottom Line	\$ 3,500	Yes	Ship Ladder to be installed at Fire Station - safety hazard
Maintenance	Bottom Line	\$ 26,450	Yes	Remainder of Stevens Hall Painting
TOTAL		\$ 211,701		

***Selectman Landau seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Selectwoman Theokas opposed and Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.***

**IV Consent Agenda**

***4.1 Treasurer’s Investment Policy***

This policy had been reviewed with Treasurer Rhonda Lamphere at the meeting of June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and approved at that same meeting.

***4.2 Granite State Analytical Water Testing Contract***

This contract, which assists the Town in meeting DES’s drinking water testing requirements, is identical to prior years.

***Selectwoman Theokas motioned to approve the Consent Agenda. Selectman Trask seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.***

**V. Selectboard’s Business**

***4.1 Chairman’s Announcements***

Chairman Myette announced the following meetings and upcoming events:

Monday July 10, 2023 Wason Pond Commission Meeting at 7:00pm

Tuesday July 11, 2023 Conservation Commission Meeting at 6:00pm

Solar Working Group Meeting at 7:00pm

Wednesday July 12, 2023

Planning Board at 7:00pm

Thursday July 13, 2023

Selectboard Meeting at 6:00pm

Tuesday July 4, 2023

Town Offices are closed for July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday

#### *4.2 Roundtable*

##### *Selectman Landau:*

- An engineer from Dubois & King was on site this week to inspect the roofs at Town Hall and at Stevens Hall.

##### *Selectwoman Theokas:*

- At this week’s Conservation Commission meeting, they discussed a deed with which they had concerns (due to the fact that the Town’s Tax Map hadn’t been created until 1978). They have determined that the Town does indeed own lot in the Town Forest area, and Colby Farms owns the lot in their area.
- The Conservation Commission is also working on a Natural Resource Inventory.

##### *Selectman Trask:*

- He noted that although the BOS had voted last week to discontinue a remote meter providing electricity to the bathhouse, he suggested that instead they move the electrical meter directly onto the bathhouse. Selectwoman Theokas is concerned that the meter, as it stands, is in a hazardous condition. Chairman Myette asked that Selectman Landau, as liaison to the Maintenance Department, be the only person to handle this situation.

##### *Chairman Myette:*

- Nothing to report.

#### *4.3 Town Administrator’s Report*

Nothing was queried.

#### *4.4 Action Items*

None.

#### *4.5 Non-Public Session(s)*

***Selectman Trask moved to go into non-public session pursuant to 91-A:3(II) (a) Public Employees, (b) Employment, (c) Reputation, and (e) Pending Litigation. Selectman***



***Landau seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.***

The meeting was closed to the public at 9:15pm; Supervisor of Roads Piper remained in the meeting room. He departed at 9:32pm.

***Selectwoman Theokas moved 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 - absent, Landau - aye. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.***

The meeting was reopened to the public at 10:07pm.

***Selectwoman Theokas moved to seal the minutes of the first non-public session, on Public Employees. Selectman Trask seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.***

***Selectwoman Theokas moved to seal the minutes of the second non-public session, on Employment. Selectman Trask seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.***

***Selectwoman Theokas moved to seal the minutes of the third non-public session, on Pending Litigation. Selectman Trask seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.***

***Selectwoman Theokas moved to seal the minutes of the fourth non-public session, on Reputation. Selectman Trask seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.***

***Selectwoman Theokas moved to seal the minutes of the fifth non-public session, on Public Employees. Selectman Trask seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.***

## **VI. Adjournment**

***Selectman Trask moved to adjourn the meeting. Selectman Landau seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.***

The meeting was adjourned at 10:12pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra H Doda  
Recording Secretary