

**Town of Chester
Selectboard’s Meeting
Thursday, October 5, 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)
Solar Working Group RFP
Stevens Hall Chairs: Karl Knudsen
Review Property Repurchase Procedure
Acceptance of Gift to Conservation Commission
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
Dick Trask
Dana Theokas
Stephen Landau (via Zoom)

Town Administrator Debra Doda

Members of the Public Present at various times:

Jon Baker
Ted Broadwater, Solar Working Group Member
Victor Chouinard, Conservation Commission Member
Patrick Connelly, Solar Working Group Member
Karl Knudsen
Darrell Quinn

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 Department Plans and an Intent to Cut to the agenda.

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 Solar Working Group RFP

Vice Chairman Couture thanked the group for working diligently and identifying three properties in Town for a solar array. The RFP the working group worked on is much better than the last one that was sent out.

Mr. Connelly mentioned the group looked at properties that create the most revenue for the town. Chairman Myette mentioned some of the downfalls from the last Town Meeting. Mr. Connelly advised the group will be addressing the residents’ concerns when they interview the different companies.

The school roof is not part of this RFP because they are looking at replacing their roof. Once that is done solar may be an option for the school.

Selectman Trask asked how much of the Salt Shed property would be needed for a solar array. Mr. Broadwater advised two acres would be clear cut for the project. Selectman Trask is worried about the environmental impact of cutting trees.

Selectman Landau feels a closer look at other properties in town is needed. Mr. Broadwater mentioned the group had multiple companies look at all the town owned properties and give their assessment for each parcel.

One item will be added to the RFP for the companies to explain how the proposed contract will affect current and future third-party electricity supply agreements.

Selectwoman Theokas motioned to release the RFP as amended. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask– abstained, Theokas – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – abstained. With three in favor, the motion passed with Landau and Trask abstaining.

2.2 Stevens Hall Chairs: Karl Knudsen

Mr. Knudsen and Mr. Baker presented a picture of the chairs the Christ Covenant Church would like to donate for use in the 2nd floor auditorium at Stevens Hall. The church meets at Stevens Hall every Sunday and the chairs from the last donation are showing their wear. The new chairs have better rubber footings so the floors will not be damaged.

Vice Chairman Couture motioned to accept the donation of chairs for Stevens Hall in the amount of \$5,500.00. 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.

III. New Business

3.1 Review Property Repurchase Procedure (moved to later in the meeting)

3.2 Acceptance of Gift to Conservation Commission (moved from later in the meeting)

Mr. Chouinard is asking for the Board to accept a cash gift in the amount of \$46,500.00 for an ecological study in the North Woods. The donor who is working with Mr. Chouinard would like to remain anonymous. The Conservation Commission has agreed to accept the gift. \$20,000 has been received thus far with the remaining \$26,500 to be transferred at a later date.

Selectman Trask inquired if all the properties are under conservation easement. Mr. Chouinard answered yes, all the properties in the North Woods are under conservation easements.

Vice Chairman Couture motioned to accept the donation of \$46,500.00 for the Natural Resource Inventory in the North Woods. 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.

3.1 Review Property Repurchase Procedure (moved from earlier in the meeting)

Chairman Myette mentioned this document was already sent to the Town Counsel for review. Town Administrator Doda mentioned Town Counsel did make some minor changes to some of the wording on the document.

Selectman Trask motioned to accept the Property Repurchase Procedure. 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.

3.2 Acceptance of Gift to Conservation Commission (moved to earlier in the meeting)

3.3 Department Plans

Chairman Myette mentioned the department heads are working on department plans. This will help the Board understand where the departments are and where they are going. Things for department heads to think about are leadership, organization, and CIP. Departments are thinking three to five years out for the plans. Fire, Highway, Maintenance, and Police will have more information than some of the other departments.

Vice Chairman Couture mentioned the Board has seen the Police Department plan and it is very impressive. Chief Berube was very detailed, and the information provided is valuable for the budget.

Town Administrator Doda mentioned all but one plan has been received and everyone is utilizing the same template. They should be ready for the Selectboard meeting of October 19th.

Selectwoman Theokas mentioned the department heads have put a lot of thought into the plans.

IV Consent Agenda

4.1 Abatements

4.2 Minutes September 7, 2023 & September 21, 2023

4.3 Intent to Cut

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 –abstained, Couture –aye, Landau – abstained. With three in favor, the motion passed with Theokas and Landau abstaining.

V. Selectmen’s Business

5.1 Chairman’s Announcements

Chairman Myette announced the following meetings:

Tuesday October 10, 2023	Conservation Commission Meeting at 6:00pm
Wednesday October 11, 2023	Planning Board Meeting at 7:00pm
Monday October 16, 2023	Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee Meeting at 7:00pm
Tuesday October 17, 2023	ZBA Meeting at 7:00pm
Thursday October 19, 2023	Selectboard Meeting at 6:00pm

Chairman Myette announced the following events:

Friday October 6, 2023	LAST day to Register to vote or change your party affiliation before Primary Elections. Room #6 from 7pm to 8p. If you're registered as an Independent, you can choose your ballot during the Primary - you don't have to register as another party now
Saturday October 7, 2023	Blood Drive at the Fire Department from 9-2. Appointments are needed. Sign up online.
Monday October 9, 2023	Town Offices will be closed in observance of Columbus Day
Saturday October 21, 2023	Household Hazardous Waste day in Atkinson

Selectman Trask asked why Household Hazardous Waste Day is being held in Atkinson. Town Administrator Doda explained that in the spring it is always held in Plaistow, and the other towns rotate in the fall. The Towns participating are Atkinson, Chester, Danville, Hampstead, Kingston, and Plaistow.

5.2 Roundtable

Selectman Landau asked if he should purchase candy for Halloween. Usually, a member of the Selectboard will sit in front of the municipal building and pass out candy and open the MPR for people to utilize the restrooms.

Selectman Trask motioned to approve the expenditure of up to \$200.00 for Halloween candy. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask– aye, Theokas –nay, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With four in favor, the motion passed.

Selectman Trask attended the Fall Fest at Spring Hill Farm. He mentioned there were hundreds of people and he was really impressed. Chairman Myette thanked everyone on behalf of the committee.

Selectwoman Theokas mentioned there was a strong volunteer support for the event. Chairman Myette is hopeful that the house will be open for next year’s event.

Selectwoman Theokas mentioned Block 5 changed the phone tree for the municipal building.

Vice Chairman Couture

Nothing to report.

Chairman Myette mentioned the Conservation Commission will be doing some clean up at Wason Pond.

Chairman Myette inquired about the grant for the Wason Pond bridge. Town Administrator Doda mentioned there are no updates on the grant. The grant is a 50% matching reimbursement grant, and a warrant article will be needed.

5.3 Town Administrator’s Report

Town Administrator Doda mentioned with everyone driving around looking at scarecrows, the Historical Society is paying for a porta potty near the shed by Stevens Hall.

A donation needs to be accepted from the Rand family on behalf of the Fire Association, and it is unknown the market value of the donation currently. The Trustees of the Trust Funds will be managing these funds, once received.

Selectman Trask motioned to approve accept the donation from the Rand Trust at the current market value. 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.

Fremont Bridge is open. The repairs were done in six weeks.

There is a lease agreement that needs to be signed for the Highway Department to rent a tractor. They have purchased the mower for the sides of the roads and need a suitable tractor to attach it to. The rental agreement has been approved by Town Counsel.

Selectman Trask motioned to allow Chairman Myette and Mr. Piper, Supervisor of the Roads, to sign the tractor lease agreement. 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.

5.4 Action Items

None

5.5 Non-Public Session(s)

Chairman Myette announced non-public sessions on Legal.

Selectman Trask motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to 91-A:3(II) (c) reputation and (e) pending litigation. 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 7:45 PM.

Vice Chairman Couture 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 7:56 PM.

Vice Chairman Couture motioned to seal the minutes of the non-public sessions, on Reputation and Pending Litigation. 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 Trask 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 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janis A. Jalbert
Recording Secretary