

**Town of Chester
Selectboard’s Meeting
Thursday, February 22, 2024
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)
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