

**Town of Chester
Selectboard’s Meeting
Thursday, March 7, 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)
Hazard Mitigation Plan
Budget Review
Warrant Article Review
PACT 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

Members of the Public Present at various times:

Rich Bellemore, Cemetery Trustee
Aaron Berube, Police Chief
Justine Celentano, Town Clerk / Tax Collector
Phil Gladu, Fire Chief / EMD
Nancy Myette
Saul Shriber

and other persons unknown to the Recording Secretary.

51 *1.3 Pledge of Allegiance*

52
53 Chairman Myette led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

54
55 *1.4 Chairman’s Additions or Deletions*

56
57 Selectman Landau has two non-public sessions.

58
59 *1.5 Public Comment*

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

62
63 **II. Appointments**

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65 *2.1 Hazard Mitigation Plan Adoption*

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67 Chief Gladu mentioned the Hazard Mitigation Plan is ready to be adopted. There are documents that
68 will need to be signed and Town Administrator Doda drafted the letter for the adoption of the
69 Hazard Mitigation Plan.

70
71 Chairman Myette stated there was a lot of work and time involved in the plan. Attendance at the
72 meetings was good. Chairman Myette thanked the team for all their help.

73
74 ***Vice Chairman Couture motioned to adopt the Hazard Mitigation Plan. Selectwoman Theokas***
75 ***seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask– abstained, Theokas –aye,***
76 ***Couture –aye, Landau – abstained. With three in favor, the motion passed.***

77
78 **III. New Business**

79
80 *3.1 Budget Review*

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82 *3.1.1 IT*

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84 Ms. Jalbert presented the revised Block5 portion of the IT budget with a decrease of \$7,392.40 from
85 the original proposed budget for FY 24-25. It was explained the Office 365 is based on email
86 accounts, not the number of computers.

87
88 *3.1.2 Budget Committee*

89
90 Mr. Dobbins was unable to attend the meeting but sent an email to the Board. Selectman Landau
91 had asked about the seminars line at the previous meeting. Mr. Dobbins left the seminar line flat as
92 there are three new members and the seminars are \$70 online and \$90 in person.

93
94 *3.2 Warrant Review (moved from later in the meeting)*

95
96 Chief Berube was asked by Selectwoman Theokas, liaison to the Police Department, to look for any
97 reductions to the proposed budget. Chief Berube suggested using the Detail Revolving account for
98 fuel and maintenance for the police vehicles up to \$30,000.00. The legislative body would need to
99 approve the expenditure from the revolving account. Chairman Myette is concerned with tracking
100 and would like to make sure the auditors are ok with it. Chief Berube pointed out if this passes the

Board and Budget Committee needs to understand the budget automatically increases next year for these lines.

The proposed warrant article would need to be before the budget warrant since if this passes it will reduce the police budget by \$30K.

3.1.3 Village Cemetery

Mr. Bellemore presented the bids for the trees that need to be taken down. The Trustees will have one tree taken down now, another tree taken down after July 1st, and the rest will be funded in future budgets.

Selectman Landau inquired about repairs in other cemeteries. Mr. Bellemore advised there are trees, gates and stones that need to be attended to. Mr. Bellemore estimates about \$100K in headstone repair, and headstones do not qualify for grants. Selectwoman Theokas suggested the budget for the cemeteries be \$25K and zero out the tree line.

Chairman Myette asked the Trustees to relook at the budget for more reductions if possible.

3.1.4 Spring Hill Farm

The Board reviewed the details for the increase to the budget. The committee will be making purchases for the house and a beautification project. Selectwoman Theokas asked why the house is being heated. Chairman Myette advised it was on to keep the floors from warping and the mice out. Vice Chairman Couture inquired about what the beautification project is. Chairman Myette stated it is for cleanup and planting around the farm.

The Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee and Trustees will be asked to look for possible reductions in the budget.

3.3 Warrant review

The Board reviewed the estimated amount being used in warrant articles. They inquired if the Lane Road emergency funding had been requested already. It was approved but some Board members thought it was not going to be moved from the unassigned fund balance unless it was needed.

Selectman Landau suggested not using the term no amount raised by taxation, it might be better phrased as no amount raised by taxation this year.

The Board discussed the amount for the historical buildings warrant article. The Board discussed the amount needed for the repairs to the post office. Vice Chairman Couture is ok with the Board’s decision if someone can defend the amount requested. The Board decided to eliminate the historical buildings capital reserve fund and transfer the current amount into the municipal improvement capital reserve fund.

Vice Chairman Couture suggested deleting the contingency fund. Selectman Landau stated this is just in case an emergency arises. If no funds are needed the money will lapse back to the unassigned fund balance.

Selectman Landau feels Dump Road should not be listed on the highway projects. The funding from the unassigned fund balance will be dropped to \$200K for article F. The warrant article for the fire department apparatus was discussed. With additional vehicles needed in the future it was suggested to continue to fund and leave the request at \$200K.

3.3 PACT

Selectwoman Theokas mentioned the franchise fee is 3% of the franchisees gross annual revenues. The percentage could be raised in the future to 5%. Selectman Landau asked if the committee has looked at more than one company.

With the agreement being the same as the last one, the board had no further questions.

Selectwoman Theokas motioned to accept and sign the cable television franchise agreement. 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.

3.4 CivicPlus Agreement

The CivicPlus agreement for the Towns website was presented.

Selectman Trask motioned to accept and sign the CivicPlus agreement. Vice Chairman Couture 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.

IV. Consent Agenda

4.1 Minutes January 18, 2024, February 1, 2024, & February 8, 2024

Selectwoman Theokas motioned to approve the minutes of January 18th, 2024 and February 8, 2024 as revised. Vice Chairman Couture 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.

Selectwoman Theokas motioned to approve the minutes of February 1, 2024 as revised. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –abstained, Landau – abstained. With three in favor, the motion passed.

V. Selectmen’s Business

5.1 Chairman’s Announcements

Chairman Myette announced the following meetings:

Tuesday March 12, 2024	Conservation Commission Meeting at 6:00pm
Wednesday March 13, 2024	Planning Board Meeting at 7:00pm
Monday March 18, 2024	Winter Fest Working Group Meeting at 6:00pm

199 Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee Meeting at 7:00 in the
200 Rangeway Meeting Room

201
202 Budget Committee Meeting at 7:00 in the Meeting Room

203
204 Tuesday March 19, 2024 ZBA Meeting at 7:00pm

205
206 Thursday March 21, 2024 Selectboard Meeting at 6:00pm

207
208 Mr. Schriber mentioned the Solar Working Group will be meeting on Tuesday March 19th at
209 6:00pm.

210
211 The Selectboard decided to add a selectboard meeting to Thursday March 14th

212
213 Chairman Myette announced the following events:

214
215 The Town Clerk’s Office in conjunction with Ark Animal Homecare will be hosting a Rabies Clinic on
216 Saturday, April 13th from 9:00-12noon at Town Hall. \$20.00 for 1 year rabies vaccine and \$25.00
217 for microchip. Please contact Ark Animal Homecare (603-860-9855) for an appointment and to pay
218 in advance. The Town Clerk’s Office will be open during the clinic to process dog licenses.

219
220 *5.2 Roundtable*

221
222 Selectman Landau mentioned the air quality in the Town Clerk’s office was tested and we are
223 waiting for the results. This became an issue after the leak above the vault in the office.

224
225 Selectwoman Theokas mentioned Recreation has its 90th participant for pickleball. This is one of
226 many activities the Recreation Department has that has great participation. Basketball has close to
227 147 kids from 4 years old to 8th grade. And the girls’ 7-8th grade won the championship. Since the
228 Town voted to change from a part-time to a full-time Recreation Director the Town has benefited.
229 Thank you to Recreation Director Reishus and all the volunteers.

230
231 Selectman Landau pointed out two students from Chester have high scores and were recognized at
232 the National Technical Honors Society.

233
234 Selectwoman Theokas mentioned the luncheon at Pinkerton Academy for the Seniors. The students
235 were able to showcase their culinary skills and the seniors had an excellent meal.

236
237 Selectman Trask stated the Girls and Boys Varsity championship basketball game is Sunday. Vice
238 Chairman Couture advised the games will be held at UNH in Durham.

239
240 Selectman Trask thanked the residents for coming out to the Annual School meeting. There were
241 about 150 residents in attendance to vote on the school budget and warrant articles.

242
243 Vice Chairman Couture:
244 *Nothing to report.*

245
246 Chairman Myette:
247 *Nothing to report.*

248

249 *5.3 Town Administrator’s Report*

250 *Nothing to report.*

252 *5.4 Action Items*

253 *Nothing to report.*

255 *5.5 Non-Public Session(s)*

257 Selectman Landau announced non-public sessions on reputation and finance.

259 ***Selectman Trask motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to 91-A:3(II) (c) reputation***
260 ***and (j) financial Information. Selectman Landau seconded the motion. A roll call vote was***
261 ***taken Myette – aye, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the***
262 ***motion passed.***

264 The meeting was closed to the public at 8:07PM.

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

270 The meeting was reopened to the public at 8:31 PM.

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

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

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

284 **VI. Adjournment**

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

290 The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 PM.

292 Respectfully submitted,

294 Janis A. Jalbert
295 Recording Secretary