

**Town of Chester
Selectboard’s Meeting
Thursday, March 14, 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)
Wason Road
New Transfer Station Employee
Budget Review
Warrant Review
Vacation Retention Personnel Policy 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
Stephen Landau
Dana Theokas
Dick Trask

Selectboard Absent:
Steve Couture

Town Administrator Debra Doda

Members of the Public Present at various times:

Aaron Berube, Police Chief
Leslie Edwards
Tom Edwards
Spencer Grindrod

David LaVita

52 Stacy Manfrates, Transfer Station Foreman

Nancy Myette

54 James Piper, Supervisor of Roads

Saul Shriber

56 Christine Szostak

58 and other persons unknown to the Recording Secretary.

60 *1.3 Pledge of Allegiance*

62 Chairman Myette led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

64 *1.4 Chairman’s Additions or Deletions*

66 Chairman Myette added an appointment on Wason Road, and an appointment with a new Transfer
Station employee.

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1.5 Public Comment

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As no Members of the Public wished to be heard, Public Comment was closed at 6:02pm.

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II. Appointments

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2.1 Wason Road

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Ms. Szostak, Mr. Edwards, and Mrs. Edwards, all of Wason Road, appeared before the Selectboard to
discuss ongoing water problems on their properties.

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80 These Wason Road properties have had water issues since the Jemco Development was built; water
sheets across the road and onto their properties. For example, this weekend the Szostaks had 3” of
82 water in their basement for the first time. Mr./Mrs. Edwards have had to pump their septic tank
twice in the past year and a half; their garden and leach field both flood and freeze over.

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Mr. Edwards suggested that a trench, corrugated, and a hydrant for the Fire Department be installed
86 to help mitigate the issue. He would also like the original Jemco development plans reviewed, citing
discrepancies between the first plan drawn up and subsequent plans.

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Chairman Myette suggested that they contact Town Planner Hadik and get on the Planning Board’s
90 agenda.

92 Ms. Szostak and Mr./Mrs. Edwards departed the meeting at 6:33pm.

94 *2.2 New Transfer Station Employee*

96 Transfer Station Foreman Manfrates appeared before the Selectboard with new employee Spencer
Grindrod. Mr. Grindrod is a life-long resident of Chester who will be filling a Saturday shift as early as
98 March 23rd. He is over 18, so is eligible to perform all Transfer Station duties, and has heavy
equipment operation experience, which will be helpful when the Skid Steer is needed.

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The Selectboard welcomed Mr. Grindrod. He and TS Foreman Manfrates departed the meeting at 6:38pm.

III. New Business

3.1 Budget Review

The Selectboard reviewed the FY24-25 Budget as it stands and made a number of cuts to salaries, supplies, maintenance, inspections and testing, contracted services, fuel, and signage. They asked that Department Heads make purchases that were deleted from next year’s budget out of this year’s budget, if at all possible.

The FY24-25 budget currently stands at \$6,086,758, an increase of 6.18% or \$354,146 over the FY23-24 budget. It will be updated and made available to the Budget Committee for their meeting of Monday, March 18th.

3.2 Warrant Review

The Selectboard reviewed the FY24-25 Warrant as it stands and made some additions. A number of Articles repurposing Capital Reserve and Expendable Trust Funds that have been unused for many years were added, as was an article to reallocate a portion of Land Use Change Tax funds from the Conservation Fund to the *Highway CIP CRF* and the addition of funds from the *Police Special Detail SRF* to the *Municipal CIP CRF* Projects WA as offsetting revenue for their requested cruiser. There was also a discussion about the financial feasibility of purchasing a used grader to be used on the dirt roads.

The FY24-25 warrant currently contains 46 Articles asking for an additional \$7,297,670 over the Operating Budget; however, offsetting revenue of \$4,660,542 (funds from CRFs, SRFs, ETFs, grants, and the UFB) brings the actual amount of funds requested from new taxation in the Warrant to \$2,637,128.

It must be noted that the Budget and Warrant requests do not translate to the tax rate, as they are exclusive of estimated revenue, which has yet to be finalized.

3.3 Vacation Retention Personnel Policy Review

The Selectboard reviewed the drafted Vacation Retention Policy to be added to the Personnel Policy, answered questions employees had submitted, and made minor changes. This will be edited and provided to the employees once again for further questions before the Board reviewed it for a final time.

IV. Consent Agenda

4.1 Minutes - February 15th and 22nd, 2024

As all members of the Selectboard had not reviewed these minutes, they will be placed back on the Consent Agenda for the next meeting.

V. Selectmen’s Business

5.1 *Chairman’s Announcements*

Chairman Myette announced the following meetings:

Monday March 18, 2024	Winter Fest Working Group Meeting at 6:00pm
	Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee Meeting at 7:00 in the Rangeway Meeting Room
	Budget Committee Meeting at 7:00 in the Meeting Room
Tuesday March 19, 2024	ZBA Meeting at 7:00pm
	Solar Working Group Meeting at 6:00pm
Thursday March 21, 2024	Selectboard Meeting at 6:00pm

Chairman Myette announced the following events:

The Town Clerk’s Office in conjunction with Ark Animal Homecare will be hosting a Rabies Clinic on Saturday, April 13th 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. The Town Clerk’s Office will be open during the clinic to process dog licenses.

5.2 *Roundtable*

Selectman Landau:

- It appears to be taking a long time for Affinity to provide a report on lighting; TA Doda will inquire for an update.

Selectwoman Theokas:

- Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee is having a hard time making quorum and she suggested that perhaps they need some additional members.
- The Maintenance Department has made some advances in projects that have been on the back burner; John is doing a great job getting Matt up to speed.
- The Conservation Commission is moving forward with a Natural Resource inventory, including monitoring. Chairman Myette added that Moosewood is finding a number of uncommon birds, turtles, and insects.

Selectman Trask:

- He is concerned that a current court case on Impact Fees might be an issue in Chester, and added that in his opinion impact fees are too high on ADUs. Selectwoman Theokas disagreed, calling Impact Fees “a ticket to entry”.
- He objects to cluster developments as being not characteristic of Chester and would like to see zoning ordinances amended in order to avoid them. In addition, developments such as Tuscan Village in Salem, and Woodmont Commons in Londonderry, were mentioned as not fitting for Chester.

Chairman Myette:

- The Planning Board is currently working on the concept of “workforce” or lower cost housing.
- The Town’s Master Plan Update meetings are beginning.

5.3 Town Administrator’s Report

No questions were raised.

5.4 Action Items

No items were added.

5.5 Non-Public Session(s)

Selectman Landau motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to 91-A:3(II) (a) public employees and (c) reputation. Selectwoman Theokas seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Myette – aye, Couture – absent, Landau – aye, Theokas – aye, Trask – aye. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.

The meeting was closed to the public at 10:21PM.

Selectman Trask motioned to come out of non-public session; Selectwoman Theokas seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Myette – aye, Couture – absent, Landau – aye, Theokas – aye, Trask – aye. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.

The meeting was reopened to the public at 11:04 PM.

Selectman Trask motioned to seal the minutes of the first non-public session, on Reputation. Selectwoman Theokas seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Myette – aye, Couture – absent, Landau – aye, Theokas – aye, Trask – aye. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.

Selectman Trask motioned to seal the minutes of the second non-public session, on Public Employees. Selectwoman Theokas seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Myette – aye, Couture – absent, Landau – aye, Theokas – aye, Trask – aye. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.

VI. Adjournment

Selectman Trask moved to adjourn the meeting. Selectwoman Theokas seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Myette – aye, Couture – absent, Landau – aye, Theokas – aye, Trask – aye. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Couture absent; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:09 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra H Doda
Recording Secretary