

**Town of Chester
Selectboard’s Meeting
Thursday, March 21, 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)
Fire Department Budget
Landfill Post-Closure Report from Nobis
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
Dick Trask

Selectboard Absent:

Dana Theokas

Town Administrator Debra Doda

Members of the Public Present at various times:

Justine Celentano, Town Clerk/Tax Collector
Phil Gladu, Fire Chief
David LaVita
Nancy Myette
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

There were neither additions nor deletions.

1.5 Public Comment

David LaVita posed a number of questions/comments he wished to ask about the prospective Solar Project. The Selectboard answered those that they could; the remainder will be passed along to the Solar Working Group.

1. The Federal Government is offering rebates to those who install solar farms. Will Chester receive this? (No, because the rebates go to the investors who actually pay for the project. The Town is not paying for it.)
2. What percentage of the Town’s electricity costs will be covered by solar?
3. He believes ReVision should have to pay the Town Impact Fees, as the Town is acting as a ‘salesperson’ for ReVision. (Chairman Myette noted that Impact Fees paid for services provided to residents by the Town; a Solar Project would not be receiving services.)
4. He believes the Town should wait 3-5 years before installing a Solar Project in order to take advantage of more advanced technology.
5. Did the Town consult with other Towns with Solar Projects to see what their income/savings were?

As no other Members of the Public wished to be heard, Public Comment was closed at 6:11pm.

II. Appointments

2.1 Fire Department Budget

Fire Chief Gladu appeared before the Selectboard to discuss some of the cuts that the Selectboard had made to his budget at last week’s meeting.

Cuts made, with his comments:

01-4220-1-4110.30	FD SALARIES - ON CALL FF	\$ 29,426	\$ 75,000	\$ 50,000	-33.33%
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He had previously sent justification for leaving this line at \$75k.

01-4220-1-4110.32	FD SALARIES - DAYTIME	\$ 24,431	\$ 65,000	\$ 57,600	-11.38%
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He is currently recruiting for a full-time Firefighter position; he will be unable to hire someone with the credentials necessary for this lowered figure.

01-4220-1-4110.34	FD SALARIES - LIEUTENANTS	\$ -	\$ 1	\$ 1	0.00%
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No comment.

102 01-4220-1-4140.05 FD EMS COORDINATION \$ - \$ 2,500 \$ 1 -99.96%

104 No comment.

106 01-4220-1-4390.31 FD ANNUAL TESTING \$ 5,749 \$ 9,000 \$ 8,000 -11.11%

108 He regularly spends over \$9k on this line, but not until May; thus, the line appears underspent at present.

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112 Chairman Myette reiterated that the Selectboard focused on underspent lines, and reminded Fire Chief Gladu that the Budget Committee was likely to press for additional cuts. Selectman Landau noted that if Fire Chief Gladu found a need for additional funds in any particular line, he could apply to the Selectboard for assistance; Fire Chief Gladu was not in favor of that option, and would prefer to have the budget figures he originally requested. With these cuts, he feels unable to plan his year.

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118 Vice-Chairman Couture asked Fire Chief Gladu to outline specifically which lines he wants to be restored, prioritize them, and allow the Selectboard to work with the Budget Committee on this.

120 Fire Chief Gladu departed the meeting at 6:51pm.

122 III. New Business

124 3.1 Landfill Post-Closure Report from Nobis

126 Chairman Myette noted that there is no remediation needed in this report, although there are a couple of maintenance-type Action Items – filling in of a rodent hole, and removal of vegetation from an area of riprap. It was also reported that the cap needs mowing, but this is not an Action Item.

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132 Darrell Quinn, who performs the cap maintenance, was present and joined the Selectboard to discuss the action items. He noted that the woodchuck hole is 20’ away from the landfill, and outside of the fence, but he will fill it in; he will also remove the vegetation. He plans to mow the cap in the Fall. He also suggested that the Selectboard consider putting the landfill post-closure report job out to bid again.

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138 Mr. Quinn departed the meeting at 7:02pm.

140 IV. Consent Agenda

142 4.1 Minutes - February 15th, 22nd, & 29th, 2024

144 *Vice-Chairman Couture moved to approve the Selectboard minutes from February 15th, 22nd, and 29th, 2024; Selectman Trask seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Selectwoman Theokas absent; motion carried.*

146 4.2 Landfill Post-Closure Report from Nobis

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Vice-Chairman Couture moved to allow Chairman Myette to sign the Nobis Landfill Post-Closure report; Selectman Landau seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Selectwoman Theokas absent; motion carried.

Chairman Myette signed the report.

4.3 Vacation Retention Personnel Policy

The Selectboard reviewed the latest iteration of the Vacation Retention Personnel Policy; there was a disagreement as to whether to delete the penultimate paragraph:

Any issue or request to carry any additional time shall be at the discretion of the Selectboard and requires a written request by the employee and verification by his/her Supervisor at least four (4) weeks prior to the end of any fiscal year in which the loss will occur in order that the Selectboard may review the situation.

Vice-Chairman Couture moved to delete the penultimate paragraph, as shown above; Chairman Myette seconded the motion for discussion purposes. The vote was two in favor, one opposed, and one abstention; motion carried. The paragraph will be deleted.

or the final paragraph:

It is understood by the Selectboard that Annual Leave is a time period where an employee can step away from the trials and tribulations of their daily work schedule and unless an emergency has occurred the employee should not be bothered with the day to day operation of the Town. If such interference occurs during Annual Leave, the employee is required to document the same to the Selectboard and supervisory personnel in a written form, to be placed in their Personnel File. An employee may be compensated for this interference, at the discretion of the Selectboard.

Vice-Chairman Couture moved to delete the final paragraph, as shown above; Chairman Myette seconded the motion for discussion purposes. The vote was one in favor and three opposed; the motion failed. The paragraph will not be deleted.

The policy will be reposted for employee input for ten (10) days.

V. Selectmen’s Business

5.1 Chairman’s Announcements

Chairman Myette announced the following meetings:

Monday, March 25 th , 2024 @ 7pm	Budget Committee – Main Meeting Room
Wednesday, March 27 th , 2024 @ 7pm	Planning Board – Main Meeting Room
Monday, April 1 st , 2024 @ 7pm	Budget Committee – Main Meeting Room
Monday, April 1 st , 2024 @ 7pm	Wason Pond Commission – Rangeway Meeting Room
Wednesday, April 3 rd , 2024 @ 6pm	School Board – Chester Academy
Wednesday, April 3 rd , 2024 @ 7pm	Planning Board – Main Meeting Room

200 Thursday, April 4th, 2024 @6pm Selectboard – Main Meeting Room

202 Chairman Myette announced the following events:

204 Tuesday, March 26th, 2024 from 7pm – 730pm Voter Registration Session – Room #6

206 Wednesday, March 27th through Friday, April 5th, 2024 Candidacy Filings

208 The timeframe to declare your intent to run for an open public office is 3/27 – 4/5, at the Town
210 Clerk’s Office during regular business hours. They will also be open from 3-5 on Friday, April 5th to
accept the Declaration of Candidacy forms.

212 Tuesday, April 9th, 2024 Deadline to submit a Petitioned Warrant Article

214 Saturday, April 13th from 9am – 12pm Annual Rabies Clinic – Rain or Shine at the Town Hall

216 The Town Clerk’s Office, in conjunction with Ark Animal Homecare, will be hosting a Rabies Clinic
218 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
220 and to pay in advance. The Town Clerk’s Office will be open during the clinic to process dog
licenses.

222 *5.2 Roundtable*

224 Selectman Landau:

- Nothing to report.

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Selectman Trask:

- Nothing to report.

230 Vice-Chairman Couture:

- The Solar Working Group is setting up various forms of communication for the Public –
232 meetings with the Seniors, a Community Forum at the end of April. They continue to perform a
market analysis.

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Chairman Myette:

- The Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee is having issues making quorum for its monthly
236 meetings. They are in search of new members, or ask current members that no longer attend
238 meetings to either resume doing so or resign. The Winter Fest was successful; perhaps next
year it could be held earlier in February with the hopes of having snow.

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5.3 Town Administrator’s Report

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No questions were raised.

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5.4 Action Items

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TA Doda pointed out that cuts were made last week to two budget lines that had originally been funded by motions, and as such the funding needed to be restored, or the question could be reconsidered.

One was for replenishment of mulch on the Wason Pond playground:

01-4520-2-4430.50	WP PLAYGROUND	\$	97	\$	500	\$ 1	-99.80%
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A motion had been made at the February 8th, 2024 meeting to increase this line to \$3,500. The Selectboard agreed to return this line to the originally motioned \$3,500.

01-4587-1-4680.08	TOWN FAIR FIREWORKS	\$	7,000	\$	7,000	\$ 8,000	14.29%
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Vice-Chairman Couture moved to reconsider the motion made at the February 8th, 2024 meeting to fund this line at \$8,500; Selectman Trask seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Selectman Landau abstaining; motion carried, and the motion from February 8th, 2024 will be reconsidered.

Vice-Chairman Couture moved to leave the Fireworks line at \$8,000, as discussed at the meeting of March 14th, 2024; Selectman Trask seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Selectman Landau opposed; motion carried, and the Fireworks line will remain at \$8,000.

5.5 Non-Public Session(s)

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, Couture – aye, Landau – aye, Theokas – absent, Trask – aye. The vote was four in favor with Selectwoman Theokas absent; motion carried.

The meeting was closed to the public at 7:28pm. Town Clerk/Tax Collector Justine Celentano remained in the Meeting Room.

TC/TX Celentano departed the meeting at 8:16pm.

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

The meeting was reopened to the public at 8:27pm.

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

Selectman Trask motioned to seal the minutes of the second non-public session on Reputation; Vice-Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Myette – aye, Couture –

aye, Landau – aye, Theokas – absent, Trask – aye. The vote was four in favor with Selectwoman Theokas absent; motion carried.

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

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

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

VI. Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra H Doda
Recording Secretary