

**Town of Chester  
Selectboard’s Meeting  
Thursday, October 19, 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)  
Rockingham Tower Update  
Wason Pond Wrangler 2024  
Highway Department Update  
Town Clerk/ Tax Collector Clerk Candidate  
Lane Road Repairs Funding  
Transfer Station Plow Bids  
Consent Agenda  
Chairman’s Announcements  
Roundtable  
TA Report  
Action Items  
Potential Non-Public Sessions  
Adjournment

*1.1 Call to Order*

Vice Chairman Couture called the meeting of the Chester Selectboard to order at 6:00pm.

*1.2 Roll Call*

Selectboard Present:

Steven M. Couture  
Richard S. Trask  
Dana Theokas  
Stephen O. Landau

Selectboard Absent:

Charles F. Myette

Town Administrator Debra H. Doda

Members of the Public Present at various times:

Justine Celentano, Town Clerk / Tax Collector  
Jessica Hatch

Melanie Parker  
James Piper, Supervisor of Roads  
Andrew Wickson

and other persons unknown to the Recording Secretary.

### *1.3 Pledge of Allegiance*

Vice Chairman Couture led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### *1.4 Chairman’s Additions or Deletions*

Vice Chairman Couture deleted 2.3 Dogs at Spring Hill Farm and Dump Road Discussion and added 2.5 Meet the TC/TX Clerk candidate and 3.2 Transfer Station bids.

### *Public Comment*

Vice Chairman Couture 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 Rockingham Tower Update*

Town Administrator Doda pointed out Chief Berube (not present) came to the Board on August 17<sup>th</sup> to discuss radio coverage in Chester Academy. The updates with the tower in Candia are still in process and will hopefully be done by early November. A motion was made at the August meeting to allow Rockingham County Sheriff’s Department sixty (60) days to complete the upgrade in Candia. After sixty (60) days, the Chief was authorized to move forward with a proposal of \$2,370.00 for engineering services at Chester Academy. TA Doda stated that it would be fiscally imprudent to expend the funds now as the upgrades were incomplete.

Selectman Landau stated that he had made the motion because he was concerned with the safety of the children. With the new information Selectman Landau is willing to amend the motion.

***Selectman Landau motioned to allow Rockingham County Sheriff’s Department an extension of sixty (60) days to complete the upgrade in Candia. Selectman Trask seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – absent, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With four in favor, the motion passed with Myette absent.***

Selectwoman Theokas pointed out in the email from Chief Berube that service has already improved.

### *2.2 Wason Pond Wrangler 2024*

Ms. Hatch announced they survived the first annual Wason Pond Wrangler and are looking for the Board’s blessing and support for the Wason Pond Wrangler in 2024.

A slide show was shown that highlighted the statistics, the recipients of the \$14K raised for charity, sponsors, and town partners from 2023. Ms. Hatch mentioned what is in store for the next wrangler.

Ms. Hatch will be going to a meeting with the Wason Pond Commission to ask for approval to keep the barn for storage.

***Selectman Trask motioned to allow the Wason Pond Wrangler to hold the event on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and to continue to utilize the barn for storage subject to Wason Pond Commission approval. Selectman Landau seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – absent, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With four in favor, the motion passed with Myette absent.***

Vice Chairman Couture thanked Ms. Hatch and Mr. Wickson for continuing the annual event.

*2.3 Dogs at Spring Hill Farm (deleted from the meeting)*

*2.4 Highway Department Update*

SOR Piper mentioned the hooped building has been installed. Town Administrator Doda will let Finance Officer Duffy (not present) know so it can be insured.

SOR Piper updated the Board on the new truck that will hopefully be delivered before Thanksgiving.

The Fremont Road Bridge deck was completed and because of some issues that arose once it was opened up, it went over budget.

SOR Piper pointed out roadside mowing was delayed. The rental mower was in an accident while in use by another customer, and was unavailable. The Highway Department has purchased a roadside mower, and the town has contracted with a local farmer to utilize their tractor.

At the end of the month, Busby will be in town grading the dirt roads.

*2.5 Town Clerk/ Tax Collector Clerk Candidate*

Vice Chairman Couture thanked Ms. Parker for coming in to meet the Board.

Ms. Parker stated she saw the ad and the job interested her. She has helped with her husband’s business and now that it has slowed, she has time on her hands to pursue something outside of her home.

Selectman Landau pointed out Ms. Parker cannot run for the Town Clerk/Tax Collector position as she is not a resident in town. Although there is not a contract for the position, there is an extensive amount of Town-paid training, and Selectman Landau inquired if she would be willing to stay for a couple of years. Ms. Parker understands and is willing to give the town two years.

Selectwoman Theokas questioned how she would adapt to working for someone vs working for herself. Ms. Parker has worked for other companies in the past.

Selectman Landau mentioned the Town Clerk’s office has confidential information and there are concerns with information getting out. Ms. Celentano mentioned there is a training module that will cover this.

***Selectwoman Theokas motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to 91-A:3(II) (b) employment. Selectman Landau seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – absent, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With four in favor, the motion passed with Myette absent.***

The meeting was closed to the public at 6:48 PM.

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

The meeting was reopened to the public at 7:03 PM.

### **III. New Business**

#### ***3.1 Lane Road Repairs Funding***

Town Administrator Doda presented the documents for the Lane Road expenditures. She feels it may be too early for DRA to approve use of the Unassigned Fund Balance. Selectman Trask feels this letter is putting them on notice that we may overspend our budget and there might need to be a freeze at the end of the fiscal year. If it is denied now, it can always be resubmitted.

***Selectwoman Theokas motioned to move forward with a public hearing on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, for the Lane Road emergency expenditures. Selectman Landau seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – absent, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With four in favor, the motion passed with Myette absent.***

Selectman Trask inquired if a public hearing for Dump Road and Dogs at Spring Hill Farm should be held on November 2<sup>nd</sup> as well. It was decided to hold all three at the November 2<sup>nd</sup> Selectboard meeting.

#### ***3.2 Transfer Station Plow Bids***

Vice Chairman Couture presented the one bid for the plowing at the Transfer Station. Selectman Trask inquired if it should be open longer for more bids to come in. The bid is \$442.00 over the budgeted amount.

***Selectwoman Theokas motioned to accept the bid of \$7,700.00 for the snow plowing at the Transfer Station. A roll call vote was taken Myette – absent, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With four in favor, the motion passed with Myette absent.***

### **IV Consent Agenda**

#### ***4.1 Intent to Cut***

#### ***4.2 Current Use Penalties and Warrant***

*Selectman Trask motioned to approve the consent agenda. Selectwoman Theokas seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – absent, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – abstained. With three in favor, the motion passed with Landau abstaining and Myette absent.*

## **V. Selectmen’s Business**

### *5.1 Chairman’s Announcements*

Vice Chairman Couture announced the following meetings:

Wednesday October 25, 2023                      Planning Board Meeting at 7:00pm

Wednesday November 1, 2023                      Planning Board Meeting at 7:00pm  
School Board Meeting 6:00pm

Thursday November 2, 2023                      Selectboard Meeting at 6:00pm

Vice Chairman Couture announced the following events:

Saturday October 21, 2023                      Household Hazardous Waste day in Atkinson from 9am to 12pm. It will be located at Woodlock Park across from the tennis courts (where the Brush & Recycling Center is located).

Saturday October 28, 2023                      Drug Take Back Day from 10am to 2pm at the Transfer Station.

Selectman Landau asked for the agenda items on the Planning Board’s meetings to be mentioned during the announcements. It was mentioned that the Planning Board’s agenda may not be available in time for the Selectboard meetings.

Selectwoman Theokas mentioned the playoff brackets have been released for Chester Academy soccer. The Boys soccer round 1 playoff game is at Derryfield tomorrow at 3:30pm and the girls quarter finals will be on Monday October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 3:30pm at Chester Academy.

### *5.2 Roundtable*

Selectwoman Theokas mentioned the Conservation Commission was recognized for their work in town by the NH Cooperative Extension.

Selectman Landau suggested selling the charger and batteries for the old scrubber now that the new one is in. With the donation of new chairs at Stevens Hall, perhaps there is another building that might be able to utilize the old chairs. Selectman Trask suggested asking some of the nonprofits in town if they want them.

Selectman Landau has been discussing crushing systems for cans and glass at the Transfer Station with Maintenance Director Cavanaugh (not present). Without crushing cans, we are mainly shipping air and the tipping fees are expensive. Vice Chairman Couture suggested putting together a

presentation with costs and savings for Board. Selectwoman Theokas thought this would be a great item for the department’s strategic plan.

Selectman Trask:  
*Nothing to report.*

Vice Chairman Couture  
*Nothing to report.*

### *5.3 Town Administrator’s Report*

Per a discussion at the previous Selectboard meeting, the Christ Covenant Church was asked if they would be interested in managing a Christmas tree and decorations for the center of town, but were unable to assist; they would, however, like to host a Carol Sing. Selectman Landau mentioned he might have a pine tree. He would need help picking the tree. Once it was selected, he would need assistance with cutting and delivering to the center of town. The decorations are in the municipal building.

Vice Chairman Couture mentioned the Town Fair Committee is down to two volunteers. He suggested we ask for volunteers. Town Administrator Doda will ask Recreation Director Reishus (not present) what the timeline is.

The repairs to the cannons have been completed by Don Brown. They look amazing.

### *5.4 Action Items*

Vice Chairman Couture mentioned there is a request to process payroll early due to holidays. The Board agreed it would be ok to process payroll early on November 9<sup>th</sup> and November 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Selectman Landau stated he would be sitting in front of the municipal building passing out candy on Halloween.

### *5.5 Non-Public Session(s)*

Vice Chairman Couture announced a non-public session on reputation.

***Selectman Landau motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to 91-A:3(II) (c) 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.***

The meeting was closed to the public at 7:33 PM.

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

The meeting was reopened to the public at 7:45 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 – absent, Trask– aye,***

*Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With four in favor, the motion passed with Myette absent.*

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

**VI. Adjournment**

*Selectman Landau moved to adjourn the meeting. Selectman Trask seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – absent, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With four in favor, the motion passed with Myette absent.*

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janis A. Jalbert  
Recording Secretary