

**Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen Meeting
Thursday, February 7th, 2019
Municipal Complex
Approved Minutes**

I. Preliminaries

Call the Meeting to Order
Roll Call
Pledge of Allegiance
Additions and Deletions
Public Comment
Approval of Minutes
Items for Signature
Appointment to Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee
Wason Pond Community Center Parking Lot
Budgets
Roundtable
Adjournment

1.1 Call to Order

Chairman Owens called this meeting of the Town of Chester Board of Selectmen to order at 7:00pm.

1.2 Roll Call

Selectmen present:

Cass Buckley (arrived at 7:02pm)
Steve D’Angelo
Joseph Hagan (arrived at 7:09pm)
Stephen Landau
Jeremy Owens

Members of the Public present, at various times:

Joe Burke, Chester Seniors
Kathy Burke, Chester Seniors
Bob Grimm, PACT
Chris Hadik, Wason Pond Commission
Kandy Knowlton, Library Director
Cindy LeBlanc
Chuck Myette, Conservation & Wason Pond Commissions
Nancy Myette
Corinna Reishus, Recreation Director
Michelle Trask, Recreation Commission
Penny Williams, Tri-Town Times
And other persons unknown to the Recording Secretary

1.3 Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Owens led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.4 Chairman’s Additions and Deletions

There were neither additions nor deletions.

1.5 Public Comment

As no Members of the Public wished to be heard, Public Comment was closed at 7:01pm.

II. Old Business

2.1 Approval of Minutes

An approval sheet for the previous weeks’ meeting minutes is in the signature folder.

2.2 Items for Signature

All members should review and sign items in the Signature Folder.

III. New Business

3.1 Appointment to Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee – Cindy LeBlanc

Mrs. LeBlanc appeared before the Selectmen in order to be appointed to the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee.

Mrs. LeBlanc has been attending the SHFAC meetings regularly, although not as a member. Selectman D’Angelo noted that she always has great ideas and he is in favor of her appointment.

Selectman D’Angelo moved to appoint Cindy LeBlanc as a regular member of the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee with a term to expire May 31st, 2021; Selectman Landau seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Vice-Chairman Buckley and Selectman Hagan yet to arrive; motion carried.

Mrs. LeBlanc will visit the Town Clerk’s office tomorrow to be sworn in. She departed the meeting at 7:02pm.

3.2 Wason Pond Community Center Parking Lot

Chris Hadik, Chuck Myette, and Corinna Reishus appeared before the Selectmen to discuss the parking lot at the Wason Pond Community Center.

Selectman Landau stated that the unpaved parking lot is difficult for seniors using a wheelchair or walker, especially in the winter. The handicap ramp also needs repair/replacement as it is not ADA compliant. He would like to have some sort of firm, stable, pervious surface installed connecting the handicap parking spaces to the ramp.

Mr. Hadik noted that the difficulty with pervious pavement is that it cannot be sanded; Selectman Landau suggested using a broom attachment on the John Deere tractor to sweep the snow away.

Mr. Myette stated that the Master Plan and the Conservation Easement govern what can and cannot be done at Wason Pond; Section 2.C specifically excludes an “impervious or paved parking lot, or any other impervious or paved surface”. He suggested that those documents, the Rockingham County Conservation District who holds the easement, and possibly the Attorney General should be consulted.

There used to be a circular drive in front of the building, but that was removed. Recreation Director Reishus referred to page 5 of the Easement, Section 3, Reserved Rights, subsection A iii, which reads “...the right to create pervious, unpaved parking areas...and the right to create and relocate permeable, unpaved roads to access such areas. This provision is an exception to Sections 2.C., D. and F., above.”

Selectman Landau will ask Groundskeeper John Dalrymple to measure the area that needs paving; Selectman D’Angelo suggested that the entire lot be measured. Mr. Myette will contact RCCD to discuss the subject once he has the measurements in hand.

Mr. Hadik, Mr. Myette, and Recreation Director Reishus departed the meeting table at 7:17pm.

3.3 Budgets

3.3.1 Senior Citizens

Joe Burke and Kathy Burke of the Chester Senior Citizens appeared before the Selectmen to defend their budget request. This request is for \$10,000, which is the same as last year’s budget and has remained unchanged since 2010.

The Seniors utilize the Town’s funds to defray the cost of various trips and activities throughout the year. Mr. Burke stated that their membership had grown approximately 20% from 2010 to 83 members at present, and that they would be grateful if the amount could be increased to perhaps \$13,000-\$15,000.

Selectman Landau moved to increase the Chester Senior Citizens’ budget to \$15,000; Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

Mr. Burke and Mrs. Burke departed the meeting at 7:22pm.

3.3.2 PACT

Bob Grimm of the PACT Committee appeared before the Selectmen to defend their budget request. This request is for \$5,940, which is an increase of 593900% over last year’s budget of \$1.

The \$5,940 is to pay for a two-year agreement with TelVue to provide cloud space and streaming services on the Town’s website. The reason the PACT Committee requests this amount to be paid with taxpayer funds rather than out of the PACT Fund is because the streaming services benefit all, not just the cable subscribers.

Vice-Chairman Buckley asked about the inventory; Mr. Grimm replied that the PACT Committee strove to have meetings available online in two days, and to leave them up for three months. They planned to create a request form on their page of the Town’s website in order that viewers might request items from the archive; until that is accomplished, the Committee is reachable by email.

Selectman Landau reminded all listening that minutes, not recordings, were the official record of all meetings.

Selectman D’Angelo asked if the Committee planned to broadcast live from the School; they do and are going to test the signal during the School’s February vacation week.

PACT has also submitted a Warrant Article and the amount requested from the PACT Fund was updated this week.

As the Selectmen had no further questions, Mr. Grimm departed the meeting at 7:29pm.

3.3.3 Village Cemetery Trustees

The Village Cemetery Trustees asked Selectman Landau to present their budget request to the rest of the Board. Their request is for \$30,784, which is an increase of 10.8% over last year’s budget request. This budget covers the Town’s ~14 historic cemeteries.

Selectman Landau stated that the Trustees wished to increase the hourly wage paid for Cemetery work to \$15/hour under line 01-4195-1-110, CEM Salaries, but to leave the total amount the same.

They wished to purchase two new leaf blowers and wheels/tires for the mowers under line 01-4195-1-740, CEM Equipment. They also plan to do some work at the Smith Road Cemetery under line 01-4195-1-690, CEM Miscellaneous.

Selectman Hagan asked about the Cemeteries’ income; Selectman Landau noted that a Special Revenue Fund had been set up via Warrant Article that restricted all income from the historic cemeteries to be spent on cemetery maintenance only via that fund, and that maintenance was required by statute.

The Selectmen had no further questions on this budget.

3.3.4 Patriotic

The Patriotic budget request is for \$1,000, which is the same as last year’s request. This request funds the purchase of flags for cemeteries and flagpoles.

The Selectmen had no questions on this budget.

3.3.5 Library

Library Director Kandace Knowlton appeared before the Selectmen to defend their budget request. This request is for \$165,910, which is an increase of 0.79% over last year’s budget.

Library Director Knowlton noted that the Library’s Assistant Director was retiring at the end of the month, and that after an evaluation of the position the hours were cut from 25 to 20.

She also noted that last year the Library gave out 194 new library cards, encompassing all age groups; previously they tended to average two per month.

As the Selectmen had no questions on this budget. Library Director Knowlton departed the meeting at 7:39pm.

3.3.6 Conservation, Wason Pond Cottage, Wason Pond Bathhouse, Wason Pond Commission

Mr. Hadik and Mr. Myette appeared before the Selectmen to defend these budget requests.

The Conservation Commission’s budget request is for \$954, which is an increase of 35.70% over last year.

Mr. Myette stated that the ConsCom had moved funds around in their budget. They have four new members, and as such the cost for meeting and seminar fees, 01-4619-1-560 CONS Dues Seminars,

has increased. They have finished the trail maps for Wason Pond and Spring Hill Farm, so the printing of trail maps, 01-4619-1-550 CONS Printing, has increased. These maps will also be posted on the Town’s webpage. Selectman D’Angelo asked about posting them at the locations themselves; Mr. Myette stated that perhaps buildings kiosks could be a good Scout project in the future.

The Wason Pond Cottage budget request is for \$1,080, which is the same as last year. The Selectmen had no questions on this budget.

The Wason Pond Bathhouse budget request is for \$280, which is the same as last year. The Selectmen had no questions on this budget.

The Wason Pond Commission budget request is for \$455, which is a decrease of 52.31% from last year’s request. Line 01-4541-1-432, WPC Conservation Development, has been deleted as it is now being paid out of the Conservation Fund.

As the Selectmen had no further questions, Mr. Hadik and Mr. Myette departed the meeting at 7:46pm.

3.3.7 Recreation, Wason Pond, Fireworks

Recreation Director Reishus and Michelle Trask, Chair of the Recreation Commission, appeared before the Selectmen to defend these budget requests.

The Recreation budget request is for \$64,771, a decrease of 0.61% from last year’s budget. Line 01-4520-1-570, REC Trash Removal, has been cut to \$1 as there is no longer need for a dumpster. Additionally, as the Recreation Department will not be having a Spring sport down at the Town Fields they are not going to pay for portable toilets at that time. Both the School and Chester Baseball use those fields in the Spring; if they want portables, they will have to pay for them. Vice-Chairman Buckley spoke in favor of shifting costs onto programs that are using the facilities.

The Wason Pond Recreation budget request is for \$9,443, an increase of 17.36% over last year’s budget. Line 01-4530-1-432, WP Heat/Oil Community Center, has increased as the cost of oil has risen. Line 01-4530-1-660, WP Portable Toilets/Playground has increased as there will now be two portable toilets at the Playground – one handicap, one standard – as previously only a handicap toilet was there and becomes terribly overused. It will be more economical to have two rather than paying to have the one swapped out twice every week.

Selectman Landau asked why the heating oil was not bundled with all the other Town buildings’ heating oil under the Maintenance budget. The other Selectmen did not object to the move, as long as it was possible to track each building’s individual usage; Finance Director Smith will be asked to make the change.

Recreation Director Reishus asked if the Groundskeeping Department still maintained the athletic fields in their budget; they do. Selectman Landau stated that they were currently working on the drainage at the French & Nichols fields.

The Town Fair Fireworks budget request is for \$7,000, the same as last year’s budget. The Fire Department normally manages this budget.

As the Selectmen had no further questions on these budgets, Recreation Director Reishus and Mrs. Trask departed the meeting at 8:02pm.

3.3.8 Welfare - Other Health Agencies, General Assistance, Intergovernmental

BOS AA Doda, as Welfare Director, was available to answer any questions the Selectmen might have on these budget requests.

The Other Health Agencies budget request is for \$23,050, the same as last year’s budget. The American Red Cross, line 01-4419-1-350, WR American Red Cross, had requested less money than last year, so the excess funds from that line were moved to 01-4419-1-364, WR Upper Room, an agency that serves many Chester residents without requesting much in aid.

The General Assistance budget request is for \$14,750, an increase of 6.12% over last year’s budget. Line 01-4442-1-690, GA Miscellaneous, has increased as there are no other line in this budget to assist residents with car expenses – car payment, insurance, gas, etc. – and this is a common request.

The Intergovernmental budget request is for \$4,512, the same as last year’s budget.

As the Selectmen had no further questions, Budget discussions ceased at 8:06pm.

IV. Selectmen’s Business

4.1 Roundtable

Selectman Landau:

- At this morning’s Department Heads meeting, there was a discussion about the newly installed flashing lights on top of the stop signs at the 102/121 intersection. When heading from Town Hall to the intersection, a tree in front of Stevens Hall blocks one’s view of the light. This tree has been trimmed extensively, as it impacts the overhead powerlines. He would like to determine whether the tree has any historical significance, and if not, have it removed, and a new tree planted where it will neither block the stop sign light nor impact the power lines. Vice-Chairman Buckley would prefer that the tree simply be trimmed. Selectman Landau will research its history; the subject will be addressed again later.
- There are three handicap parking spaces in front of the MPR, as well as the two in the circle; are all of those needed? The Selectmen agreed that although parking was at a premium at Town Hall, all of those are likely to be needed and as such decided not to remove any of them.
- A representative from Harriman is here today looking at the property in order to create engineering plans for the Police Department Space Needs Study.

Selectman D’Angelo:

- Also at this morning’s Department Heads meeting, there was a discussion about the lack of merit increases and the accompanying lack of communication about this subject from the Board of Selectmen.
- Selectman Landau had mentioned the salary matrix at this morning’s meeting and has three employee volunteers to assist with the project. Selectman Landau added that they plan to meet on Monday, February 11th at 1:00pm.
- Murphy Drive was also discussed. The subject is on the agenda for the Selectmen’s meeting of February 21st. The secondary egress road is in the CIP for 20/21 but can be moved forward should the Selectmen wish; Selectman D’Angelo suggested waiting until after the School District Meeting of Tuesday, March 12th to make any decision as full-day kindergarten will be discussed and voted on at that time. Selectman Landau is in favor of building a one-way exit road out to Stockman Hill; Vice-Chairman Buckley believes that would be a good long-term solution but, in any case, the Fire Department having a completely separate egress road is a good idea.

Selectman Hagan:

- Nothing to report.

Vice-Chairman Buckley:

- Nothing to report.

Chairman Owens:

- The Historical Society has asked permission to set up at table at Town Meeting to sell items; the Town Clerk and the Supervisors of the Checklist have no objections. The Selectmen were amenable to this request.
- The Town's median ratio has been calculated at 82.3%. A revaluation is currently ongoing and should be completed in August 2019.

4.2 Public Comment

As no Members of the Public wished to be heard, Public Comment was closed at 8:33pm.

V. Adjournment

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be Thursday, February 21st, 2019.

Vice-Chairman Buckley moved to adjourn the meeting; Selectman Landau seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra H. Doda
Recording Secretary