

**Town of Chester  
Board of Selectmen Meeting  
Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 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  
Chester Public Library Renovations  
Preliminary Revaluation Numbers  
Technical Review Committee  
Post Office Building  
Wason Pond Pounder  
Roundtable  
Non-Public Sessions  
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:

Steve D’Angelo  
Stephen Landau  
Jeremy Owens

Selectmen absent:

Cass Buckley  
Joseph Hagan

Members of the Public present, at various times:

Mary Jennings, Library Board of Trustees  
Kandace Knowlton, Library Director  
Paul McKenney, MRI  
Deb Munson, Library Board of Trustees  
Chuck Myette  
Nancy Myette  
Maria Veale  
Margaret Voss  
Penny Williams, Tri-Town Times  
And other persons unknown to the Recording Secretary

### *1.5 Pledge of Allegiance*

Chairman Owens led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### *1.6 Chairman’s Additions and Deletions*

There were neither additions nor deletions.

### *1.7 Public Comment*

Selectman Landau noted that it was the end of the winter season; both the Transfer Station and the Boy Scouts are happy to take damaged flags and dispose of them properly. Residents may bring those flags to the Selectmen’s Office if they are unable to bring them directly to the Transfer Station or the Boy Scouts.

As no Members of the Public wished to be heard, Public Comment was closed at 7:03pm.

## **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 Chester Public Library Renovations*

Library Director Kandace Knowlton and Library Board of Trustees members Mary Jennings and Deborah Munson appeared before the Selectmen to discuss the bids received from their RFP for Library Renovations.

Eight bids were received by the deadline of April 12<sup>th</sup> and were opened at the Library Board of Trustees meeting on April 16<sup>th</sup>. The bids ranged from a low of \$190,434 to a high of \$344,980. The Trustees and the architect reviewed all bids and unanimously preferred #7, not just because it was the low bidder but also due to a good reference. The bidder is currently working locally. Work would begin in September.

Library Director Knowlton estimates that, should the \$52k in the CIP drawdown Warrant Article be approved, the Library will have \$202k to put towards the renovations with potentially another ~\$20k from its current fundraiser.

Selectman Landau asked if they had a presentation for Town Meeting; they do not, although they have held several open houses. He recommended that they prepare a short one, perhaps five minutes, in order to let the residents know what was going on. They should be prepared to answer questions and might be able to garner more donations.

Selectman Landau also asked Library Director Knowlton and the Trustees about the Post Office building, which is planned to be discussed under Agenda item 3.4. Historical sidebar: the Post Office, which used to be a hardware store, was formerly connected to the Library, which used to be a barn. The Post Office would be amenable to giving up some of the building – space in the rear of the building, plus the second floor – should the library wish to expand into that section.

Selectman D’Angelo asked that they run the bids past the Technical Review Committee; they agreed.

Library Director Knowlton, Ms. Jennings, and Ms. Munson departed the meeting at 7:16pm.

### 3.2 Preliminary Revaluation Numbers

Paul McKenney from MRI appeared before the Selectmen to discuss the preliminary numbers gathered from the 2019 valuation process.

In the period of April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 through March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019, there were 255 listed, qualified sales:

<b>Type</b>	<b>Sales</b>	<b>Value Increase</b>
Residential	190	25%
Condominium	35	22%
Vacant Land	14	8%
Commercial	2	22%
Mobile Home	14	N/A
Total	255	23%

The 2018 assessed value was \$606,406,300; the 2019 assessed value is \$747,845,866, an increase of \$141,439,566. The overall median assessment to sales ratio is now 98.13%, well within the IAAO (International Association of Assessing Officers) standard of 90% - 110%; it would have been 78% without the revaluation. The revaluation will solve the Assessing Department’s software problem and complete the move from Visions to Avitar.

Each household will be mailed a letter on May 10<sup>th</sup> explaining their home’s new value and offering them the opportunity to schedule a meeting to discuss the valuation, should they wish to do so. Calls to schedule appointments will be taken from May 10<sup>th</sup> through 24<sup>th</sup> (appointments can also be scheduled online) and appointments will be scheduled between May 16<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, at Town Hall. BOS AA Doda will reserve a meeting room for MRI for these dates.

Selectman D’Angelo asked whether one’s house increasing in value by ~23% also meant that the tax bill would increase ~23%; this is not so. In general, when a house’s assessment increases, the tax rate decreases. There is, however, no way to know what the tax rate will be until it is set in October; it will take effect on the December 2019 tax bill.

Selectman Landau asked if one put a fixed addition onto a mobile home if it was still valued as a mobile home; Mr. McKenney stated that one needed to consider what the market would bring, and that perhaps the two different sections would be assessed differently. He added that mobile home values are no longer depreciating as they had previously because all home values are rising.

Selectman D’Angelo asked if this information could be posted on the Town’s website; Mr. McKenney will speak with Assistant Assessor Packard. Selectman Landau asked if the Town should still consider

the ‘average house’ to be \$350k; Mr. McKenney will research and come up with the median value.

The next revaluation will take place in 2024. Selectman Landau is not in favor of the state constitutionally mandated five-year revaluation cycle; he would prefer that it be based on the economy, not on the calendar.

As the Selectmen had no further questions, Mr. McKenney departed the meeting at 7:30pm.

### *3.3 Technical Review Committee*

The ad-hoc Technical Review Committee that was formed in April at the behest of the Selectmen has met and drafted a list of their purpose and processes. Town Counsel Diane Gorrow has advised the Selectmen that they cannot draw up an ordinance compelling the use of the TRC, as it is the purview of the Planning Board; however, they can make it a policy that all projects and events must go through this Committee.

**Selectman D’Angelo moved to authorize the Technical Review Committee to provide advisory oversight for all events, use of Town facilities, subdivisions, site plan reviews, zoning applications, conditional use applications, and construction in or to Town buildings; Selectman Landau seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Vice-Chairman Buckley and Selectman Hagan absent; motion carried.**

### *3.4 Post Office Building*

A property acquisition firm has contacted the Town about purchasing the Ruth Ray building. It was noted that if the Town did wish to sell the property, the request would have to go through Town Meeting, so in any case it could not be decided until May 2020.

**Selectman Landau moved to inform the property acquisition firm that the Town is not interested in selling the Ruth Ray building; Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Vice-Chairman Buckley and Selectman Hagan absent; motion carried.**

### *3.5 Wason Pond Pounder*

Maria Veale appeared before the Selectmen to discuss the Wason Pond Pounder.

Last year’s Pounder had some incidents where visitors on horseback were recalcitrant when asked to stay off the trails for safety reasons. As a result, the Chester Charitable Foundation has requested that the Selectmen restrict horses from the Wason Pond property from 3pm Friday, May 10<sup>th</sup> when they begin to place obstacles on the trails through 3pm on Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup> when the event is over, and cleanup begins.

As Chuck Myette, Chairman of the Wason Pond Commission, was present, the Selectmen invited him to join the conversation. Mr. Myette concurs with Ms. Veale, stating that the Selectmen do have the authority to make this decision and encouraging them and the Foundation to post signs and volunteers at all possible entrances to the property. There will be a Police detail and Ranger John Wright on site to assist.

Ms. Veale stated that the Foundation could always use more volunteers, especially people to monitor the obstacles from 11am to 1pm on Saturday. Volunteers will park at the Fellowship Bible Church on

Rod & Gun Club Road and be shuttled to the property; participants will park at Aggregate in Raymond and be shuttled.

**Selectman D’Angelo moved to ban horses from the Wason Pond property starting Friday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 3:00pm until Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm; Selectman Landau seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Vice-Chairman Buckley and Selectman Hagan absent; motion carried.**

Ms. Veale wished to publicly thank the Chester Seniors for their support. She and Mr. Myette departed the meeting table at 7:46pm.

#### **IV. Selectmen’s Business**

##### *4.1 Roundtable*

*Selectman Landau:*

- Nothing to report.

*Selectman D’Angelo:*

- Town Counsel Gorrow was a guest at this month’s Department Heads meeting and provided information on CIP spending. He would like her explanation added to the Planning Board’s policies and procedures.
- Another topic discussed at the Department Heads meeting was workplace safety; he would like to move forward with handling this. There have been a number of threats made by visitors to employees this week, which is unacceptable. Residents are reminded to treat the employees with dignity and respect. Selectman Landau added that one might think they’re only making a joke, but in today’s climate this is not funny. The Selectmen agreed to set up a Safety Working Group to put together a plan.
- A flyer containing the Budget and Warrant for this year’s Town Meeting should be in residents’ mailboxes by the end of the week. Selectman Landau added that the Town Report books should be available early next week. He urged residents to show up for Elections and Town Meeting; this is how the tax rate is determined.

*Chairman Owens:*

- The Supervisors of the Checklist are holding a Voter Registration session on Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019 from 11am to 12pm at Town Hall.
- Elections are Tuesday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019 from 7am to 7pm in the MPR. If you have not yet registered to vote, you may do so at the polls.
- Town Meeting is Thursday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019 starting at 6pm in the MPR. You may not register to vote at Town Meeting.

##### *4.2 Non-Public Session*

**Selectman Landau moved that the Board go into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (c) Reputation; Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Vice-Chairman Buckley and Selectman Hagan absent; motion carried.**

The meeting room was closed at 7:59pm. Margaret Voss remained in the meeting room.

Mrs. Voss departed the meeting room at 8:04pm.

The meeting room was re-opened at 8:36pm.

**Chairman Owens moved that the Board come out of non-public session; Selectman D'Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Vice-Chairman Buckley and Selectman Hagan absent; motion carried.**

**Selectman D'Angelo moved that the minutes to the first non-public session on Reputation be sealed for thirty (30) days; Selectman Landau seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Vice-Chairman Buckley and Selectman Hagan absent; motion carried.**

**Selectman Landau moved that the minutes to the second non-public session on Reputation be sealed for an indefinite period; Selectman D'Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Vice-Chairman Buckley and Selectman Hagan absent; motion carried.**

## **V. Adjournment**

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

**Selectman D'Angelo moved to adjourn the meeting; Chairman Owens seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Vice-Chairman Buckley and Selectman Hagan absent; motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra H. Doda,  
Recording Secretary