

**Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen Meeting
Thursday, July 11th, 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
Public Hearing: Building Permit Fees
Final Assessment Values Approval
PACT Committee
Wason Pond
Pavilion Engineering Funding
CIP
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 7:02pm.

1.2 Roll Call

Selectmen present:

Steve D’Angelo
Stephen Landau
Chuck Myette
Jeremy Owens

Selectmen absent:

Joseph Hagan

Members of the Public present, at various times:

Myrick Bunker, Building Inspector
Briana Demers, PACT
Bob Grimm, PACT
Scott Marsh, MRI
Paul McKenney, MRI
Nancy Myette
Jean Packard, Assistant Assessor
Michael Weider, Planning Board
And possibly 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*

Michael Weider stood and was recognized. He wished to correct a statement that he had made at the June 27th meeting, that PACT Chairman Bob Grimm had been present at a Planning Board meeting in November 2018 when the CIP was discussed; this was not so. Chuck Heuer and Briana Demers had been present, but not Mr. Grimm.

There was an additional brief dispute about Mr. Weider’s visit to the above referenced meeting; Selectman D’Angelo was concerned that Mr. Weider represented his position on the PACT funding as being that of the Budget Committee, and yet the Committee had not met before attending the Selectmen’s meeting so that was not possible. Mr. Weider began to provide a timeline of the Planning Board’s communications with the PACT Committee, but Chairman Owens asked that this discussion be terminated and continued at a future BOS meeting.

As no other Members of the Public wished to be heard, Public Comment was closed at 7:11pm.

II. Old Business

2.1 *Approval of Minutes*

There are unapproved minutes in the Signature Folder; please review them and indicate changes or approval.

2.2 *Items for Signature*

All members should review and sign items in the Signature Folder. **Selectman Landau moved to authorize Chairman Owens to sign the Granite State Analytical water testing contract; Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Selectman Hagan absent; motion carried.**

III. New Business

3.1 *Public Hearing: Building Permit Fees*

Selectman Landau moved to open the Public Hearing on Building Permit Fees at 7:10pm; Vice-Chairman Myette seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Selectman Hagan absent; motion carried.

Selectman Landau is concerned that if permit fees are too high, people will build without them. He referenced the fee for barns, which appear to be \$51 per square foot of area. Building Inspector Bunker demurred and pointed out the first paragraph of the fees document, explaining that the fees

are calculated using the estimated construction cost multiplied by \$7.00 per \$1000 of said construction cost. In this case, an outbuilding (such as a barn)’s construction cost is estimated at the previously mentioned \$51.00 per square foot of area, calculated by the square footage of the outside perimeter of the structure, per story. As an example, a 20’ x 20’ single story outbuilding contains 400 square feet; 400 * \$51 equals an estimated construction cost of \$20,400. The permit fee would then be calculated at \$7 per \$1000 of that construction cost, which is $((\$20,400 / \$1000) * \$7)$, or \$142.80. He added that this is the same document he received when he first became the Town’s Building Inspector; the only thing that has changed is the dollar figures. The figures come from the International Code Council (ICC) Building Valuation Data of August 2018.

The Selectmen asked Building Inspector Bunker to bold the first paragraph in order that the method of calculation is clearer to applicants. They also asked that he cite the ICC information in a footnote.

There was some discussion about tents; those under 400sf or on owner-occupied private property are exempt from permit fees. The Selectmen also asked that this be cited clearly.

As neither the Selectmen nor the members of the public in attendance had questions, Building Inspector Bunker departed the meeting table. The Public Hearing will remain open until at least 8:10pm and members of the public with questions should feel free to voice them.

3.2 *Final Assessment Values Approval*

Scott Marsh and Paul McKenney from MRI along with Assistant Assessor Jean Packard appeared before the Selectmen to go over the Town’s final property values based on the Town’s revaluation process and any subsequent hearings.

Hearing notices were mailed out May 9th, with hearings scheduled through May 29th. 137 hearings were requested, which is less than 5% of the Town’s population, and additional on-site inspections took place. Many of the hearings were requested as the assessor had been unable to access the interior of the resident and details were incorrect. Other residents were concerned with how the new valuation would affect their property taxes, but that figure could not be calculated at this time.

The 2019 Preliminary Value was \$605,123,580; the Final Value \$743,753,644. This is a difference of \$138,630,064. The overall change is 23%, with sales broken down as:

157	Residential	25%
14	Vacant	8%
36	Condominiums	22%
2	Commercial	30%

Mr. McKenney thanked Assistant Assessor Packard for her assistance with this project as well as the ongoing conversion from Vision Appraisal to Avitar. The Avitar site will be updated when the figures have been approved.

Selectman Landau, who noted that he is opposed to strictly scheduled revaluations in general, inquired about one particular property: the *North Chester Ladies’ Aid Society*, a property which was formerly valued at \$95,700 and is now valued at \$141,700. This property is an old schoolhouse, no electricity, insulation, or indoor plumbing, set on 4/10th of an acre of land. How could it possibly be valued at \$141,700? It was explained that this building is considered an ‘antique’ (100-plus years old, various characteristics that add value, definitely a niche market) and is assessed differently than

other properties – valued at an additional \$10-15 per square foot in general.

There was an additional conversation about utilities valuation, which have not been updated; they will be handled by the Town’s utilities appraiser, George Sansoucy, and the figures will be available in late August, right before the MS-1 is due. Mr. Marsh added that the Town had until September 1st to make any changes.

Selectman D’Angelo moved to accept the 2019 Final Valuation as provided by MRI, excluding utilities and including any changes made by September 1st; Selectman Landau seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Selectman Hagan absent; motion carried.

Mr. Marsh, Mr. McKenney, and Assistant Assessor Packard departed the meeting at 7:45pm.

3.3 PACT Committee

PACT Committee Chairman Bob Grimm and Station Coordinator Briana Demers appeared before the Selectmen to continue discussions on the TV Station’s needs.

Mr. Grimm began by suggesting that when one Committee makes a decision that impacts another Committee, that decision should be communicated by the former to the latter.

The PACT Committee plans to begin Phase I of their equipment needs (\$14,500, from the PACT Fund), and to phase in the change from TelVue to Tightrope, the streaming service (\$5,895, from the PACT Budget in the General Fund).

Ms. Demers also has a proposal from Unique Media Systems to consult, design, engineer, set-up, configure, wire, and/or train on the newly purchased equipment. The total price varies depending on which modules are chosen but could be somewhere in the \$2,500 - \$3,000 range, depending on how much training is needed. A decision will be made at the next PACT Committee meeting.

Mr. Grimm noted that the PACT Committee has recently lost members and is now down to five full members rather than seven, which can make it difficult to achieve a quorum of four; is it possible to change the make-up of the Committee? It was decided that as there were only five full members remaining, the quorum would be three instead.

Ms. Demers and Mr. Grimm departed the meeting at 8:04pm.

3.4 Wason Pond

It has been suggested that a parking ordinance be drafted for at Wason Pond somewhat like the one at Rye Beach, with parking permits for residents and a solar-powered ‘pay and display’ station for non-residents. The ordinance would include fines for unpaid or illegal parking. Selectman D’Angelo will contact Rye Beach for information.

It was also noted that there is an old sand/gravel pit at Spring Hill Farm that is now a pond. The area could be cleaned up and designated as for residents only; this idea was popular.

Various other complaints with Wason Pond were raised; dogs swimming in the pond, although the rules state that dogs must be leashed at all times; horses being ridden on the ballfields and tearing up the turf; people jumping off the bridge roof. Chairman Owens will consult with Police Chief Aaron

Berube about these problems.

The Selectmen suggested a joint meeting between themselves and the Wason Pond Committee to discuss all these issues.

3.1 Public Hearing: Building Permit Fees, Redux

As neither the Selectmen nor members of the public in attendance had any further comments to make, the Public Hearing ended at 8:23pm.

Selectman Landau moved to close the Public Hearing on Building Permit Fees at 8:23pm and accept the new fee schedule with the requested clarifications; Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Selectman Hagan absent; motion carried.

Building Inspector Bunker departed the meeting at this time.

3.5 Pavilion Engineering Funding

Vice-Chairman Myette stated that a pavilion at Wason Pond had always been planned and was in the CIP. He had asked the Timber Framers Guild to give him an estimate for materials, engineering, etc.; the total came to \$4,150. At the June 20th meeting, the Selectmen voted to use encumbered funds from the CIP to pay for this engineering; consultation with Town Counsel and Finance Director Smith showed that this was impermissible.

Vice-Chairman Myette stated that the Conservation Commission had recently received an ~\$8,000 check from Dick Lewis for some hemlock cut from Town owned property, and had asked Finance Director Smith if that money could be used to pay for the engineering; she thought that it could. On top of the \$4,150 for the plans, there is a need for ~\$1,000 for soil testing.

Selectman Landau stated that the Recreation Department was not in favor of this pavilion, and he would rather see the tree cutting money go towards the Wason Pond Community Center with Maintenance funds being used to purchase the plans.

Mike Weider stood and was recognized. He stated that the Recreation Department has \$39,273 in Impact Fees, and that the Selectmen had the authority to use those funds for the Pavilion engineering.

Selectman D’Angelo moved to take \$5,150 out of the Recreation Department Impact Fees for design and soil testing for the Wason Pond Pavilion; Selectman Landau seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Vice-Chairman Myette abstaining and Selectman Hagan absent; motion carried.

3.5 CIP

(This subject was originally raised during Roundtable, but as the discussion went on for quite some time, it has been pulled out into its own subject.)

Selectman D’Angelo expressed concern with what he sees as a lack of communication from the Planning Board about the CIP, citing the PACT situation as an example. He also asked why the Planning Board had stopped using the ‘scoring system’. He wants to be sure that the Selectmen’s priorities are utmost.

Selectman Landau suggested that after the vetting is done, the Selectmen be copied on the notification to the Department Head.

Mr. Weider replied that the Selectmen do have the final authority on spending; the Planning Board simply follows the process and approves items to be added to Table 10. The Selectmen could have returned the PACT request to the CIP, if they had attended the meeting where it was deleted. He added that as PACT is not eligible for Impact Fees, any equipment they purchased would have been 100% taxpayer funded. Impact fees can only be used on items already in the CIP.

He added that in 2008 the State voted to allow Cable Committees to have a revolving fund, with Selectmen as agents to expend; why hadn’t this been created?

Selectman D’Angelo opined that Mr. Weider being on both the Planning Board and the Budget Committee gave him a disproportionate amount of input into the CIP; Mr. Weider demurred, stating that he was only one member and that the process was working. He suggested that the Selectmen have power that they are not utilizing.

IV. Selectmen’s Business

4.1 Roundtable

Selectman Landau:

- The Trustees will be in Town the week of July 22nd through 26th. They will be assisting with moving items from the Maintenance Garage into the Stevens Hall basement. Chairman Owens asked if the arrangement for the American Legion to use the Maintenance Garage had been finalized; Selectman Landau replied that he wanted it to be a handshake deal, and added that as the building formerly housed salt, it might not be the best place to store maintenance equipment. He would prefer to store items that might rust elsewhere, perhaps in a container.
- The Selectmen have received a letter from Governor Sununu’s office, inviting them to send one representative to a meeting on his budget scheduled for July 19th. He would like to attend, if no other Selectman is interested. **Selectman D’Angelo moved to send Selectman Landau to the Governor’s budget meeting; Vice-Chairman Myette seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Selectman Hagan absent; motion carried.** BOS AA Doda will contact the Governor’s office to RSVP.
- There are several dogs in Town that are not yet registered, even though their owners have been notified multiple times and the Town Clerk’s Office hosted a rabies clinic. If dogs are deceased, owners should notify the Town Clerk’s office; if they have trouble paying the licensing fee, they should contact the Board of Selectmen’s Office.
- He has three items for non-public session.

Selectman D’Angelo:

- As requested, Town Counsel reviewed both the Nobis and Wilcox & Barton proposals for the annual landfill monitoring contract. There appear to be minor differences – one is slightly less expensive and calls for two reports instead of one, but both are quality firms. **Selectman D’Angelo moved to award the Landfill Monitoring contract for FY19-20 to Nobis; Vice-Chairman Myette seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Selectman Hagan absent; motion carried.**
- Recreation Director Corinna Reishus has asked for clarification on a request to waive event

insurance from a local non-profit organization; the Selectmen have waived the requirement for other organizations in the past. Selectman D’Angelo would like to know from Town Counsel and Primex what the Town’s liability is should they do this.

Vice-Chairman Myette:

- There is beaver activity in Wason Pond under a bridge; Kristina Snyder of the Conservation Commission believes it is not a major problem and will be handling this. Residents should notify the ConsCom if they have issues.
- The Conservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing at 7:00pm on Tuesday, July 23rd to review properties they are considering purchasing. Two properties are owned by the Illig family, contiguous to properties off Norton Road down to the pond, and two by Scott Currier on the Chester/Sandown town line.
- The Conservation Commission is sponsoring a talk on Wednesday, July 24th about Forest and Wildlife Habitats. Refreshments begin at 6:30pm; the program begins at 7:00pm.

Chairman Owens:

- He reminded residents that they may sign up to be notified via email when new information is posted on the Town’s website – look for the button entitled, “Subscribe Me”.
- Tomorrow morning - Friday, July 12th - at 8:00am, the Town Administrator Working Group will be meeting with John Scruton, who will be serving as advisor during the Town’s search for a Town Administrator.

4.2 Non-Public Session

Selectman Landau moved that the Board go into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (a) Public Employees and (c) Reputation; Vice-Chairman Myette seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Selectman Hagan absent; motion carried.

The meeting room was closed at 9:24pm.

The meeting room was re-opened at 9:48pm.

Selectman Landau moved that the Board come out of non-public session; Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Selectman Hagan absent; motion carried.

Selectman Landau moved that the minutes to the first non-public session, on Reputation, be sealed for an indefinite period; Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with 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 four in favor with Selectman Hagan absent; motion carried.

Selectman Landau moved that the minutes to the third non-public session, on Public Employees, be sealed for an indefinite period; Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Selectman Hagan absent; motion carried.

V. Adjournment

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be Thursday, July 25th, 2019.

Selectman Landau moved to adjourn the meeting; Chairman Owens seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Selectman Hagan absent; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:48pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra H. Doda,
Recording Secretary