

**Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen Meeting
Thursday, September 19th, 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
Ryan’s Sugar Shack
Loranger Property Purchase
MS1, Utility Valuations, and Town Mapping Program
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 7:01pm.

1.2 Roll Call

Selectmen present:

Steve D’Angelo
Joseph Hagan
Stephen Landau
Chuck Myette
Jeremy Owens

Members of the Public present, at various times:

Victor Chouinard, Conservation Commission
Emily Kunelius, Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee
Nancy Myette
Ryan Neal
Jean Packard, Assistant Assessor
Penny Williams, Tri-Town Times
And possibly 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 7:02pm.

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 Folders.

III. New Business

3.1 Ryan’s Sugar Shack

Ryan Neal appeared before the Selectmen along with Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee (SHFAC) Chairman Emily Kunelius to request a renewal of his lease to tap maple trees on Spring Hill Farm property.

Mr. Neal attended the SHFAC meeting of Monday, September 16th to obtain permission from that group before approaching the Selectmen. Ms. Kunelius noted that their permission had been granted.

Mr. Neal stated that last year he had donated the equivalent of \$562.50 worth of maple syrup products to the Town for events such as the Library’s Breakfast with Santa. He also conducted tours for and gave speeches to Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, School Youth Groups, etc.

Town Counsel Diane Gorrow had reviewed the lease he had provided and asked that he include an insurance provision. He has requested a Certificate of Insurance from his provider but has yet to receive the paperwork. It was suggested that the Selectmen, if they wish, could consider granting him a conditional approval contingent upon receipt of the Certificate of Insurance, at which time they could sign the lease. As it does not take effect until January 20th, time is not of the essence.

Mr. Neal had noted at the SHFAC meeting that he had observed a trail crossing into the Raymond portion of the Spring Hill Farm property; Ms. Kunelius discovered that a Raymond resident had developed/improved upon an existing logging trail.

Selectman Landau commended Mr. Neal for his work.

Selectman Landau moved that the Selectmen approve the lease with Ryan’s Sugar Shack to tap maple trees on the Spring Hill Farm property Chester Map and Lot 011-048-000 and 011-052-000, and Raymond Map and Lot 007-000-002-000, contingent upon the receipt of his Certificate of Insurance; Vice-Chairman Myette seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

Mr. Neal thanked the Selectmen and departed the meeting at 7:06pm.

Ms. Kunelius announced that the Spring Hill Farm Fall Fest is scheduled for Saturday, October 5th, with a rain date of Sunday, October 6th. Parking will be between the greenhouse and the road; Vice-Chairman Myette plans to mow it on Saturday.

Selectman D’Angelo asked Ms. Kunelius about the cattle grazing on the Spring Hill Farm property; she stated that the project is working out well and that they would be happy to lease the property to this owner again should he be interested.

Selectman D’Angelo also suggested that Town Fair be moved to a combination of Spring Hill Farm and Wason Pond properties, due to the lack of parking at the School; Vice-Chairman Myette demurred, stating that parking was even worse at those two areas. Ms. Kunelius added that the hay fields were difficult to traverse as they were not at all level.

Ms. Kunelius departed the meeting at 7:08pm.

3.2 Loranger Property Purchase

Victor Chouinard, Chairman of the Conservation Commission, appeared before the Selectmen to solicit their signatures on the Purchase and Sale agreement for a property the Conservation Commission is interested in purchasing.

Paul Loranger, an Exeter resident, is the owner of 46 acres on Fremont Road, described as Map 9 Lot 92. The ConsCom has walked the property and finds it to be a good value for money with a logging road that can be followed to the 2,100 feet of frontage on the Exeter River. Mr. Loranger could develop it into six residential lots but is willing to sell it to the Town for conservation land instead for \$230k, the amount on his 2015 appraisal.

Selectman Hagan asked if there were any maintenance costs involved with purchasing this property; Mr. Chouinard stated that there were not, no more than any other piece of conservation land.

Selectman Landau moved to sign the Purchase and Sale Agreement to purchase 46 acres of land described as Map 9 Lot 92 along Fremont Road and the Exeter River from Paul Loranger as requested by the Conservation Commission; Vice-Chairman Myette seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

Mr. Chouinard departed the meeting at 7:23pm.

3.3 MS1, Utility Valuations, and Town Mapping Program

Assistant Assessor Jean Packard appeared before the Selectmen to answer any questions they might have on the MS1 as well as demonstrate the Town’s new mapping program from CAI Tech.

All entries for the MS1 have been made, including changes made after residents with concerns met with the Assessors during the designated timeframe. Base assessments went up ~26%, so the tax rate should decrease by approximately that amount, depending on spending.

Assistant Assessor Packard noted that the Town is permitted to include an overlay of up to 5% during a revaluation year to account for abatements. Overlay is calculated from the previous year’s tax

commitment, which is ~\$12m; therefore, as Selectman Hagan calculated, a 5% overlay would be ~\$600k, which is quite a bit. Selectman D’Angelo would like to see any unused portion of the overlay used to repair roads, but Selectman Landau would prefer to see it used to lower taxes.

The Selectmen signed the MS1.

Assistant Assessor Packard then demonstrated the Town’s new mapping program from CAI Tech, which had been demonstrated earlier this week at the monthly Department Heads meeting. This program has many features that appear to be extremely useful to both employees and residents in the form of ‘layers’ that can be turned on and off. Existing features include things like abutters lists, topographical maps, flood zones, location services, areas of interest, etc. Department Heads had suggested layers that could be ‘staff only’ such as catch basin, culvert, and cistern locations, permits, etc. Adding a ‘staff only’ section would cost \$950 to set up plus an annual maintenance fee of \$500 on top of the \$2,400 annual fee to maintain the entire program.

As the property lines and roads are being transferred over from the Town’s existing USGS flat maps, they do not always line up due to actual topography and should be ‘orthorectified’. Among other things, this prevents accurate measurements. The cost for this rectification is estimated at \$15k, and she plans to submit a Warrant Article for the upcoming Town Meeting for this project.

Selectman Landau stated that the Boy Scouts were currently performing the Town’s perambulations and have GPS coordinates and photographs of monuments. He will forward this information to Assistant Assessor Packard. April 1st is the start of the assessing year, and all surveying information received in the past year is sent to the mappers at that time.

It is currently in the ‘preview’ phase, so any changes can be made at no charge. They hope to go live at the beginning of October.

Assistant Assessor Packard departed the meeting at 7:52pm.

IV. Selectmen’s Business

4.1 Roundtable

Selectman Landau:

- The Rockingham County Jail trustees have been in Town this week and have finished the painting of the Highway Garage.
- When the Town Administrator is hired, where will that employee’s office be? He suggested that the ZBA Admin and her files be moved into the Supervisors of the Checklist office, as they use it rarely, and that the Conservation files be moved into Room 20A. The other Selectmen would like a tour of the offices in question.

Selectman D’Angelo:

- He had attended the Highway Safety Committee this week, and the following issues were discussed:
 - move Town Fair away from the Town Fields due to parking issues
 - a blind curve on Fremont Road
 - DOT’s proposed roundabout at the center of Town. Selectman D’Angelo believes that DOT will attend Town Meeting to discuss; Selectman Landau disagreed.
 - ownership of the parcel of land in front of the General Store; apparently the State believes

that it owns this property, whereas the Town believes that it’s Town owned land. **Selectman Landau moved to ask Town Counsel to research ownership of the “Town Common”; Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.**

Selectman Hagan:

- The scarecrows are starting to appear - he thanked the Historical Society for their volunteerism that helps to make the Town great.

Vice-Chairman Myette:

- Road Agent Oleson has prepared a sketch of the proposed parking lot stabilization at the Wason Pond Community Center along with answers to the questions posed by RCCD; BOS AA Doda will forward the information to them.

Chairman Owens:

- The Safety Policy may need to be amended in order to add the Town Administrator.
- Mosquito trapping has begun; 20 mosquitos will be sent to the State for testing. Please do not disturb the traps.

4.2 Non-Public Session

Selectman Landau moved that the Board go into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (c) Reputation and (e) Pending Litigation; Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

The meeting room was closed at 8:08pm.

The meeting room was re-opened at 8:34pm.

Selectman D’Angelo moved that the Board come out of non-public session; Selectman Hagan seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

The minutes to the first non-public session, on Pending Litigation, will remain unsealed.

Selectman D’Angelo moved that the minutes to the second non-public session, on Reputation, be sealed for a period of ninety (90) days; Chairman Owens seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

Selectman Landau moved that the minutes to the third non-public session, on Reputation, be sealed for an indefinite period; Chairman Owens seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

Selectman Landau moved that the minutes to the fourth non-public session, on Reputation, be sealed for an indefinite period; Chairman Owens seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

V. Adjournment

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be Thursday, September 26th, 2019.

Selectman Landau moved to adjourn the meeting; Selectman D'Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra H. Doda,
Recording Secretary