

**Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen Meeting
Thursday, October 17th, 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
Budgets
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
Jeremy Owens

Selectmen absent:

Chuck Myette

Members of the Public present, at various times:

Aaron Berube, Police Chief
Greg Bolduc, Fire Chief
Rich Czarnek, Transfer Station Supervisor
Phil Gladu, Emergency Management Director
Andrew Hadik, Planning Coordinator
Michael Oleson, Road Agent
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

3.2 Budgets

3.2.1 Highway Department

Road Agent Oleson appeared before the Selectmen to defend his budget request. The Highway Department is requesting \$751,165, which is an increase of 0.81% over the current year’s budget.

He explained that due to the generous amount of road funding voted in at Town Meeting, he was able to reduce many road maintenance lines, and if the Town continues to fund roadwork in the same manner, these reductions will continue. He did add, however, that five of the trees that had come down during last night’s storm were ones that he had planned to remove if his Warrant Article for a Roadside Tree Removal Fund had been approved; since it had not, the cost to remove these trees was now higher than it might have been.

The Selectmen had no questions on the remainder of his budget.

Insofar as the CIP is concerned, Road Agent Oleson noted that he was asking for an asphalt ‘hotbox’ to be purchased next year. This equipment heats asphalt and will allow the Highway Department to fill potholes in the winter; it will not necessarily save the Town money, as it costs fuel to run, but it patches potholes much better than with coldpatch and will help the roads stay in better condition. The Planning Board has the estimates.

He is also planning on requesting \$1.5m for roadwork for the upcoming Fiscal Year at Town Meeting and plans to rebuild North Pond Road and repave Mulberry Lane with those funds. Mulberry is not that old but has water issues under it.

Selectman D’Angelo inquired about the use of Impact Fees, suggesting that they be used to purchase the ‘hotbox’. Road Agent Oleson demurred; he has a plan and prefers to use those on roads. He added that he had downgraded quite a few roads on the CIP’s Table 10 from

‘rebuild’ to ‘grind and repave’ as they simply cannot be afforded otherwise. Some roads in need of major work, however, include Road & Gun Club, which needs a \$500k culvert replacement to be built to the 100-year flood level per the State; Cole Road, which only had five years from the temporary culvert replacement to be properly replaced; and Halls Village Road.

The East Derry Road project is nearing its end; they hit a lot of ledge, which slowed the work down and added to the cost, but expect to be finished and ready for the binder during the first week of November. The wear course will be put down in the Spring.

The Wason Pond Community Center parking lot is complete, and the material certified as ADA compliant. This came in under the estimate, so he suggested that the remaining funds could be used towards replacing the Handicap ramp.

The Secondary Access Road for the Fire Department is well underway. Power for the gate will be wired on Monday, the paving done Thursday. Next week the loam will be put down and the area cleaned up, and the gate itself installed the first week of November. The area will be allowed to settle over the winter, and the wear course put down in the Spring. Road Agent Oleson would like a sign erected at the 102 end of this driveway, indicating that it is for emergency personnel use only and that violators will be fined \$250. Police Chief Berube indicated that an ordinance is necessary for the Police Department to enforce that, so BOS AA Doda will work with Town Counsel Gorrows to have one drafted.

The Fire Department’s septic system is complete and awaiting State inspection before it can be backfilled.

Selectman D’Angelo inquired about the Highway Department’s telephone; although one may call, there is no way to leave a message should the phone ring unanswered. Road Agent Oleson indicated that this is by design; emergency calls should be directed to the Police Department, and routine matters should be handled by the submission of a ‘Request for Action’ on the Town’s website.

As the Selectmen had no further questions for Road Agent Oleson, he departed the meeting at 7:21pm.

3.2.3 Transfer Station, Landfill

Transfer Station Supervisor Czarneck and Planning Coordinator Hadik appeared before the Selectmen to defend their budget requests.

The Transfer Station is requesting \$209,048, which is an increase of 7.07% over the current year’s budget.

The cost for recycling various commodities has increased due to an increase in the cost of hauling and, in the case of paper recycling, the discovery that the vendor was undercharging. Selectman Landau inquired if recycling was generating more revenue, and it is not as commodities are down in general, but recycling is still more cost effective to the tune of ~\$20k each year over putting those items into the dumpster. Planning Coordinator Hadik added that the State is beginning to realize the economic benefit of recycling as landfills are closing and we are running out of places to put trash.

There was some discussion about the feasibility of combining mixed cans in with the scrap metal to save space and money; Transfer Station Supervisor Czarneck is not in favor as the cans will take up more space in the container unless crushed, and the can trailer is not in the way. He would prefer to leave it as is.

Selectman D’Angelo asked that a little more detail be included in the narrative for the Budget Committee’s review.

Transfer Station Supervisor Czarneck and Planning Coordinator Hadik also manage the Landfill budget; that request is for \$10,500, which is an increase of 21.39% over last year’s budget.

These increases are due to the well monitoring contract and the cap maintenance.

As the Selectmen had no further questions for Transfer Station Supervisor Czarneck and Planning Coordinator Hadik, they departed the meeting at 7:38pm.

3.2.4 Emergency Management

Emergency Management Director Gladu appeared before the Selectmen to defend his budget request. The Emergency Management Department is requesting \$10,881, which is an increase of 4.82% over the current year’s budget.

The only increase is for Hazmat Mutual Aid; this is a shared cost between towns, divided by population. Selectman D’Angelo described it as ‘insurance against potential disaster’. The line for house numbering has remained flat; EMD Gladu works with Building Inspector Bunker on this.

EMD Gladu noted that Town Clerk Liz Lufkin, who has experience with Homeland Security and grants, had recently volunteered to help with the Emergency Management Department and he would like to have her appointed as the Assistant Emergency Management Director. The Selectmen were amenable to this request and she will be appointed when she appears before the Selectmen to defend her budget request.

3.2.5 Ambulance, Fire, Forest Fire, Ambulance Billing, Fireworks

Fire Chief Bolduc joined EMD Gladu to defend the Fire Department and associated departments’ budget requests.

The request for the Ambulance and Dispatch contracts is \$122,839, which is an increase of 2.64% over the current year’s budget. This is governed by the ten-year contract that was signed in 2018.

There was some discussion about cell towers. The Fire Department is considering erecting its own tower on Town-owned land a few years hence; this might cost ~\$150k and would definitely be a CIP item. They are thinking about this due to the increased price of renting space on the SBA tower on Derry Road for their equipment; the original cost of \$1k was raised to \$6k in 2018, and although Auburn and Derry have agreed to pay 1/3rd each, this is still an increased cost. Selectman Landau noted that the Town owns the tower at the Transfer

Station; might Auburn and Derry be interested in renting space on that?

The Fire Department request is for \$500,261, which is an increase of 34.19% over the current year's budget. The bulk of this increase is for two additional full-time fire fighters; without them, the increase would be closer to ~5%. Currently the Fire Station is staffed with one firefighter from 7am to 3pm, and a second from 8am to 4pm, so two firefighters for a six-hour period, five days a week. The addition of two new employees would allow the station to be staffed with two firefighters for twelve hours a day, seven days a week. They would also help with the 'duty officer' rotation. The Fire Department only has four Officers to rotate the Duty Officer position, which means that the officer on duty is restricted to Town one weekend each and every month. If the Fire Station was staffed on the weekends, there would be some relief for the Duty Officer.

Selectman D'Angelo inquired about FEMA's Fire and Police Grants for Rural Communities. Fire Chief Bolduc stated that he has already spoken with their usual grant writer, and that the process has begun. This grant would assist with the cost of new personnel in a 'ramp-up' fashion; the first year the grant would pay 75% of expenses with the Town responsible for 25%; the second year, 50%/50%; the third year, the grant would pay 25% and the Town 75%; and the fourth year, 100% of the expense is the responsibility of the Town.

The Forest Fire request is for \$2,001, which is the same as the current year. The Selectmen had no questions on this budget.

The Ambulance Billing request is for \$1, which is the same as the current year. It was noted that Derry bills the patient when their ambulance is dispatched, and the Town receives none of that income.

The Fireworks request is for \$8,000, which is an increase of 14.29% over the current year's budget. This increase is due to the increased tariffs from China. The vendor does not believe the total cost will be the full \$8,000.

Insofar as the CIP is concerned, Fire Chief Bolduc needs to purchase new Personal Protective Equipment. Costs for this have increased, as the grade of PPE previously purchased is no longer available and the new grade is more expensive. He would also like the Fire Station parking lot paved; the contractor that is building the Secondary Access Road can do that in the Spring when he comes back to put down the wear course. Finally, he needs more radios.

Selectman D'Angelo inquired about Impact Fees; Fire Chief Bolduc stated that his current plan is to utilize them for a future CIP item, Mobile Data Terminals for Vehicles.

There was also some discussion about a new Fire Truck, which is scheduled in the CIP for FY21-22, versus refurbishing an old one. Fire Chief Bolduc is not necessarily in favor of refurbishment, as that can cost \$300k and last for 10 years, whereas a new truck can cost \$500-700k and last for 20 or 30. Also, it takes the vehicle out of circulation during the refurbishment with no spare available. He believes, however, that the request for a new vehicle can be pushed back later than FY21-22. Selectman Landau inquired about the value of an un-refurbished vehicle when it came time to replace; apparently there is not a big market for them, other than in the West where used tankers are popular. Selectman Landau then suggested retaining these vehicles and storing them elsewhere in Town to be used as backups in case of need; Fire Chief Bolduc is not opposed to this, and in fact would be interested in the

storage location also being used as a training facility that could be rented out to other Departments to generate some revenue.

Selectman D’Angelo suggested putting aside funds each year earmarked for a new Fire Truck, but Fire Chief Bolduc is opposed to this, as earmarking funds can affect how the Department gets grants.

As the Selectmen had no further questions for Fire Chief Bolduc, he and EMD Gladu departed the meeting at 8:21pm.

3.2.6 Building Inspector

Building Inspector Myrick Bunker was unable to appear before the Selectmen to defend his budget request. The Building Department is requesting \$101,006, an increase of 1.91% over the current year’s budget.

Selectman Hagan noted that the revenue received from the Building Department more than covers the amount requested in the Budget.

The Selectmen had no questions on this budget request.

3.2.7 Welfare – Other Health Agencies, General Assistance, Governmental

BOS AA Doda appeared before the Selectmen to defend the Welfare budget requests.

The Other Health Agencies budget request is for \$22,750, a decrease of 1.30% from the current year’s budget. This is due to one of the supported agencies requesting a lower donation this year.

The General Assistance budget request is for \$12,450, a decrease of 10.43% from the current year’s budget. Funds from the Rent and the Miscellaneous lines (often used for car payments and gas) have been requested extensively this Fiscal Year, and are being increased; the lines for Electricity and Fuel have not been used as much, as these are often last minutes situations and are assisted by the Wilcomb-Townsend Trust, so these have been decreased.

The Governmental budget request is for \$4,512, which is the same as last year.

The Selectmen had no further questions on this budget request.

Budget discussions ceased at 8:27pm.

IV. Selectmen’s Business

4.1 Roundtable

Selectman Landau:

- He had attended last night’s Planning Board meeting, where the CIP was being discussed, along with Selectman D’Angelo and Vice-Chairman Myette (the Planning Board’s liaison). Maintenance Supervisor Paul Cavanaugh had handled the Maintenance Department’s requests well.

- He has one item, on Public Employees, to be discussed in non-public session.

Selectman D’Angelo:

- The Selectmen had received a letter from State Senator Jon Morgan referring to anticipated school funding and municipal aid from the State over the next two years; the Town will receive ~\$67k, which could possibly be used towards the new Financial Software. The School will receive ~\$535k. According to School Board Chairman Royal Richardson, the School may not spend these funds; perhaps they can be used to assist in lowering the Tax Rate.

Selectman Hagan:

- The ZBA is currently researching a legal issue about expiring variances; they will be speaking to their Attorney.
- The Church restoration fundraising is ongoing; he urged residents to participate. Selectman Landau suggested drafting another donation Warrant Article for next year’s Town Meeting.

Chairman Owens:

- An engineer from DuBois & King inspected the Wason Pond Parking Lot and certified that the material was ADA compliant.
- Busche Academy has once again kindly offered to allow visitors participating in Halloween on Chester Street to park in their lots. Selectman Landau added that Town Hall will be open for restroom usage.
- He has two items for non-public session.

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 (b) Employment; Selectman Hagan seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Myette absent; motion carried.

The meeting room was closed at 8:35pm.

The meeting room was re-opened at 9:04pm.

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

Selectman Landau moved that the minutes to the first non-public session, on Public Employees, be sealed for an indefinite period; Chairman Owens seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Myette absent; motion carried.

Selectman Landau moved that the minutes to the second non-public session, on Employment, be sealed for a period of sixty (60) days; Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Myette absent; motion carried.

V. Adjournment

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be Thursday, October 24th, 2019.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra H. Doda,
Recording Secretary