

**Town of Chester  
Board of Selectmen Meeting  
Thursday, November 7<sup>th</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  
Tax Rate Setting: Joanne Smith  
CIP  
Reconfiguration of BOS Office  
Manpower Issues  
Warrant Articles  
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 7:01 pm.

*1.2 Roll Call*

Selectmen present:

Steve D’Angelo  
Stephen Landau  
Jeremy Owens  
Charles Myette

Selectman absent:

Joseph Hagan

Members of the Public present, at various times:

Corinna Reishus, Recreation Director  
Joanne Smith, Finance Director  
Margaret Voss, Chester Dancers  
Penny Williams, Tri-Town Times  
And possibly other persons unknown to this Recording Secretary

*1.5 Pledge of Allegiance*

Chairman Owens led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## 1.6 *Chairman’s Additions and Deletions*

Chairman Owens added Ms. Margaret Voss, Chester Dancers, to the agenda.

## 1.7 *Public Comment*

As no Members of the Public wished to be heard, Public Comment was closed at 7:02 pm.

## 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 *Tax Rate Setting: Joanne Smith*

Finance Director Smith appeared before the Board to present the proposed Tax Rate.

Finance Director Smith explained that the DRA proposed a preliminary 2020 tax rate of \$20.38. She noted that the school received funds which they were unable to spend, causing the biggest tax decrease, \$3.47, to be on the school tax line.

Finance Director Smith said that the Board needs to determine the amount of overlay they are going to use; she advised that the maximum amount that could be used is \$700,000. She and the Board discussed different options for the use of the \$700,000 overlay to be put into the Unassigned Fund Balance (UFB), and how it would change the tax rate. Finance Director Smith explained that setting this tax rate is difficult because there is so much happening, including how much to use of the overlay for the UFB, the recent house reevaluation, and this year’s school surplus.

Finance Director Smith and the Board reviewed two different tax rate options, each using a different amount of the overlay funds, as detailed by Finance Director Smith.

- **Using \$200,000** of the overlay would set the 2019 tax rate at \$20.38, a decrease of \$3.87 from the 2018 tax rate.

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Town</b>	\$6.87	\$6.69	-\$0.18
<b>County</b>	\$1.09	\$0.87	-\$0.22
<b>School</b>	\$16.29	\$12.82	-\$3.47
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$24.25</b>	<b>\$20.38</b>	<b>-\$3.87</b>

Finance Director Smith showed the rates of using \$700,000 of overlay, proposed by Selectman D’Angelo, because of his concerns regarding pending litigation and monies the Town may owe.

- **Using \$700,000 of the overlay** would set the 2019 tax rate at \$21.11, a decrease of \$3.14 from the 2018 tax rate.

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Town</b>	\$6.87	\$7.42	\$0.55
<b>County</b>	\$1.09	\$0.87	-\$0.22
<b>School</b>	\$16.29	\$12.82	-\$3.47
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$24.25</b>	<b>\$21.11</b>	<b>-\$3.14</b>

Finance Director Smith stated that it is unusual to use the entire amount of the overlay of \$700,000, and this use of the funds would need to be justified to the taxpayer.

Selectman D’Angelo said that eventually, based on the litigation, the Town will owe money. He explained that the Town will not have this opportunity to use this money next year.

The Board and the Finance Director had much discussion debating the best way to divide up and use the overlay funds, as well as, the house reevaluation done this year, and how best to set the tax rate. They said that although the tax rate is going down, the reassessment increased house values causing some tax bills to increase.

Selectman Landau pointed out that the reassessment, which he noted he is against, will increase taxes on homeowners because their home values went up, making it difficult for people to afford to live in Town.

The Board and the Finance Director discussed what impact the litigation will have on the Town’s taxes.

Finance Director Smith suggested using \$350,000 of the overlay.

Chair Owens noted that if the tax rate drops too much this year, next year the tax rate could go up dramatically.

Selectman D’Angelo said that he thinks that using \$500,000 is a better move for the taxpayer; he noted he is looking at next year’s tax rate, and how the Town will come up with funding next year.

The Board agreed **to use \$500,000 of the overlay towards the UFB.**

Finance Director Smith stated this will set the 2020 tax rate as follows:

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Town</b>	\$6.87	<b>\$7.11</b>	\$0.24
<b>County</b>	\$1.09	<b>\$0.87</b>	-\$0.22
<b>School</b>	\$16.29	<b>\$12.82</b>	-\$3.47
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$24.25</b>	<b>\$20.80</b>	<b>-\$3.45</b>

**Selectman D’Angelo moved to approve using \$500,000 for the overlay, setting the 2020 tax rate at \$20.80; Selectman Myette seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.**

Finance Director Smith departed the meeting at 7:58 pm.

### 3.2 CIP

Selectman Landau said that the cooling system to correct/readjust the cooling in the front part of the municipal building, listed on the CIP for \$33,000, was removed from the CIP by the Planning Board (PB) and should be returned back to the CIP, as it is very much needed.

Selectman Myette explained that there had been some confusion about the various heating/cooling items listed in the CIP, which was why the PB had removed it.

Selectman Landau said the tractor cab was also taken out of the CIP; he has no issue with the cab being removed from the CIP.

Selectman Myette said that the cab was less than \$5000.00, which is why it was removed.

Ms. Reishus appeared before the Selectmen to defend Recreation (REC) items which the PB had removed from the CIP.

Ms. Reishus said that the Planning Board removed picnic tables and the fitness trail. She explained that both of these items were a zero impact to the taxpayers because they were both going to be paid for with the REC impact fees. Ms. Reishus pointed out that REC cannot do the projects, even with the REC impact fees, if the projects are not listed in the CIP.

Ms. Reishus said that the picnic tables are a \$5000.00 item that will be paid for with the REC impact fees. She said that the Planning Board removed this item from the CIP.

Selectman Myette said that the PB looked at the criteria for a CIP item that determined if a project should remain or be removed; he said that either there wasn’t enough justification for a project or the project cost less than \$5000.00. He said that the fitness trail location was an issue because all the areas that the REC Commission presented for the fitness trail have conservation easements.

Ms. Reishus said that determining the specific location for a project was never a requirement to have a project listed on the CIP. She noted that the rules change every year which is very frustrating for a department head. Ms. Reishus said she gets frustrated when she presents a project one year and she is told that these requirements need to be met, but when she brings the project the next year having met those requirements then she is told to meet different requirements.

Ms. Reishus explained that a fitness trail is an item that was taken off last year, but that the Town residents want this project as a way to stay active and be healthy.

Selectman D’Angelo suggested that Ms. Reishus find a location for the fitness trail and then bring it back to the BOS.

Ms. Reishus said that the PB removed the mobile concession stand, Town tennis courts, and a second playground to be built in Town. She said that these were listed out five to six years to give time to do the vetting.

Selectman Myette said that the concerns around the tennis courts and the playground are location, and for the playground, the \$100,000 cost. He said that the REC department needs to consider if there

is a need, there is a location, and they have a good approximate cost.

Selectman Myette pointed out that the Wason Pond playground had funds raised by the Moms’ Club.

Selectman Landau reviewed the Town map and suggested an area that does not have any conservation easements on it for the fitness trail and a potential second playground.

Ms. Reishus and the Board discussed the mobile concession stand. Selectman Landau pointed out that a mobile concession stand would prevent the need for a permanent structure to be built and maintained.

Ms. Reishus said that she will send a letter to the PB to inform them that the REC department plans to purchase the picnic tables with their impact fees before the new CIP is voted in on November 20, 2019.

Ms. Reishus departed the meeting at 8:30 pm.

The Board reviewed and discussed other items listed on the CIP, including the heating/cooling system for the municipal building, a new facility for the Police Department, the Fire Department vehicles, and the roads.

Selectman Landau suggested putting the heating/cooling system into the CIP for the year 2023-2024 and leave it in until after a decision is made on the Police Department facility.

The Board had a discussion about a new facility for the Police Department and what year it should be listed on the CIP. They discussed creating a warrant article for the design plans for a new Police facility.

Selectman Landau said that the General Government section should be separated into two different units, General Government and Administration.

The Board discussed the CIP Roads list.

Selectman D’Angelo said that the Board needs to have a meeting with the Department Heads to ask them what they absolutely must have to go forward next year.

### *3.3 Margaret Voss, Chester Dancers*

Ms. Voss appeared before the Selectmen to express her frustration about the extra insurance she is being told she needs to have and the requirements that the Technical Review Committee (TRC) is requesting for her to hold a dance lecture/demonstration.

Ms. Voss said that her insurance has told her that she does not need any extra insurance, but the Town is telling her that she must get extra insurance to hold a parent presentation. She said that there are no Public invited, only the parents and the grandparents of the dancers are coming in to view the formal ballet.

Ms. Voss said the program is very expensive and that she cannot afford to have to pay for more insurance. She noted she puts \$10,000 to \$20,000 into this program per year.

Ms. Voss said that the TRC form does not explain what she needs from the different departments; she said she has been unable to get into contact with the different departments. She explains that if she knew what they need from her, she would be able to provide it without wasting her time.

Selectman D’Angelo explained that the Town’s insurance company, Primex, requires the Town to have insurance that is acceptable to Primex. He said that the Board has had discussions, internally, about covering the costs of the extra insurance for those who cannot afford the insurance.

Selectman Myette suggested subsidizing the insurance for these programs, with guidelines.

Selectman Landau said that the Town may be over-regulating the events in Town; he recommended that the TRC form explain what the department needs.

Ms. Voss said that the dance demonstration is not a dance recital, but a formal ballet.

Selectman Landau told Ms. Voss to get a letter from her insurance; he said that he would contact the three departments listed on the TRC and handle it for her.

The Board said that they would help her and thanked her for coming in to the Board.

Ms. Voss departed the meeting at 9:09 pm.

### *3.4 Reconfiguration of BOS Office*

**Selectman D’Angelo moved to approve of the Reconfiguration of the BOS Office; Selectman Myette seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.**

Selectman Landau informed the Board of the discovery of a live wire in the municipal building and oil sheen in a fuse box. He said that the TA (not present) and Maintenance (not present) are aware of the problems. He said that the fuse box will cost approximately \$600.00, but it isn’t known how much the live wire repair will cost. Selectman Landau noted that the problems were discovered when someone tried to use the TV in the meeting room and the electrical wouldn’t work on three of the four walls.

### *3.5 Manpower Issues*

Selectman D’Angelo advised the Board that the Town Clerk Liz Lufkin (not present) has notified the Board of Selectmen that she is requesting to add a permanent part-time clerk.

The Board discussed the increase in the volume of work for the tax clerk’s office.

Selectman D’Angelo said that there are manpower issues for the Police Department and Fire Department, also.

The Board discussed the need to get creative and address the best way to attract prospective employees and overcome the high cost to live in the Town and the State.

Selectman D’Angelo pointed out that the Maintenance Department is short-handed, as well.

### *3.6 Warrant Articles*

There was an initial discussion of draft Warrant Articles. The following articles were reviewed, need further discussion, and are not ready to move forward:

- a. Steeple Repair at Chester Congregational Church
- b. Ortho Rectifying Maps
- c. Optional Tax Credit for Combat Service
- d. Establish PACT Revolving Fund
- e. PACT (If d. doesn’t pass)
- f. Roadside Tree Removal
- g. 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- h. Transportation Improvement Capital Reserve Fund

#### **IV. Selectmen’s Business**

##### *4.1 Roundtable*

*Selectman Landau:*

- Noted that he had already discussed the electrical issue in the municipal building.
- Reviewed Veterans’ Day schedule.

*Selectman D’Angelo:*

- Noted that there will be an FAQ on the website to help people with the TRC.
- Reviewed the Department Heads meeting; noted the Town Administrator Debra Doda introduced herself.
- Discussed the ATV use around the utility poles.

*Selectman Myette:*

- Conservation Commission is going to be having a presentation on December 8, 2019 at 1:00 pm in the Multi-Purpose Room (MPR) on fishers.
- He reviewed the discussion by the Wason Pond Commission on Monday night on the parking permits. The suggestion was a transfer station/ parking pass. He asked if the WPC should continue to work on this. The Board agreed that they should continue working on this.

*Chairman Owens:*

- He pointed out the nice thank you card from the Swinging Puckerbrushers Camping Club.
- The PB did approve the REC request for the release of the impact fee funds for the water bottle filling station in the MPR for the amount of \$3743.00.

**Selectman Myette moved to release the REC impact fees in the amount of \$3743.00; Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.**

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

**Selectman Landau moved that the Board go into Non-Public session under RSA 91-A: 3 II (a)**

**Employment and RSA 91-A: 3 II (c) Reputation; Selectman Myette seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.**

The meeting room was closed at 10:05 pm.

The meeting room was re-opened at 10:13 pm.

**Selectman Landau moved that the Board come out of Non-Public session; Selectman Myette seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.**

**Selectman Landau moved that the minutes to all Non-Public sessions on Employment and Reputation be sealed indefinitely; Selectman Myette seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.**

**V. Adjournment**

**Selectman Myette 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 10:13 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

C. Molly Qualters,  
Recording Secretary