

**Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen Meeting
Thursday, December 5th, 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: Acceptance of Unanticipated Revenue
Unmerging of Lots: Kevin Scott
Police Department Hiring: Police Chief Berube
Budget and Warrant Review Continued
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 7:00 pm.

1.2 Roll Call

Selectmen present:

Steve D'Angelo
Joseph Hagan (arrived at 7:05 pm)
Stephen Landau (arrived at 7:34 pm)
Charles Myette
Jeremy Owens

Town Administrator:

Debra Doda

Members of the Public present, at various times:

Aaron Berube, Police Chief
Nancy Hoijer, Zoning AA
Janis Jalbert
Nancy Myette
Kevin Scott, 11 Haverhill Road, Chester, NH
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

No Additions or Deletions.

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 Public Hearing: Acceptance of Unanticipated Revenue

Public Hearing Notice, posted on October 28th, 2019:

The Board of Selectman will be holding a Public Hearing in accordance with NH RSA 31:95-b, III (a) on Thursday, December 5th, 2019 at 7:00pm at the Chester Municipal Offices, 84 Chester Street, Chester, New Hampshire, in the Meeting Room (Room No. 4) for the purpose of accepting unanticipated revenue from the State of New Hampshire for unrestricted municipal aid in the amount of \$31,298.40.

Chairman Owens read the Public Hearing notice.

Chairman Owens opened the Public Hearing at 7:02 pm.

3.2 Unmerging of Lots: Kevin Scott

Kevin Scott appeared before the BOS to request the Restoration of Involuntarily Merged Lots, RSA: 674:39aa.

Mr. Scott read his letter of November 24, 2019 to the Board into the record. (See Attached.)

Mr. Scott noted that his and his three siblings’ names are on the property, and they all get tax bills for the properties. He wants it “cleaned- up” in the event that one piece of land is sold it will be reflected accurately on the tax map.

Ms. Hoijer, a Zoning Board representative, appeared before the Board to ask questions.

Ms. Hoijer asked Mr. Scott about the property coming out of current use. They discussed the “current use” issue.

Ms. Hoijer returned to the Public at 7:11 pm.

The Town Administrator (TA) Doda, the Board, and Mr. Scott discussed the issue. Mr. Scott noted that there are three separate deeds for the property; they are only merged on the tax map. TA Doda noted that this is the first time the Board has had to deal with this issue in the last four years. The Board and Mr. Scott agreed to wait for the next meeting to get more information about handling this issue.

Mr. Scott requested to be put on the agenda for the next week’s BOS meeting.

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

3.3 Police Department Hiring: Police Chief Berube

Police Chief Berube and Mr. Matthew Higgins appeared before the Board for presentation and consideration of Mr. Higgins as the new full-time police officer.

Chief Berube described the hiring and background check process and he noted that there were “zero glitches” in Mr. Higgins’ process. He said that Mr. Higgins is a very suitable candidate for the Town.

Chief Berube said that Mr. Higgins has a Bachelors’ degree in criminal justice, owns a home in the Town of Atkinson, NH, is married, and is currently employed by the Essex County sheriff’s office in MA.

Mr. Higgins said that for the future he wants to work in a community where he can make a difference, is interested in the mental health aspect of police work, as well as, working with police dogs.

Chief Berube noted that Mr. Higgins start date will be January 6th, 2020, with 16 weeks at the police academy and then field training.

Selectman Landau arrived at the meeting at 7:34 pm.

Chief Berube reviewed the Town of Chester’s agreement with Mr. Higgins:

A 36-month work agreement after the academy training is complete. The contract is \$37,090 that includes all of the academy training time, field training, uniforms, psychological exam, background investigation, hours, and employment coordination with TA. The total contract is over \$70,000 but the fringe benefits the Town is providing have been removed.

Mr. Higgins said he is comfortable signing the contract.

Selectman D’Angelo moved that the Board approve the hiring of Matthew Higgins; Selectman Myette seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Selectman Landau abstaining as he had missed this discussion due to lateness; motion carried.

Chief Berube and Mr. Higgins departed the meeting at 7:45 pm.

3.4 Budget and Warrant Review Continued

TA Doda and the Board discussed recent revisions to the budget.

TA Doda noted that the cost of benefits for police and fire had increased and the budget had been amended to reflect the increase. She said that the cost for electricity and oil for Spring Hill Farm had been returned to the budget.

TA Doda said that the budget is a nine and one-half percent increase over last year’s budget.

The Board discussed the pay matrix.

TA Doda and the Board discussed the CIP, the necessary roadwork, and how best to move forward on roadwork and other CIP projects. They agreed that some of the CIP items would need to be moved to other years rather than have the items be an expenditure in the coming year.

3.1 Public Hearing: Acceptance of Unanticipated Revenue, Redux

Selectman Owens moved to close the Public Hearing; Selectman Landau seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

Selectman D’Angelo moved to have the Board accept the unanticipated funds of \$31,298.40; Selectman Myette seconded the motion. The vote was four in the affirmative; Selectman Landau abstained; motion carried.

The Public Hearing was closed at 8:16 pm.

IV. Selectmen’s Business

4.1 Roundtable

Selectman Landau:

- He said that the Town Clerk (not present) had found a deed for the Town Common. He suggested that the Town have a survey done of the property for three reasons: the fencing has been hit and possibly moved, the General Store has an easement on their steps into the store and the road, and the building near the property may be used as a business and they will need to know what parking they have available.

Selectman Landau moved that the Board get an estimate of the cost for a survey of the Town Common; Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

- The Employees are planning a Holiday Luncheon on Wednesday, December 11th, at 12:00pm, the building will be closed for a short time.

Last year the Selectmen authorized \$300 towards this luncheon.

Selectman D’Angelo moved to authorize \$300 for the Employee Holiday Luncheon; Selectman Landau seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

Selectman D’Angelo:

- He explained that there is an ordinance for a parking ban from November 15 until April 1, to ensure the roads are clear to allow for plowing.
- He noted that at the Technical Review Committee (TRC) meeting, the TRC agreed to modify the form with more clarification on the form. He said that there will be an FAQ scheduled.

Selectman Hagan:

- He offered a thank you on behalf of the Board of Selectmen to the Road Agent and Highway Department for their ongoing work.
- He offered a thank you to the First Responders in response to the gas leak, as a member of the American Legion.
- He offered condolences on behalf of the Board to Eileen Tully and her family. Maureen Tully passed last week, after a long, protracted illness, in hospice care. He noted that Maureen Tully, a graduate of Pinkerton Academy, was one of the smartest and wittiest persons he had ever met.
- He asked people to remember the troops with the anniversary of Pearl Harbor.

Selectman Myette:

- He gave a reminder of the Fisher presentation on Sunday at one o’clock.

Chairman Owens:

- He reviewed the up-coming meetings and suggested that if the Public have questions or comments that they come to the BOS meeting rather than posting on social media or calling individual Selectman.

TA Doda asked, on behalf of the Finance Director (not present) that the pay date for January 1st be moved back one day to December 31, 2019. The Board agreed to this request.

Recording Secretary C. Molly Qualters departed the meeting at 8:33 pm.

4.2 Non-Public Session

Selectman Landau moved that the Selectmen 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 unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

The meeting room was closed at 8:35pm.

Janis Jalbert entered the meeting room at 8:46pm.

Ms. Jalbert departed the meeting at 9:03pm.

The meeting room was reopened at 9:35pm.

Selectman Landau moved that the Selectmen come out of non-public session; Selectman

D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

Selectman Landau moved that the first non-public session, on Employment, be sealed for a period of thirty (30) days; Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

Selectman Landau moved that the second non-public session, on Public Employees, be sealed for an indefinite period; Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

V. Adjournment

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 9:37pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

C. Molly Qualters,
Recording Secretary