

**Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen’s Meeting
Monday, April 27, 2020
Virtual Meeting
Approved Minutes**

I. Preliminaries

Call the Meeting to Order
Roll Call
Pledge of Allegiance
Chairman’s Additions or Deletions
Public Comment (10 minutes)
Approval of Minutes
Items for Signature
Emergency Management Update
East Derry Road
Wason Pond
Review Newsletter
Roundtable
Adjournment

1.1 Call to Order

Chair Owens called the meeting of the Chester Board of Selectmen to order at 7:01 PM.

Under the emergency provisions of RSA 91A, this meeting is being conducted electronically and will be recorded, via dial-in, (929) 436-2866, internet at <https://zoom.us/j/770832311> as well as broadcast on Channel 20 and streamed on <http://vod.chesterctv.com>

1.2 Roll Call

Selectmen Present (Remotely):

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

Present: Town Administrator Deb Doda (Remotely)

Members of the Public Present (Remotely), at various times:

Police Chief Aaron Berube
Town Clerk/Tax Collector Elizabeth Lufkin

BOS Administrative Asst. Janis Jalbert
EMD Phil Gladu
Road Agent Mike Oleson
Penny Williams
Chester CTV

1.3 Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Owens led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.4 Chairman’s Additions or Deletions

Chair Owens made one addition – Liz Lufkin, Tax Collector.

1.5 Public Comment

As there were no members of the public who wished to comment, public comment was closed as 7:11 PM.

II. Old Business

2.1 Approval of Minutes

An approval sheet for the previous meeting’s minutes was sent electronically.

2.2 Items for Signature

All members reviewed and signed the items in the signature folder submitted electronically.

III. New Business

3.1 Emergency Management Update

Mr. Gladu indicated he sat in on the EOC conference call today but missed the Governor’s Press Conference as the Fire Department had an emergency call. Last week the Governor extended the State of Emergency and the financial aspect such as federal funding, utilities, insurance and worker’s compensation. There has been no update on restrictions with the Stay at Home Order in effect until May 4th but the Governor may comment more on that this week. Extra large gloves have been obtained for the Transfer Station and more will be ordered.

Mrs. Lufkin indicated the invitation-only rabies clinic will be held on Saturday at Chester Academy. The residents on the list will be emailed and those that don’t have email addresses will be called. This is for Chester residents whose dog licenses have expired or are due to expire by the 30th. Those residents will need to contact Ark Animal Homecare and prepay by

phone. If they are not on the list on Saturday, they will not be able to participate. Emergency Management will assist with traffic and verifications.

Mrs. Lufkin indicated the newsletter has been drafted and she would like to get edits and revisions by first thing tomorrow morning so it can go out on Wednesday.

Mr. Gladu received an email from Superintendent Lockwood asking how Town offices would take precautions should the Governor loosen restrictions. This will be discussed more at Wednesday’s EMD meeting. Possible discussions include screening people who visit the Town offices and how that could be done, and who would staff that. The Governor may put the decision to reopen in the hands of the Town.

Mrs. Lufkin and Mr. Gladu will review the list of Emergency Orders.

Selectman Landau recommended keeping the Community Center closed until the pandemic is over so it can be used for potential quarantine of first responders. Chair Owens agreed.

3.2 East Derry Road

Chair Owens noted he has not heard from the resident of East Derry Road who requested the speed tables at the last meeting. He asked she get evidence from the other homeowners as to whether it was something they all wanted. Road Agent Oleson noted he met with her and explained the plan was to first lower the speed limit to 25 MPH, then it could escalate to reinstalling signage or considering speed tables. The tables can be put in at any time but once they are in, they’re in and there is no removing them. There is plenty of sight distance for a motorist traveling at 30 MPH but not at 60 MPH. Chief Berube noted speeding is up because residents do not believe they will be pulled over due to risk of exposure to COVID-19. This may be worth revisiting when the pandemic settles down. Road Agent Oleson noted the speed tables were not planned for the corner and the decision not to install them did not have to do with budgeting. That item should be encumbered if necessary and discussed again in June.

Selectman Myette recommended radar controlled flashing speed signs. Road Agent Oleson noted each sign could cost \$3-\$4,000 and are solar powered and would need to be installed in an area with a lot of sunlight.

3.3 Wason Pond

Selectman D’Angelo provided pictures of the conditions at Wason Pond with many visitors ignoring social distancing and an individual appearing to run some sort of baseball clinic. Memorial Day is a few weeks away and now is the time to put together permits and an ordinance. Vice-Chair Myette noted he will meet with Mrs. Lufkin and Town Administrator Doda to discuss the permit system. Town Administrator Doda had drafted an ordinance earlier this year and had run it by legal. Ranger Wright could distribute permits and record license numbers on them when presented with a valid registration.

Selectman D’Angelo noted Stratham had temporarily closed its parking lots and barricaded the entrances with saw horses. Spring Hill Farm may be a more suitable trail system for recreation

since it has less parking. Chief Berube will check with the State to see about temporary no parking along that section of Route 102. Selectman Hagan agreed noting in his opinion 50% of people have no concept of social distancing and are ignoring it. Selectman D’Angelo indicated the older population in Town needs protection from this being brought in from out of Town. COVID-19 cases have exploded across the border in Massachusetts especially. Selectman Hagan noted it could be 18-24 months before a vaccine is ready and something has to be done to limit the risk here in Chester. Selectman Landau agreed it could be tried for a few weeks and extended if necessary. People could still walk, bike or ride horses to the area. The beach, playground and fields are closed.

Selectman Hagan motioned from tonight (April 27, 2020 at 7:48 PM) until June 15, 2020 sawhorses or some other methodology will be used to block roads and access for parking on the Wason Pond property. Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion.

Selectman Hagan amended his motion to include a temporary order that there be no parking on the section of Route 102 along Wason Pond. Selectman D’Angelo seconded the amendment. A roll-call vote was taken Hagan – aye, Landau – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Myette – abstain. The motion passed 4-0-1.

Mrs. Lufkin will include this in the newsletter. Road Agent Oleson indicated he will work with Chief Berube to put up flags and cones for now at both entrances and order temporary no parking signs. Chief Berube will get plastic signs in the meantime. Selectman D’Angelo clarified he was authorized to do so. Selectman Landau clarified the closing was for vehicular traffic. Mrs. Lufkin clarified no parking, closed to traffic, not stating the area was closed just the fields, playground and beach. Chair Owens noted the fields near the school may be next, but he has not seen many congregating there.

Selectman Landau asked about having 3-4 Parks & Recreation employees who would normally be participating in the Summer Program being assigned to maintenance so they would not be lost as employees. Maintenance was in favor and could use some help with mowing and painting. The trustees will not be available. The interior of the cabin needs a professional cleaning as well as paint and plaster repair inside so it can be made use of. Selectman D’Angelo asked what portion of the budget would be utilized. Selectman Landau was in favor of utilizing the \$15,000 recreation budget line. Selectman D’Angelo noted it could be moved to the maintenance line if necessary.

Vice-Chair Myette noted he spoke with Dick Lewis who went down and assessed the damaged trees and there were approximately 100 of them within 50’ of trails. He will bring this up at the next Wason Pond Meeting and with Conservation. Mr. Lewis quoted \$3,150 for cutting the trees and use of the tractor with winch and another \$1,700 if they would like the trees chipped and the chips distributed on the paths. Selectman D’Angelo was in favor of chipping. Selectman Hagan noted it was the perfect time to do if closing or reducing access to the park for maintenance so no one would get hurt. Vice-Chair Myette proposed the Conservation Commission Forestry account had about \$30,000 on account from timber revenue and could be used for this purpose. Selectman D’Angelo asked when it could be finalized. Vice-Chair Myette indicated it was under \$5,000 so it could be started right away. Selectman D’Angelo recommended shutting

everything down for a week and placing electronic signs to let people know. Selectman Hagan agreed he was in favor of having this move ahead, it was a good time to do it.

Selectman Hagan motioned to remove the damaged trees, chip and line trails at Wason Pond expeditiously, by next month. Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken D’Angelo – aye, Hagan – aye, Landau – aye, Owens – aye, Myette – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

3.4 Tax Collector

Mrs. Lufkin indicated Emergency Order #25 authorized the municipality to abate interest on property taxes not paid after assessment for the duration of the state of emergency. She has spoken with the NH Tax Collector’s Association and legal who noted the decision rests with the governing body to decide conditions, time limits and amounts. She has had a request for taxes due for December’s billing and informed the requestor that the intent of the order was to assist people with hardship because of virus and loss of jobs during the State of Emergency itself, and it was at the discretion of the Selectmen.

Mrs. Lufkin asked the Board what it would like to do moving forward. The Board, after lengthy discussion, decided there was no need to take action at this time as they already assess the situations on a case by case basis and would continue to do so for now. Mrs. Lufkin will let the requestor know that the Selectmen have the authority and did not make a motion to change their existing procedure. Letters will go out on Friday. Notices of Intent to Lien will go out on June 1st.

3.5 Potential Non-Public Sessions

Selectman Landau indicated he had one potential non-public and agreed it could be discussed at Thursday’s meeting.

IV. Roundtable

Selectman Landau asked if repairs should proceed with Stevens Hall? There is a Warrant Article but has been no Town Meeting or funding. The 300th Anniversary is in a year and a half. Chair Owens and Vice-Chair Myette recommended getting estimates together. Selectman D’Angelo added that photos could be taken by drone.

Vice-Chair Myette thanked everyone who participated in the community Earth Day cleanup. Andrew from ABI had picked up the blue bags today.

Vice-Chair Myette noted there are some metal gates at Spring Hill Farm that did not end up being used that could be utilized for Pomp Road.

Vice-Chair Myette announced that Conservation Commission is promoting a photo contest “Dandelions are Beautiful” as part of the pollinator program.

Chair Owens noted the following meetings are coming soon:

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Tuesday, April 28th at 7:00 PM – Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee
Wednesday, April 29th at 7:00 PM – Planning Board
Thursday, April 30th at 7:00 PM – Board of Selectmen
Monday, May 4th at 7:00 PM – Wason Pond Conservation & Recreation Commission

V. Adjournment

Selectman Landau moved to adjourn the meeting. Selectman Hagan seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Landau – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Hagan – aye, Owens – aye. With all in favor the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Hoijer
Recording Secretary