

**Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen’s Meeting
Thursday, April 30, 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
Wason Pond Closure and Parking Ordinance
East Derry Road
Roundtable
Potential Non-Public Sessions
Adjournment

1.1 Call to Order

Chair Owens called the meeting of the Chester Board of Selectmen to order at 7:00 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):

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

Present: Town Administrator Deb Doda (Remotely)

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

Police Chief Aaron Berube
Fire Chief Greg Bolduc
Town Clerk/Tax Collector Elizabeth Lufkin

47 BOS Administrative Asst. Janis Jalbert
48 EMD Phil Gladu
49 Recreation Director Corinna Reishus
50 Jack Cannon
51 Barbara Cannon
52 Penny Williams
53 Chester CTV
54 Suzanne Chappell
55 Debbie O’Sullivan
56 Ken Biel
57 Greg Bobish
58 Michael Romick
59 Carla Beck
60 Jane Fowler
61 Joe Alan
62 Leslie Edwards
63 Norma Palinovic
64 Bob Smith
65 Julie Leonard
66 Kaleigh Dube
67 Alicia Haverty
68 Christopher Kosura
69 Maryanne Boulter
70 Elizabeth Casey
71 Lori Davis
72 Margaret Pedone
73 Anne, resident of East Derry Road
74 And other persons unknown to the minute taker
75

76 *1.3 Pledge of Allegiance*
77

78 Chair Owens led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.
79

80 *1.4 Chairman’s Additions or Deletions*
81

82 Chair Owens made an addition for the Oath of Office of Barbara Cannon and one non-public
83 session under reputation.
84

85 *1.5 Public Comment*
86

87 Suzanne Chappell of 126 Lady Slipper Lane expressed disappointment with the closure of the
88 parking lot at Wason Pond. Ms. Chappell indicated she had not witnessed groups of people,
89 use of the playground or any misuse.
90

91 Ken Biel of 3 Croft Lane noted he had four teenagers and three dogs who need to get out of the
92 house often and expressed disappointment at the closure of the parking lot at Wason Pond. Mr.

Biel indicated he was not concerned about Mass. Plates so long as they are not harassing others and don’t need the government to intervene.

Debbie O’Sullivan of 88 Ledge Road indicated she was disappointed the parking lot was closed if the trails were open. Vehicles park next to each other at Walmart.

Greg Bobish of 124 Smith Road asked the Board how they have the power to give orders to close Wason or do parking permits? If the Selectmen order the police and if the police are enforcing it?

Suzanne Chappell added crossing the road was dangerous.

Chair Owens asked if there were any other comments from the public and being none closed public comment at 7:07 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 Wason Pond Closure and Parking Ordinance

Selectman Landau indicated the reason he had made the motion to close the parking lot at Wason Pond at the last meeting was because the Board has discussed the ordinance not for the last two weeks or in the moment but it has been discussed the last three years. The Board has been concerned with what goes on in the summer and in addition the Town is now in the midst of COVID-19.

Selectman Landau answered the question “Do we have the authority?” – Yes, the Governor issued an Emergency Order and the RSA states property owned by the Town of Chester gives the right to the Board to manage and was additionally given to the Wason Pond Conservation & Recreation Commission at Town Meeting. The purpose was not to close Wason Pond itself as was distinctly stated. Many comments improperly indicated a closure. The purpose was not to close Wason Pond but to give us 5-6 weeks to come up with some sort of way to regulate the parking there. There are 104 spaces and possibly more could be used. One-fourth of the Town can be used to walk trails. No one has gone near the ballfields near the school parking lot. There is a 40-acre Conservation Area, Spring Hill Farm has 440 acres and there are many Class VI roads. No one is trying to stop people from walking areas. Selectman Landau offered

his own property it is not posted no trespassing and if anyone would like to walk it come and walk.

Selectman Landau noted parking at this area has been discussed over and over and over again and an ordinance was needed to somehow control the parking situation at Wason Pond.

Selectman Landau indicated one email stated we can’t do so because we took \$1 Million in federal funds to purchase the property. Selectman Landau corrected the Town of Chester paid \$1.55 Million to buy the property which was done out of a vote at Town Meeting. The Warrant Article was originally with \$3 million to buy conservation easements. \$100,000 was what was accepted as federal grant money and as such the Town cannot discriminate who can use it. There is a summer program to benefit the Town’s children and teens who have jobs in Chester. Suddenly weekends have gotten inundated and that costs everyone money.

Selectman Landau indicated the next couple of weeks may be a problem and would like to see people, especially those making complaints, get involved if they are so interested and the join the Board to take action. Four out of five Board members agreed. “I didn’t pre-discuss this with anyone.”

Selectman Landau added the crossing at Route 102 is a problem and he has made calls to both the Police and Fire Department to have the two electronic signs to tell people to slow down for the crossing and asked the Police Chief to have someone parked there to make sure no one is speeding by. The parking closure is due to end June 15th if not sooner. No one is questioning the closure of Rye, Hampton and Seabrook. Wason is considered a minor pond.

Vice-Chair Myette indicated the Board was trying to keep the area open as long as possible but needed to look at the bigger picture, of all the activities we manage and work with others who were closing recreation area and the safety of the public. Still saw a lot of people in areas which were closed. The Board is looking at hours and the number of cars and to understand how people are using it and consider other ideas such as parking permits for residents.

Selectman D’Angelo noted there are a lot of folks coming in from out of Town. He had submitted photos showing a group of teenagers close together not wearing any protective masks. Ranger Wright is in his 70’s. One gentleman from outside of Chester was conducting a private business, a baseball training clinic, on Town property. There were kayaks and dingys observed and they were from Fremont, Raymond and Massachusetts. The Road Agent observed three cars from Massachusetts at 10:30 AM the day after the lot was closed. The Board has been working on an ordinance for the better part of the year to permit Town residents to be able to park during the summer when overflow is a problem. Pawtuckaway is closed and the overflow are coming here. Also Chester is a Town without any COVID-19 infections and the Board is trying to protect the people of the Town. Massachusetts is still peaking with infection.

Selectman D’Angelo advised that Wason Pond will be closed completely while the 100 or so diseased trees are removed for about a week to deal with that. Spring Hill Farm is an alternative and Conservation has bought new properties. A list can be put on the website.

Vice-Chair Myette noted there are trail maps available for a dozen or so properties. Spring Hill Farm and Wason Pond are already on the website and there are another ten to put up. Some trails are about a mile and others more than five miles.

Selectman Hagan addressed the comments concerning the Bill of Rights noting the constitution is not a suicide pact. The Town is facing a very dangerous virus we didn’t even know existed two-three months ago. People are dying and people are ignoring basic simple safety measures. There is an influx of people from out of town seeking us out – why? Because they can get away with stuff. There is one police officer on duty. We need to limit out of towners’ parking during these exigent circumstances.

Selectman D’Angelo advised that there is also no parking on Route 102 and violators will likely get a ticket. Selectman D’Angelo noted Selectman Hagan is a medical doctor. Our first responders have been lucky so far and have taken extraordinary measures to protect the Town and don’t want to put them unnecessarily into harm’s way. The cases are bad in Massachusetts and it would be surprising if the Governor lifts the restrictions on private or public golf courses.

Chair Owens reopened public comment at 7:31 PM.

Selectman Landau addressed some chat comments which suggested the Selectmen patrol the pond and responded that is why we have a police department and added that he would love to see some of you volunteer to be first responders and then see for yourself we are not trying to hurt anyone.

Chair Owens asked if the Board had looked at the ordinance. Vice-Chair Myette indicated it helps accomplish what we are trying to do. Selectman Landau indicated he had some issues and noted he had no problem rescinding the closure if the ordinance was able to protect the residents and other users of the area.

Michael Romick asked that if the Town cannot restrict people because it accepted the federal grant money, could it make parking for residents only? Selectman Landau noted the Board is taking a look at that. Selectman D’Angelo has done a lot of work looking into a way for non-residents to pay to park and monitor it which will aid the park. Currently residents are paying .04 cents per thousand (which adds \$10-\$15 to each resident’s tax bill) plus the initial purchase price. If the parking lot needs repair or someone has to be hired there will be funds to help with that.

Selectman D’Angelo noted he attended a meeting at the Fire Station on Wednesday and Mrs. Reishus made a lot of good points concerning soccer and baseball programs. Besides the resident sticker with the license plate recorded on it, sporting events can get a temporary parking pass at no cost, even out of towners who may be attending their child’s event. Jenness Beach for example utilizes parking meters and when they run out, that’s it. Another possibility is to have a flow of traffic one way in and one way out which would help control the number of people and allow stickers to be given out.

Ken Biel noted it sounds like the Board has had issues for a long time before the virus. A lot of people are upset with the government. People are complaining about beaches being closed.

Mr. Biel noted he goes to the Derry Dog Park and wouldn’t want to be kicked out for not being a resident and doesn’t want out of towners kicked out of Wason Pond either. “We are all adults and can make our own decisions, own risks.” “No one is trying to force the virus on us.” To shut it down and take advantage of the situations and treat citizens like children is why there is push back.

3.2 East Derry Road

Anne, a resident of East Derry Road, noted she participated in discussions at the last meeting concerning the installation of speed tables and spoke with other residents of the road who are also in favor. Other recommendations were an electronic speed sign or flashing speed indicator. What is the difficulty, plowing? Financial? Chair Owens noted the scope of the project did not include these speed tables in the budget and there would be a financial component. Also the stop sign had a lot of push back from residents of the road and had to be taken down. Everyone is driving faster right now because law enforcement is not stopping as many cars for speeding on all roads. The tables can’t be put in on a turn. In some places slowing down won’t happen. Before moving forward the Board needs to have a comprehensive discussion with the Road Agent and get feedback from the other residents of East Derry Road. The Police Department can’t be there constantly monitoring speed.

Selectman D’Angelo noted the line of sight was the full length of a football field and he was not saying no. The wear course would be going on soon and he would like to see the other neighbors come forward and discuss the matter with the Board and the Road Agent. There are a half dozen other roads that will then want to slow down their traffic too. Something is being done, the speed limit is being lowered to 25 MPH. Anne noted she did not believe it would be obeyed. Selectman D’Angelo noted he anticipated when the road was done this would be a problem. Anne noted she would get a petition together and forward it to Janis Jalbert.

Selectman D’Angelo asked Police Chief Berube his thoughts about the radar signs. Chief Berube indicated they are an effective deterrent. The least invasive way is lower the speed limit and the presence of the department out there.

Selectman D’Angelo asked how much higher the tables would be and Chief Berube noted they would be 6-8” with gradation up to a flat area.

Vice-Chair Myette expressed concerns with motorcycles. Chief Berube indicated the tables are painted and are reflective chevron and use warning signage. The Town of Exeter uses them in parks and roads that are densely populated.

Town Administrator Doda noted the wear course was scheduled for the week of May 4th depending on weather.

Selectman D’Angelo asked how it would work on a major thoroughfare when someone was traveling 40-50 MPH? Someone could end up losing control and land in a tree or house.

3.3 Appointment of Barbara Cannon

Selectman D’Angelo motioned to appoint Barbara Cannon as Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector for a term to expire March 14th, 2023. Selectman Landau seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Landau – aye, Owens – aye and Hagan – aye. The motion passed unanimously with all in favor.

3.4 Potential Non-Public Sessions

Selectman Landau indicated he had one additional non-public session under reputation.

IV. Roundtable

Selectman Landau asked Chief Berube about the new cruiser which was scheduled to come in within a week. Chief Berube noted the old cruiser had a value of \$5,000 and was in decent shape. Selectman Landau recommended the Town take the Police Department lettering off and change the mirrors so the Town could make use out of it. Maintenance or the Building Inspector could use it. Selectman D’Angelo recommended using it for details and traveling to court hearings and Chief Berube indicated that would not be necessary as he has kept the same number of vehicles in the fleet since 2008.

Selectman Landau motioned to keep the 2015 former police vehicle with approximately 140,000 miles on it from being traded in and make use of it for the Town. Selectman Hagan seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Landau – aye, Hagan – aye, Owens – aye. The motion passed unanimously with all in favor.

Ken Biel noted when he lived in Texas they would paint the old police cruiser “Citizens on Patrol” and volunteers with training would take shifts and call in anything suspicious and help with flat tires.

Selectman D’Angelo noted he registered a vehicle online about ten days ago and still has not received his registration and stickers and wondered if there was a better way to expedite this. Mrs. Lufkin noted they had no control when it left the office but if longer than 30 days the DMV would re-issue at no charge.

Chair Owens noted the following meetings are coming soon:

Monday, May 4th at 7:00 PM – Board of Selectmen’s Meeting
Tuesday, May 5th at 7:00 PM – Wason Pond Conservation & Recreation Commission
Wednesday, May 6th at 7:00 PM – Planning Board
Thursday, May 7th at 7:00 PM – Board of Selectmen’s Meeting

V. Non-Public Sessions under 91-A:3(II)(c) reputation of someone other than a member of the Board.

Selectman Landau motioned to go into non-public session under 91-A:3(II)(c) reputation of someone other than a board member. Vice-Chair Myette 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 closed to the public at 8:24 PM.

The meeting was reopened at 8:47 PM.

Selectman Landau motioned to come out of non-public session. Vice-Chairman Myette 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.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes to the first non-public session on Reputation for a period of one (1) year; Chairman Owens 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.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes to the second non-public session on Reputation for a period of one (1) year; Chairman Owens 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.

VI. Adjournment

Selectman Landau moved to adjourn the meeting. Vice-Chairman Myette 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 8:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Hoijer
Recording Secretary