

**Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen’s Meeting
Thursday, April 1, 2021
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
Stevens Hall
Warrant Articles
Lien Process
Roundtable
Potential Non-Public Sessions
Adjournment

1.1 Call to Order

Chairman Owens called the meeting of the Chester Board of Selectmen to order at 7:00pm.

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 (Present Remotely):

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

Town Administrator Debra Doda (Present Remotely)

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

Aaron Berube, Police Chief
Liz Lufkin, Town Clerk/ Tax Collector
Corinna Reishus, Recreation Director
Lynn Rockwell
Penny Williams, Raymond Area News
Mike Willinsky

PACT

and 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 or Deletions

Chairman Owens added a discussion on the lien process with Town Clerk/Tax Collector Lufkin.

1.5 Public Comment

Chairman Owens opened the meeting to public comment at 7:01pm.

Lynn Rockwell questioned the status of the Meetinghouse Warrant Article for the steeple repair and if they would have one or two warrant articles at Town Meeting.

Chairman Owens advised one warrant article was moved forward in the amount of \$25K.

Selectman Landau advised that the amount could be adjusted at Town Meeting.

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 Stevens Hall

Selectman Landau explained that the structural integrity of the basement stairs is a concern at Stevens Hall. Our priority is getting the roof and painting done before the 300th events start.

Vice-Chairman Myette inquired if the basement steps were on the CIP.

Selectman Landau advised the elevator structure and basement stairs will be part of the renovation of the building.

Selectman D’Angelo questioned if we are still waiting for an estimate, is it really a CIP item. Who is responsible for getting the estimates for the work?

Town Administrator Doda indicated the Planning Board placed it on the CIP with \$15K as a place holder and estimates will be forthcoming. Charters Brothers is making separate estimates for different repairs at Stevens Hall.

Vice-Chairman Myette stated that usually when an item says awaiting estimates because it is generally out a year or two on the CIP. Selectman Landau confirmed the stairs are in FY 22-23.

3.2 Warrant Articles

Chairman Owens questioned why we are renumbering the warrant articles. Selectman Landau indicated we must decide on what articles need to be first and last.

Vice-Chairman Myette asked if our intent is to place the most important articles first. Everyone agreed with putting the important articles first.

Selectman Landau suggested the following order to start I – CIP Projects, H -CIP Funding, G- 300th Anniversary, D- Steeple Repair, T- Historical Building Capital Reserve Fund, R- Fire Department Apparatus, E- Budget, J – Highway CIP Funding, K - Highway CIP Projects, B – Revaluation, C- PACT, O – Police OHRV, N – Master Plan. Then all the others can follow with petitioned articles being last.

Selectman D’Angelo suggested Article E- Budget be the first item after the Planning Boards amendments. The budget was always the main item when he was on the Budget Committee and in past years.

Selectman Landau feels the CIP articles are more important than the budget. Both the Budget Committee and the BOS agree on the budget.

Selectman D’Angelo suggested if we need to reorder the articles it can be done after the Public Hearing and recommendations from the Budget Committee.

Town Administrator Doda will number the Warrant Articles and Selectman Hagan will call tomorrow with his recommendations before sending the finalized copy to the Budget Committee.

3.3 Lien Process

Town Clerk /Tax Collector Lufkin will begin the 2020 Tax Lien process on April 15th. Currently we have roughly \$180K in principal and \$7K in interest outstanding for 2020. Once the lien invoice is created there is no way to decipher what is principal or what is interest. Interest will also jump from 8% to 14% once a lien is placed on the property. Certified letters have been sent to all property owners making them aware that the property will have a lien placed on it.

Selectman D’Angelo asked what the original dates were for the property tax interest abatement as voted on by the BOS in May 2020. Ms. Lufkin advised it would end once the State of Emergency ended, or the BOS rescinded it.

Ms. Lufkin advised the easiest way to fix this is to give people the opportunity to pay their 2020 taxes with no interest by April 15th and any interest that would have accrued during the year will be added into the amount due after the 15th.

Selectman D’Angelo advised if relief is needed, taxpayers would be able to apply for assistance on a case-by-case basis.

Selectman Landau is concerned that the original motion of not charging interest on late taxes was in effect for as long as the Covid-19 emergency existed. There are people relying on the motion we previously had voted on.

Selectman D’Angelo indicated it is our discretion if we would like to continue it past April 15th. He questioned how many people this would potentially affect in town. Ms. Lufkin advised it would be around 30 people.

Selectman D’Angelo motioned to discontinue the interest abatement on the 2020 Tax Levy as of April 15th, 2021. Vice-Chairman Myette seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, Owens – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Landau – abstained, Myette – aye and Hagan – aye. The vote was four in favor with Selectman Landau abstaining; motion carried.

Selectman Hagan directed attention to the fact that personal bankruptcy in the United States has decreased in the Covid crisis.

Selectman D’Angelo stated that anyone having issues with taxes should contact the Town Clerk, BOS Administrative Assistant or the Town Administrator for assistance.

IV. Selectmen’s Business

4.1 Roundtable

Selectman Landau has three non-publics on reputation.

Vice-Chairman Myette has one non-public on reputation and one on financial.

Selectman D’Angelo:
Nothing to report.

Selectman Hagan:
Nothing to report.

Chairman Owens brought up the gate on Chester Turnpike.

Selectman D’Angelo feels if anyone wants to go down the road and risk damaging their vehicle, good luck to them. As for installing a gate he is against putting up the gate on a Class VI road.

Selectman Landau asked if the proposed gate would be beyond the homes there. Selectman D’Angelo confirmed yes, it should be beyond the homes.

Manchester Water Works is widening some of the road. They own three parcels on the road and would like to patrol.

Police Chief Berube stated Manchester Water Works is asking for permission to place a gate and would like to maintain the road. They do not want to restrict access on the road just looking to try to keep honest people honest.

Vice-Chairman Myette inquired if the planned gate would be accessible for a horse or bicycle to go around them. Chief Berube advised they will accommodate the wishes of the town. Also, they were very specific they would not lock the gate.

Complaints have been made by some of the residents on the road about OHRVs and other vehicles using the road inappropriately. People are tossing trash out, using it as a dumping ground and trees are cut down with bullets.

Selectman Landau has spoken to a gentleman from Manchester Water Works about how they would like to patrol their property.

Selectman D’Angelo questioned what authority they have giving a ticket or arresting someone for trespassing on the property. Chief Berube advised in the State of New Hampshire they are fully sworn officers. They have been sworn in in both Auburn and Manchester.

Chairman Owens summarized that the Manchester Water Works is asking for the gate to simply clean the place up and they are being very accommodating.

Selectman D’Angelo would like a letter sent to the abutters asking them how they feel about a gate going up on the road.

Chairman Owens announced the following meetings and events are coming up:

Monday, April 5, 2021	Budget Committee Meeting at 7:00pm Wason Pond Commission Meeting at 7:00pm
Wednesday, April 7, 2021	Planning Board Meeting at 7:00pm
Thursday, April 8, 2021	Board of Selectmen’s Meeting at 7:00pm
Monday April 12, 2021	Public Hearing on the Budget and Warrant Articles via Zoom.
Saturday April 17, 2020	Rabies Clinic at Town Hall. Call Ark to register and pay. Town Clerk will be open that Saturday to register dogs only.

4.2 Non-Public Session(s)

Selectman Landau motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to 91-A:3(II) (a) public employees, (c) reputation, (d) property, and (e) pending litigation. Vice-Chairman Myette seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, Owens – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Landau – aye, Myette – aye and Hagan –aye. With all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was closed to the public at 8:00 PM. Road Agent Oleson remained in the meeting,

Road Agent Oleson departed the meeting at 8:23 PM.

Selectman Landau motioned to come out of non-public session. Vice-Chairman Myette seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, Owens – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Landau – aye, Myette – aye and Hagan –aye. With all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was reopened to the public at 9:18 PM.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the first non-public session, on Pending Litigation, for an indefinite period. Vice-Chairman Myette seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, Owens – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Landau – aye, Myette – aye and Hagan –aye. With all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the second non-public session, on Reputation, for a period of six (6) months. Vice-Chairman Myette seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, Owens – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Landau – aye, Myette – aye and Hagan –aye. With all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the third non-public session, on Reputation, for a period of one (1) month. Vice-Chairman Myette seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, Owens – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Landau – aye, Myette – aye and Hagan –aye. With all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the fourth non-public session, on Reputation, for an indefinite period. Vice-Chairman Myette seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, Owens – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Landau – aye, Myette – aye and Hagan –aye. With all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the fifth non-public session, on Reputation, for a period of three (3) months. Vice-Chairman Myette seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, Owens – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Landau – aye, Myette – aye and Hagan –aye. With all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the sixth non-public session, on Property, for a period of three (3) months. Vice-Chairman Myette seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, Owens – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Landau – aye, Myette – aye and Hagan –aye. With all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the seventh non-public session, on Public Employees, for an indefinite period. Vice-Chairman Myette seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, Owens – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Landau – aye, Myette – aye and Hagan –aye. With all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

V. Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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297 Janis A. Jalbert
298 Recording Secretary