

**Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen’s Meeting
Thursday, April 8, 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
Reopening of Town Facilities
Boy Scout Yard Sale
Budget & Warrant Public Hearing Prep
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

Selectmen absent:
Joseph Hagan

Town Administrator Debra Doda (Present Remotely)

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

Aaron Berube, Police Chief
Patrick Connelly
Bill Fox
Phil Gladu Emergency Management Director

Darlene Gustavson
Corinna Reishus, Recreation Director
Patrick Walker
Penny Williams, Raymond Area News
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

None

1.5 Public Comment

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

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

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 Reopening of Town Facilities

Recreation Director Reishus noted a Chester resident has been waiting for the Board of Selectman to reopen the town facilities and fields so she can have a wedding ceremony at the covered bridge at Wason Pond. The Wason Pond Commission has no issue with the outdoor wedding as long as guidelines are followed.

The wedding will be capped at 50 people with the possibility of less. The recommendation is for a police detail to be at the wedding to help with managing the mask mandate and social distance guidelines.

Based on the new CDC guidelines, Ms. Reishus is recommending opening the fields now for organized groups such as Chester Academy and the Chester Baseball/Softball. For all other outdoor facilities, the recommendation is May 1st.

As for indoor facilities the recommendation will be to reopen June 1st except for Stevens Hall. The Historical Society has work being done in May inside the building.

Town Administrator Doda advised the state will no longer be mandating a quarantine area for first responders in mid-April. Based on that the Wason Pond Community Center can be reopened. Ms. Reishus confirmed the seniors are not ready to return to indoor activities. The offer has been extended to the seniors to use the courtyard outside the MPR if they wish.

Ms. Reishus is looking for the Board to give the authority to reopen facilities in town and authorize field usage for outside events.

Selectman D’Angelo would like to revisit this in another week once the governor gives an update on the state of emergency and mask mandate.

Mr. Patrick Connelly, speaking personally as a track coach, asked the Board to consider opening the fields so kids can run in the grass instead of on asphalt.

Chairman Owens advised we are not mitigating anything as they are already doing things just without the use of the fields.

Mr. Patrick Walker mentioned this is not only about opening the fields. We need to prepare the fields prior to kids being able to use the field. Ms. Reishus advised she has given permission for a small group of people to start preparing the fields ahead of the reopening.

Mr. Bill Fox, baseball and basketball coach, advised the kids are masked and we are sanitizing during practices. The kids do not transmit as much as adults. If we can keep the parents socially distanced, we can have a safe season.

Selectman D’Angelo stated the Covid-19 variants are very dangerous. We have done very well in town so we should not throw caution to the wind now.

Chairman Owens confirmed the board will revisit this subject at the next meeting.

3.2 Boy Scout Yard Sale

Selectman Landau stated this discussion can be placed on hold until the fields and buildings are reopened. Both Chester Academy and Boy Scouts will ask for permission to use the fields when that happens.

3.3 Budget & Warrant Articles Public Hearing Prep

Town Administrator Doda pointed out the Budget Committee will be asking questions on a few of the Warrant Articles at Monday night’s Public Hearing, and we should be prepared.

Selectman D’Angelo commented that the Budget Committee had no issues with the Budget, the concern is with some of the warrants being presented. The Charters Brothers and Gary Goudreau have been asked to do a presentation to the Budget Committee at the public hearing to explain Article # 12 – Historic Building Capital Reserve Fund. The Budget Committee is asking for answers to things we do not have answers to.

Chairman Owens indicated the Stevens Hall renovation will be a hot topic at the public hearing and at town meeting.

Selectman Landau suggested letting townspeople know how much the building is used. There are 12-15 groups that will not be able to meet if Stevens Hall is gone. Selectman Landau pointed out if we do not have the roof work done, we might have to plan to have the building torn down.

Selectman D’Angelo mentioned that we are hiring an engineer to assess the tower on the building that is potentially leaning. Selectman Landau remembers there has been concern in the past with the tower leaning.

Selectman Landau stated the next article that the Budget Committee questioned was Article #14 – Highway CIP Funding. The big concern is over what areas will be done; just looking at the numbers on Table 10, Jennifer Drive and the rest of North Pond will take the bulk of the \$750K.

Selectman D’Angelo stated the figures on the Table 10 are just estimates not actual figures. Road Agent Oleson has already stated that he will work on the projects until the money is depleted. We need to stay focused on what we can do with the money we have.

Selectman Landau indicated questions arose on Article #18 – Police Department OHRV.

Selectman D’Angelo advised the Special Detail Fund was established at the 2001 Town Meeting.

Article 16 – Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 31:95-c to restrict the revenues from special details to expenditures for the purpose of special details? Such revenues and expenditures shall be accounted for in a special detail fund, separate from the general fund. Any surplus in said fund shall not be deemed part of the general fund accumulated surplus and shall be expended only after a vote by the legislative body to appropriate a specific amount from said fund for a specific purpose related to the purpose of the fund or source of income.

Selectman D’Angelo interpreted that the money can only be used for items used for details such as police cars. He pointed out the Board of Selectman have no authority on this account; it is solely in the hands of the legislative body to expend from the account. The money in the account is generated from a detail and it should be spent on detail related purchases.

Chairman Owens advised we should have town counsel look at the warrant article to verify the OHRV is a valid purchase from this account. If it in fact is a valid purchase it can stay otherwise it can be removed.

Selectman Landau stated the article as written is not just for cars or time at a detail. Past purchases on this account included walkie talkies that can be used by an officer on a detail.

Police Chief Berube advised the OHRV would apply to this account as it can be used for special details. The original warrant article from 2001 was reviewed by counsel 8-10 years ago for understanding on what can be purchased from this fund.

Town Administrator Doda will have town counsel review the warrant article before the public hearing on Monday.

Selectman Landau stated the Budget Committee questioned with winter being over why Article #20 - Winter Road Maintenance Fund was still on the warrant. He suggested leaving it so the townspeople understand what we are spending and also in this instance what we are saving.

Lastly, Article #26 – Stone Property was questioned. Selectman Landau suggested the figures and facts the Budget Committee has are incorrect.

Vice-Chairman Myette agreed he would talk to this warrant article and the donation is dependent on if the owner will accept it for the federal tax purposes appraisal. If the appraisal is not accepted, we can pull the warrant article.

Selectman D’Angelo stated the Budget Committee commented in their meeting if the property were donated to the town, it would be a loss of revenue for the town. Also, what are the plans for the property if we accepted the donation?

Vice-Chairman Myette will inform the public of possible ideas for the property such as historical, community center, Police Department or even an emergency road. When we get to town meeting, we will be prepared to explain this article.

The townspeople can make the decision if they want the donation at the town meeting.

Selectman Landau indicated that we have spent around \$70K to look at options for a new Police Station. If it is placed at 84 Chester Street, we have learned the entire building along with the grounds will need to be revamped at a significant cost to the town. Having the extra piece of land in the center of town for the future would be good for the town.

IV. Selectmen’s Business

4.1 Roundtable

Selectman Landau has two non-publics, one under reputation and another under public employees.

Selectman D’Angelo:
Nothing to report.

Vice-Chairman Myette indicated there is a need for signs at Spring Hill Farm to show people where to park so farm activities are not disturbed. People can park at the house, across the street and along the road. The Trustees have already spoken to Road Agent Oleson about getting signs and they can be made by the state with the wording to be discussed.

Selectman D’Angelo would like to see if there is another solution such as putting up a snow fence. Signs may keep people away and Spring Hill Farm should be enjoyed.

Vice-Chairman Myette will look at other possibilities such as steel posts with rope or cable.

Vice-Chairman Myette mentioned the beaver sign has been placed at Wason Pond. It has great information about beavers on it. He also has one non-public under public employees.

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

Monday, April 12, 2021 Budget Committee Public Hearing at 7:00pm
Wason Pond Commission Meeting at 7:00pm

Selectman D’Angelo suggested logging on early before the Public Hearing to verify they will not have the same issues as this past meeting.

Wednesday, April 14, 2021 Planning Board Meeting at 7:00pm

Thursday, April 15, 2021 Board of Selectmen’s Meeting at 7:00pm

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

The meeting was closed to the public at 8:05 pm.

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

The meeting was reopened to the public at 8:38 PM.

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

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

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

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

V. Adjournment

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

302
303 The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

304
305 Respectfully submitted,

306
307 Janis A. Jalbert
308 Recording Secretary