

**Town of Chester  
Board of Selectmen’s Meeting  
Thursday, August 26, 2021  
Municipal Complex  
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  
Fire Department Update  
Police Department Update  
Stevens Hall  
Wason Pond Footbridge and Boy Scout Project  
Chairman’s Announcements  
Roundtable  
Potential Non-Public Sessions  
Adjournment

*1.1 Call to Order*

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

*1.2 Roll Call*

Selectmen Present:

Chuck Myette  
Steve Couture  
Steve D’Angelo  
Stephen Landau  
Jeremy Owens

Town Administrator Debra Doda

Members of the Public Present at various times:

Aaron Berube, Police Chief  
Phil Gladu, Acting Fire Chief  
Alex Hodosi  
TJ Lannan  
Nancy Myette  
Corinna Reishus, Recreation Director (Remotely)

and other persons unknown to the Recording Secretary.

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52 *1.3 Pledge of Allegiance*  
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54 Chairman Myette led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.  
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56 *1.4 Chairman’s Additions or Deletions*  
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58 Foot Bridge and the Boy Scout Project at Wason Pond have been added to the agenda  
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60 *1.5 Public Comment*  
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62 Chairman Myette opened the meeting to public comment at 7:01pm.  
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64 As no Members of the Public wished to be heard, Public Comment was closed at 7:02pm.  
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66 **II. Old Business**  
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68 *2.1 Approval of Minutes*  
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70 An approval sheet for the previous meeting’s minutes was sent electronically.  
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72 *2.2 Items for Signature*  
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74 All members reviewed and signed the items in the signature folder.  
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76 **III. New Business**  
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78 *3.1 Fire Department Update*  
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80 Acting Fire Chief Gladu updated the Board on a few calls the department responded to. On August  
81 13, the department was dispatched to an allergic reaction. Patient was stung multiple times and  
82 upon arrival was in a bad condition. The patient was transported to Derry.  
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84 On August 24<sup>th</sup>, they were dispatched to assist Auburn with a head on collision. Chester treated  
85 both patients involved in the accident.  
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87 Tanker-1 is back after a recall on the fuel rail system and E1 has a new shut off valve for the foam  
88 system.  
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90 Acting Fire Chief Gladu mentioned working on getting “Red Alert” set up. This is for incident  
91 reporting and will be a time saver as it automates much of the administrative work they currently  
92 do.  
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94 Acting Fire Chief Gladu introduced the two new Lieutenants, TJ Lannan, Firefighter and EMT, and  
95 Alex Hodosi, Fulltime Firefighter and EMT. A pinning ceremony for the members and their families  
96 and friends will be on Saturday August 28<sup>th</sup>.  
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98 Vice-Chairman Owens asked what the responsibilities of a lieutenant are and how it will change  
99 their role in town. Acting Fire Chief Gladu stated they will run the scene, call for more assets, make  
100 radio transmissions to Derry, keep track of personnel, and write up the reports.

Chairman Myette mentioned this is the start of the Chain of Command. There are four officers currently. Acting Chief Gladu stated this is just the start, in the future there will be more, but certain certifications are needed for the position along with service length.

The Explorer program has started with one more participant that joined this week. Explorers range in age from 14 to 21 years old. Once an explorer either graduates from High School or turns 18 years old, they can become members of the department.

Selectman Landau mentioned there needs to be at least two people that are Youth Protection Trained (YPT). If needed, Selectman Landau offered to do the training for the Fire Department personnel.

Chairman Myette asked how the Fire Department is connecting with Pinkerton with regards to the Fire Program at the school? LT. Hodosi explained that was the program he started with. They have a trade school in Manchester, NH and students earn their Firefighter 1 certification during the first semester and EMT 1 certification during second semester.

Acting Fire Chief Gladu mentioned another great recruiting event is at the Town Fair, and when school starts, the explorers will be heading back to school and talking about the program.

Chairman Myette heard that the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee would possibly be reaching out for some Explorer volunteers for the September 25<sup>th</sup> Fall Fest to assist with parking.

### *3.2 Police Department Update*

Police Chief Berube mentioned although the police were not dispatched to the allergic reaction call on Friday August 13<sup>th</sup>, they were in the area and were first on scene. Officer Higgins assessed the situation and administered the EpiPen for the first time on the job. The doctor advised the first administering of the EpiPen probably saved the patient’s life. Officer Higgins will be presented with the lifesaving award.

Chief Berube would also like to mention Corporal DiPerri has been with the department for 10 years today.

Chief Berube discussed being transparent with the overtime and court issues the department is facing. The Police Department is the only department in town that is open nights, weekends, and holidays. Premium pay is given to the officers to come in to work on holidays which helps with losing time with their families on those days.

This is an estimated breakdown of what comes out of the overtime line on the budget. Figures are estimates only.

The overtime budget for FY21-22 is \$28K. The average overtime rate for the officers is \$46.00 per hour.

Town Approved Holidays (11 days)	264 Hours	\$12,200.00
FT Yearly Training (24 mandatory hours)	168 Hours	\$7,800.00

Court	4 hours per officer per month	\$15,509.00
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With these estimates, the budget is underfunded by \$7K and this does not include filling one vacation shift. If a holiday falls on a weekend, but is observed on a Monday or Friday, that is an additional 268 hours per year for a total of \$12,328.00 per year.

In the past, Chief Berube has reworked the schedules by having officers come in late or leave early. The officers now have a set schedule and feel like they are losing their time off and not being compensated for it when they must come in for training or court on their day off.

To have minimal coverage with the current overtime budget there is a shortfall of \$20K.

Chief Berube summarized the budget for the part-timers for FY21-22 is \$35K. The average rate for the part-time officers is \$25.00 per hour. The breakdown for the part time line is detailed below.

Patrol	24 hours per week per officer	\$32,000.00
Training (24 Mandatory training)	24 hours per officer	\$2,400.00
Court	4 hours per month per officer	\$4,900.00

The part-time line is underfunded by \$4,300.00.

Chief Berube stressed with the new budget season the increase will be significant. For the next 10 months we will have to continue to ask people to come in late or leave early to prevent overspending of the budget.

Chairman Myette asked why this was not built into the budget before and the BOS wants to know if there is a problem so funds might be found in other places. As we get closer to the end of this budget, or on a monthly basis, keep the board aware of where the budget is.

Chief Berube mentioned the overtime line and cruiser lines are attacked during budget season. During the last few years, the department heads have been asked for zero percent increases to the budgets. To explain to everyone that there is a need for giving overtime to the officers is hard.

One part of the budget that was not very clear before this year is holidays. Chief Berube believed the holidays were paid out of a different budget, not the Police Department budget. There is no documentation of going over in a budget because he has made the officers leave early or come in late and that cannot continue.

Chairman Myette suggested documenting that the overtime is in excess of the officers’ 40-hour work week and where the money is being used such as court and training. This will prevent the need to short the hours the officers are working.

Chief Berube explained historically that the budget bottom line is what he must work with and if he goes over the budget, it will penalize him. To make everyone understand why he looks at the budget constantly, RSA 105 states overspending of the budget can result in termination for a Police Chief.

Chief Berube stated the overtime line has been at \$28K since 2015 and because of the heated debates every year on the subject, he gave up trying to increase the line.

Vice-Chairman Owens suggested adding new lines into the budget for court, training, and such. Chief Berube mentioned he has already asked for new lines to be placed in the budget such as holiday coverage. He is working with the Town Administrator to get rid of redundant lines and add new lines to make it clearer on the budget. When the new budget is submitted with a 13% increase it will not be a shocker to the Board of Selectmen.

Selectman Landau questioned if court time should necessarily be paid at time and a half and feels a court line on the budget should be added.

Selectman D’Angelo advised doing a spreadsheet to help the Board of Selectmen and people in town understand how the department has grown, what the department is doing, and how the money is being spent.

Chief Berube mentioned compensation and the matrix being adjusted. The Town of Danville Police posting was previously sent to the Board. The Town of Danville is starting their officers at \$27.88, while Chester starts the officer at \$24.12 per hour. Chief Berube will look at an abbreviated matrix to get to a top step to be competitive with other agencies.

Selectman D’Angelo questioned how many officers were paid less than what Danville is starting at. Chief Berube advised half the full-time officers in the department. Selectman D’Angelo mentioned the officers have the opportunity to make up the base pay with detail work.

Chief Berube will work on a revised matrix for the Police Department using the same format, grades, steps, and numbers for consideration by the Board.

Vice-Chairman Owens asked about the Police Explorers program. Chief Berube explained the program is run by the Boy Scouts of America and it does require overtime for the officers. With the current funding the department cannot provide the resource at this time.

Chairman Myette asked if it would be beneficial for the department to participate in the program. Chief Berube mentioned Officer Gardner was an explorer, auxiliary officer, and now a full-time officer. Pinkerton Academy calls the department for a student to ride-along with an officer, and they do have a small number of students that want to go into either fire or public safety.

### *3.3 Stevens Hall*

Chairman Myette mentioned estimates were received for some repairs at Stevens Hall.

Selectman Landau inquired if a committee is still being considered to establish what repairs and the costs would be for the entire building. The building is being used and these are a temporary fix to keep the building from getting worse.

Chairman Myette advised the leak in the roof can be seen in the attic. If the repairs are reasonable to fix the roof along with the gutter it should be considered. Selectman Landau mentioned there is money for the short-term fix, but it could be repeated if the project is approved in the future.

Selectman D’Angelo explained the longevity of the fix is unknown and \$30K is a lot of money for a temporary fix. Selectman Landau advised if the committee is created, they will not have all the information for the next town meeting.

Town Administrator Doda stated the roof repair is \$8K, gutter repair is \$2K and the spot painting is \$22K for a total of \$32K.

**Selectman Couture motioned to move forward with the roof and gutter repair and spot painting on Stevens Hall not to exceed \$33K. Vice-Chairman Owens seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, D’Angelo – abstained, Owens – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – abstained. With three in favor, the motion passed with Selectman D’Angelo and Selectman Landau abstaining.**

Selectman Landau will have Maintenance Director Cavanaugh investigate the manlift stipulation on the estimate.

Selectman Couture suggested having the basics for the committee such as who will be on the committee, what result the board is looking for, and a timeframe. Vice Chairman Owens suggested a selectman, employees, townspeople, and other committee members. Selectman Landau feels a member from the Budget Committee, Lions Club, and Historical Society.

Chairman Myette suggested consulting with Recreation Director Reishus or having her on the committee, as she oversees booking events at Stevens Hall.

Both Selectman Landau and Selectman D’Angelo will work with the committee.

### *3.4 Wason Pond Footbridge and Boy Scout Project*

Chairman Myette advised the Boy Scout Project has been started. There were no state permits needed. The scheduled date for completion is around September 19<sup>th</sup>.

Selectman D’Angelo questioned if we were doing anything to keep people off the bridge during the construction. Chairman Myette advised there is enough room for people to walk by the area. It was noted assembly is being done offsite.

Recreation Director Reishus has upcoming facilities requests and asked to be kept in the loop on both the bridge repair and scout project.

Chairman Myette announced the temporary bridge being paid for by the Conservation Commission will be started this weekend and should be complete in one to two days. The jersey barriers placed by the Road Agent will need to be removed before construction begins.

Selectman Landau suggested asking Wason Pond Commission to not allow horse traffic on the temporary bridge. Chairman Myette explained the strength of the bridge is designed to hold the gator.

**Selectman Couture motioned to remove the jersey barriers from Wason Pond. Vice-Chairman Owens seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Owens – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.**

Town Administrator Doda requested guidance on coding the expenses for the bridge. Selectman Landau suggested putting the expenses to the Wason Pond Budget line and it can clearly be explained why the line is over.

**IV. Selectmen’s Business**

*4.1 Chairman’s Announcements*

Chairman Myette announced the following meetings for next week:

Wednesday, September 1, 2021          Planning Board Meeting at 7:00pm

Thursday, September 2, 2021          Board of Selectmen Meeting at 7:00pm

Chairman Myette announced the following events:

Saturday, September 11, 2021          Town Fair

Saturday, September 25, 2021          Spring Hill Farm Fall Fest

*4.2 Roundtable*

Vice Chairman Owens:

*Nothing to report.*

Selectman Couture mentioned his continued work on the Solar Panel RFP. He should have it ready for the Board to review in a few weeks.

Selectman D’Angelo reported Ark Animal Homecare is attempting to purchase the Edward Mills property. They are on the ZBA agenda for September.

Selectman Landau attended the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary meeting and is very impressed with all they are doing and have accomplished. The upcoming Gala is sold out and the encampment may be moved to the Nichols-French Fields if the School and Board of Selectmen will allow it.

Chairman Myette questioned if the Board would like to delegate the signing of the vacation approvals to Town Administrator Doda.

***Selectman Couture motioned to authorize Town Administrator Doda to sign off on all time off requests. Vice-Chairman Owens seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Owens – aye, Couture – aye, Landau –aye. With all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

Selectman D’Angelo mentioned having a policy written up and placed in the personnel policy. This will be essential for new board members to understand what is already in place.

Chairman Myette mentioned a letter was crafted to the Garabedians by the land use attorney expressing the concerns of the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board about the operation. The Garabedians have ceased operations and have agreed to a public hearing with site plans for development and operation. The public hearing will possibly be in September.

Chairman Myette reviewed the Jenkins Farm road subdivision conditions of approval and the possibility of enforcing the bond. A letter was also sent, and they will be starting to pave next week.

Eversource reached out to the Spring Hill Farm Trust about a possible grant. They have been awarded \$2500.00 to put towards getting the building ADA compliant. There is no timeframe for the repairs, but there have been estimates.

Selectman D’Angelo asked when the community center ramp will be started. Town Administrator Doda advised the vendor has been notified and we are waiting to be placed on the schedule. The vendor for the Spring Hill Farm barn roof has also been notified.

#### *4.3 Non-Public Session(s)*

Chairman Myette announced there are five non-publics on reputation, employment, and pending litigation.

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

The meeting was closed to the public at 8:35 PM.

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

The meeting was reopened to the public at 9:26 PM.

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

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

***Selectman Landau motioned to leave the minutes of the third non-public session, on Employment, unsealed. Selectman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Owens – aye, Couture – aye, Landau –aye. With all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***

***Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the fourth non-public session, on Public Employees, for a period of thirty (30) days. Selectman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Owens – aye, Couture – aye, Landau –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 an indefinite period. Selectman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Owens – aye, Couture – aye, Landau –aye. With all in favor, the motion passed unanimously.***



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**V. Adjournment**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janis A. Jalbert  
Recording Secretary