

**Town of Chester  
Board of Selectmen’s Meeting  
Thursday, September 23, 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  
Budget Expectations  
Solar RFP Update  
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 D’Angelo  
Stephen Landau  
Jeremy Owens  
Steve Couture

Town Administrator Debra Doda

Members of the Public Present at various times:

Aaron Berube, Police Chief (Remotely)  
Phil Gladu, Acting Fire Chief  
Nancy Myette  
Mike Oleson, Road Agent  
Darrell Quinn (Remotely)  
Corinna Reishus, Recreation Director (Remotely)

and other persons unknown to the Recording Secretary.

*1.3 Pledge of Allegiance*

Chairman Myette led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### *1.4 Chairman’s Additions or Deletions*

Selectman D’Angelo acknowledged Town Administrator Doda’s birthday today.

#### *1.5 Public Comment*

Chairman Myette opened the meeting to public comment at 7:02pm.

Selectman Landau mentioned the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee and Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee have a fundraiser selling collectable maple syrup bottles.

As no other Members of the Public wished to be heard, Public Comment was closed at 7:04pm.

### **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.

### **III. New Business**

#### *3.1 Budget Expectations*

Chairman Myette explained the meeting is to go over the expectations of the budgets prior to the budgets being finished and sent out for review. This is to help understand where the expenses are and how to move forward with the preparation of budgets, warrant articles, bonds, and CIP items.

Chairman Myette reviewed his thoughts on the expectations for the upcoming budget season.

- Be thoughtful and accurate on the budget avoiding wild guesses.
- Look at reducing or equaling this year’s budget, with the understanding that this may not be the case with some of the budget lines. Look at every line and if it has not been spent in two years reduce it to zero or to the amount spent in previous years.
- Planned increase conversations with Board of Selectmen is better than waiting for the presentation of the budget. If possible, the increases should not be higher than the cost-of-living increase which is around 3% and document with footnotes the rationale for the increase including the cost benefits. If there are revenues collected, please note that on the budget.
- If there are uncertainties or contingencies built into the budget, please explain with footnotes.
- Have all the anticipated costs such as salaries and expenditures been accounted for.

- Have new hires (permanent and temporary) been accounted for in the budget? Also include any promotions, matrix increases, salary bumps, and bonuses.
- Provide justification for the new hires and build it into the budget.
- Check for completed annual reviews for all promotions and merit increase.
- Large expenditures should be identified and have an accurate estimate. Check to make sure items needed over \$5K have been placed on the CIP.
- For both budgets and CIP please justify the need and identify potential sources for funding the item.
- Be prepared to present to the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee.

Selectman D’Angelo mentioned the town can be better prepared for CIP Projects and other large expenditures if there are accurate estimates. Make sure the CIP is updated and accurate.

Road Agent Oleson mentioned the wear courses for the roads will be done next year and the Highway Department will need a new truck with a cost of \$188K. The CIP funding needed for roads will be just like previous years around \$1M. Road Agent Oleson stated the Highway Department needs another fulltime employee and it has already been added to the budget.

Selectman D’Angelo is concerned with discussions that may include police cruisers, fire trucks, highway trucks and possibly transitioning to a Director of Public Works (DPW) for the town.

Chairman Myette explained transitioning to a DPW is expensive and the question is where the money is going to come from. If a DPW were to happen the Board would need the Road Agent’s help with selling it to the townspeople. Road Agent Oleson advised a DPW review was done by MRI a few years ago and nothing has happened. It is in the hands of the Board of Selectmen and not up to the Road Agent at this point.

Selectman Couture pointed out the need for more employees and the potential for new revenue streams for road projects that could possibly be an offset. Road Agent Oleson explained the Highway Department budget is for minor maintenance, salaries, plowing, beaver activity, and tree cutting while the CIP is for major roadwork and other projects are done with warrant articles.

Selectman Landau suggested a warrant article to start a highway trucks and big equipment capital reserve fund just like what has been done for both the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Fire Department large equipment.

Chairman Myette pointed out these are the reasons the CIP was created. This is a tool to help with figuring out what is needed in years to come, and how do we start funding for the expenditure if a bond is not an option. Selectman Landau suggested looking at how we approach it so we can invest for the future large expenditures.

Road Agent Oleson explained salaries will be a big increase on the budget. Flaggers are needed on job sites to keep the workers safe. The Police Department has been great, but they may not be available for some emergencies.

Selectman Landau suggested having interested fire members or townspeople trained as flaggers. Road Agent Oleson pointed out if the Fire Department has an emergency, they would not be available if they are on a jobsite flagging.

Another addition on the highway budget will be an on-call stipend. The last 15 years it has been the Road Agent on call 7 days a week 365 days a year and it is time to share that responsibility. The employees will be paid for the time they are on-call for emergencies in the town.

Road Agent Oleson announced the road work on Rand, Holman, and Parker will start on Monday for about three weeks. To make it easier for the paving equipment and trucks to get to the area, the No Thru Trucking signs have been removed from Hale True Road. They will be back up at the conclusion of the work.

Chief Berube pointed out this is his 14<sup>th</sup> year of creating a budget for the town with no wild guesses for numbers. The Police Department budget is about 92% salary and 8% operations. Most of the equipment is on an annual renewal in the department and every possible grant is looked at for the department. Chief Berube will take the budget expectations into consideration for the upcoming budget.

Selectman D’Angelo reiterated having a good budget is key and there are no surprises with deficiencies on the budget. Chief Berube supplied the board with the line items he saw as being deficient at a previous meeting. Chairman Myette suggested adding a line for court which is justified and easy to explain why it is needed.

Selectman D’Angelo explained going into the budget for next year it would be nice to have justification as to why the budgets are what they are. Chief Berube mentioned any line in previous years that has increased by more than 5% has had an explanation for the increase. The Police Department budget for FY 22-23 is increasing about 9% and all of it is personnel costs.

Selectman Landau mentioned the town has grown and we have to look at that.

### *3.2 Solar RFP Update*

Selectman Couture reported the site walk for the Solar RFP was attended by ReVision Energy. ReVision Energy thought the site had potential with the southern exposure and power line access. Town Administrator Doda is getting the additional information requested by ReVision.

Selectman Landau inquired about preparations for the property, specifically the cover on the site. Selectman Couture explained the preparation would depend on the arrangement. And the installation on a capped landfill is very specific.

Chairman Myette mentioned the possibility of a different location if this is a viable option for the town. Selectman D’Angelo questioned if it could be placed on conservation land. Selectman Couture suggested waiting to see what ReVision has for a proposal for the town before considering other options.

## **IV. Selectmen’s Business**

Chairman Myette suggested adding a Town Administrator update to the Board of Selectmen’s agenda for any high-level highlights that should be mentioned. PACT has suggested the town invest in a sound system. Chairman Myette had mentioned a previous conversation with PACT about investing in a good sound system and video system in the MPR for town meetings or events. This is the time to look into that.

199 *4.1 Chairman’s Announcements*

200  
201 Chairman Myette announced the following meetings for next week:

202  
203 Monday, September 27, 2021 Recreation Commission Meeting at 7:00pm

204  
205 Tuesday, September 28, 2021 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee Meeting at 7:00pm

206  
207 Thursday, September 30, 2021 Board of Selectmen Meeting at 7:00pm

208  
209 Chairman Myette announced the following events:

210  
211 Saturday, September 25, 2021 Spring Hill Farm Fall Fest 10am to 4pm

212  
213 Sunday, September 26, 2021 Trail Ride

214  
215 Monday October 4, 2021 Make plans to have a late lunch, or dinner, at the Manchester  
216 Texas Roadhouse (1525 South Willow Street) on Monday,  
217 October 4<sup>th</sup>, between 3pm and 9pm. Present a copy of the  
218 flyer that will be passed out at the Fall Fest, show it on your  
219 phone, or simply mention it to your server, and Texas  
220 Roadhouse will donate 10% of your total food purchase to  
221 the Spring Hill Farm Trust.

222  
223 Chairman Myette mentioned the luminary kits to benefit the Meetinghouse Preservation Fund are  
224 selling for \$10. *LIGHT THE WAY* takes place on December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Kits are available at  
225 Bittersweet Blessings for the season and on Saturday December 4<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am to 7:00pm in front  
226 of the church.

227  
228 *4.2 Roundtable*

229  
230 Selectman Landau inquired if there were decisions on the placement of the time capsule. Selectman  
231 D’Angelo feels the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee should be making the decision on the location.

232  
233 Selectman Landau attended “A Hard Road to Travel” virtual workshop asked for a non-public to  
234 discuss changes that may directly affect the town. The “Scouting for Food” program will be held at  
235 the Transfer Station November 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup>. If someone is unable to bring the food to the  
236 Transfer Station during those dates, food can be dropped off at the Town Municipal Building.

237  
238 Selectman D’Angelo announced the Zoning Board of Adjustment approved a Veterinary Clinic at  
239 Edwards Mill and several garages within the wetland buffer.

240  
241 Selectman Couture:  
242 *Nothing to report.*

243  
244 Vice Chairman Owens reported the participation from residents on Chester Street is high for Trick  
245 or Treating. Selectman D’Angelo suggested a survey for how much candy is wanted. Recreation  
246 Director Reishus stated if the town is giving their approval, Recreation can assist with collecting  
247 and distributing candy to the Chester Street residents.

Selectman Landau questioned if the restrooms would be open in the municipal building for people to use. Selectman D’Angelo advised that about half a dozen people have used the facilities in the past. Vice-Chairman Owens agrees it should be open for those that need the restrooms.

Recreation Director Reishus mentioned Stevens Hall has been reserved by the Lions Club and will be open for restrooms.

Chairman Myette thanked Terry Kennett, Duane Demeritt and Jocelyn Grady for painting the Annex.

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

Chairman Myette announced there are six non-publics on reputation and pending litigation.

***Selectman Landau motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to 91-A:3(II) (c) reputation and (e) pending litigation. 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 closed to the public at 8:23 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 9:07 PM.

***Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the first non-public session, on Pending Litigation, for a period of one (1) year. 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.***

***Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the second non-public session, on Pending Litigation, for a period of one (1) year. 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.***

***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 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 Reputation, for a period of one (1) week. 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.***

***Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the fifth non-public session, on Reputation, for a period of thirty (30) days. 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.***

*Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the sixth non-public session, on Reputation, for an indefinite period. 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.*

**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 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janis A. Jalbert  
Recording Secretary