

**Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen’s Meeting
Thursday, October 14, 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
Conservation Commission P&S
Budgets
Fire Department Software and Mobile Vaccination Unit Requests
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 7:01pm.

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
Paul Cavanaugh, Maintenance Director
Victor Chouinard, Conservation Commission Chairman
Oliver Ford, NH State Representative
Phil Gladu, Acting Fire Chief
Nancy Myette
Mike Oleson, Road Agent
Corinna Reishus, Recreation Director (Remotely)
Kristina Snyder, Conversation Commission

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

None

1.5 Public Comment

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

As no Members of the Public wished to be heard, Public Comment was closed at 7:03pm.

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 Conservation Commission

Conservation Commission Chairman Chouinard read the request to release funds for the purchase of Conservation Land from Lloyd R. Emery Jr, Tax Map 4, Lot 69, Chester NH.

Chairman Myette mentioned the Conservation Commission has been looking at this parcel for a few years.

Mr. Chouinard mentioned having the town owned conservation land in that area surveyed and combined into one tax map. Selectman Landau advised the town field also needs to be surveyed and we can possibly have the engineer survey all the lots at the same time.

The lot looks like it may have been cut about eight to ten years ago but it is all trees.

Selectman Landau motioned to accept the request to release funds for the purchase of Conservation Land. 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.

3.2 Budgets

101 *3.2.1 Police and Animal Control – moved to later in the meeting*

102
103 *3.2.2 Government Buildings, Stevens Hall, Solid Waste Disposal, Recycling, Solid Waste Cleanup*

104
105 Maintenance Director Cavanaugh presented the Maintenance budget with a 7% increase, Stevens
106 Hall with a flat budget, Transfer Station Solid Waste Disposal budget with a 4% increase, and
107 Recycling budget with an increase of 46%.

108
109 Salaries were adjusted by the Finance Director based on the matrix and added summer help again.
110 Pest control rates have increased and all pest control for the town is in this one line.

111
112 The Library and Stevens Hall are overdue for the fire/ security alarms to be serviced and updated,
113 \$7,900.00 has been moved from major projects to cover the costs. Since this is considered
114 maintenance, it is not on the CIP. Currently the town has multiple alarm companies and Town
115 Administrator Doda is putting out a Request for Proposal (RFP) to get all accounts combined into
116 one.

117
118 Acting Fire Chief Gladu mentioned the paneled alarm activations are currently monitored through
119 Derry and they will be routed to a third-party monitoring system in the future. The understanding
120 is the town will also need to contract with a third party and it was recommended the town should
121 look into this now since there was an issue with the school alarm monitoring. Selectman Couture
122 suggested looking at grants such as the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) for
123 Homeland Security Emergency Management.

124
125 Selectman D’Angelo pointed out footnotes for the budgets with justifications would be helpful to the
126 Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee. If there are questions that come up or new
127 information is received, another meeting has been set up in December.

128
129 Maintenance Director Cavanaugh mentioned an issue with a drainage on the side of the MPR (Multi-
130 Purpose Room) and some pipes are collapsing. Currently the budget has a line for cleaning out the
131 lines which was increased this year. Maintenance Director Cavanaugh is currently working on
132 getting updated quotes for the repairs/ replacement of the drainage system. Selectman Couture
133 advised this could be an ARPA project.

134
135 Maintenance Director Cavanaugh pointed out the Post Office building needs maintenance. There are
136 issues on the second floor such as the construction, heat, and the stairs, but if the second floor is not
137 going to be used the issues do not need to be addressed. Chairman Myette mentioned the possibility
138 of having the Stevens Hall Renovation Committee address the second floor of the Post Office also.
139 Selectman Landau indicated he is having a hard time getting the group together.

140
141 Chairman Myette indicated the prices for gas and diesel are rising and suggested revisiting at the
142 Gas and Diesel lines on the Government Buildings, Stevens Hall, and Transfer Station budgets.

143
144 Selectman Landau questioned if more money needed to be added to the restoration line for the
145 architect’s services on the Stevens Hall budget. Town Administrator Doda advised there is still
146 money in the Stevens Hall capital reserve account that can be used for his services.

147
148 The Transfer Station Solid Waste Disposal budget will need a few lines revisited at before coming
149 back to the Board in December. This does not reflect the possible changes in recycling of cardboard
150 or recycling.

Selectman Landau explained the Solid Fill Disposal line is the concrete that needs to be disposed of. If the town disposes of the concrete this year it will not be carried on the budget next year. Maintenance Director Cavanaugh advised Transfer Station Supervisor Ragnarsson (not present) is looking for a company to take the concrete since the facility in Raymond no longer takes concrete. Chairman Myette suggested ABC Processing in Dracut, MA.

3.2.3 Highway and Streets

Road Agent Oleson presented the Highway Budget with a 19.39% increase.

Road Agent Oleson pointed out the increase to the salary line is for an additional full-time employee, seasonal employees, and the on-call stipend. Town Administrator Doda noted that the Finance Director prepares the salary lines based on the pay matrix for the budgets. The employees will get a \$200.00 stipend to be on-call for 24 hours a day for one week which is similar to the Fire Department. For the last 15 years the budget has not been impacted as the Road Agent has been the one on call and there has been no charge unless the Police Department calls the Road Agent out to work.

Road Agent Oleson noted the town is growing, the department is falling behind because there is not enough help, so another employee was added to the salary line. Chairman Myette asked for a footnote with the justification for hiring another employee.

Selectman Landau inquired if the town should be looking to hire two additional employees considering the town already pays for an MLM employee to be on some jobs. Road Agent Oleson pointed out that hiring an MLM employee includes the equipment needed that the town does not have. The tractor on the CIP was pushed further out due to needing a new truck sooner.

Road Agent Oleson explained the increase in the plowing overtime line is based on overspending it every year. Roadside Cleanup went up as there are more trees falling around town. A warrant article to help with the trees was denied previously and the problems with trees continue.

Selectman D’Angelo inquired as to why there was not a decrease in hot patch since moving from cold patch. Road Agent Oleson advised the decrease would be seen when they have caught up on the roads.

Selectman D’Angelo noted the winter maintenance fund has not been touched in a few years. Road Agent Oleson explained that is for a bad winter and should not be used to subsidize the budget. Additional roads will be accepted and plowing must be planned for them for next year.

The pricing for salt went up drastically this year to justify this increase and it is likely to put the current year’s budget in the red. The signs budget line went up mainly due to people cutting the posts and stealing the signs. It costs the town over \$100.00 per sign when they are stolen. Not only signs but catch basin covers are being stolen also.

Road Agent Oleson mentioned speed limit signs were put up on Towle Road and the person responsible was told to take them down. They were told the proper procedure for getting signs placed on the road. Town Administrator Doda reported a petition on Facebook for speed bumps for the road.

After a brief conversation about a having a DPW for the town, Chairman Myette explained the actual dollar amounts are needed and then the town can look at how to finance it. With us continuing to kick it down the road the prices are also rising. Road Agent Oleson pointed out in the past he was told the town does not get bonds since we have a CIP.

Town Administrator Doda will work with Finance Director Smith on the breakdown for the salary line and the road agent will work on the other justifications.

Selectman D’Angelo asked what the costs would be for a trapper. Road Agent Oleson advised it would be \$175 per animal. With the insurance limits the town requires, a trapper had to be subcontracted through MLM in the past. Selectman Couture stated the insurance would cost the town \$3700.00. The average number of animals trapped is between 10-15 a year. Town Administrator Doda pointed out the town spent \$8K in July alone to clean culverts of beaver debris. Chairman Myette mentioned it is cheaper and more cost efficient if the town hires someone to trap the beavers. TA Administrator Doda will work with Finance Director Smith on getting that into the budget.

3.2.4 Ambulance Billing, Emergency Management, Fire, Forest Fire

Acting Fire Chief Gladu stated the Emergency Management budget stayed the same other than house numbering. The increase is due to catching up on existing and the increase in houses being built.

The Ambulance budget is a fixed 10-year contract with a 3% increase.

Acting Fire Chief Gladu advised the increases in salaries are based on the matrix. The stipend for both the Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief will remain until a decision is made for those positions.

Fire Prevention Inspections budget line went down. The Fire Prevention Week is a video with no Fire Department participation due to Covid-19. Selectman D’Angelo asked about the amounts charged for inspections on new houses and where that falls on the budget. Acting Fire Chief Gladu advised they charge around \$50 to \$60 depending on the inspection. The prices were increased in 2019.

Acting Fire Chief Gladu mentioned office supplies went up. When the new Red Alert system is in place more of the documents will be online. Selectman Landau asked if the reports will be online why is there an 18% increase. Even with reports online the Fire Department will need to generate some reports and print probationary books.

Gas/Oil/Diesel went down based on the usage from previous years. Rate increases from the mechanics the town uses has increased the Vehicle Maintenance budget.

Selectman D’Angelo inquired about the pipe that burst at the Fire Department, and who was doing the fire watch at the school. Acting Fire Chief Gladu advised a member of the Fire Department did the fire watch at the school and the problem with the alarm was fixed today. Another problem that has been fixed was a leaking pipe on the main line of the sprinkler system in the fire station.

3.3 Fire Department – Software and Mobile Vaccination Unit Requests

Acting Fire Chief Gladu mentioned the RedAlert software has been established and money has been put in the budget. The next step is getting the Selectmen to send a letter approving the installation. This will automate a lot of what goes into a report. The current system is obsolete and if it crashes there is no support.

Town Administrator Doda advised the pricing is ~\$25k for the software and modules, or the vendor would allow four annual payments of ~\$6.5k. There will also be \$3,770 for support and hosting each year. Acting Chief Gladu will look at what is in the budget for the software.

Selectman D’Angelo asked if the Fire Department had impact fees that could cover the cost and when the last time impact fees were used. Town Administrator Doda mentioned one year ago the department had roughly \$17K but recently used some. Selectman D’Angelo questioned if this could be a CIP project. Town Administrator Doda will get the answer.

Acting Fire Chief Gladu mentioned the Covid-19 Vaccination Clinic is at the Transfer Station on Saturday, October 23, 2021, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. He will get more clarity and details for the event such as if all the vaccines will be available.

3.2.1 Police and Animal Control (Continued)

Police Chief Berube presented the Police Department Budget with an increase of 8.81% and the Animal Control Budget with an increase of 100%. Chairman Myette thanked him for having the supporting documentation for the increases on the budget.

Chief Berube noted the increases in the part-time line include the weekly patrol shifts, mandatory training hours, and court hours and about \$2K left for extra coverage during the year. Chief Berube mentioned they are in the process of hiring another part time officer.

Chief Berube pointed out the PD Conferences and Classes was supposed to increase for the current budget but was never changed before the budget went to Town Meeting. Training is critical for part of the job and with Governor Sununu’s Police task force the mandatory training will increase. The Police Academy is not providing as many classes as before, so more classes must come from 3rd party trainers and or off-site training at an additional cost.

The Detective was compensated with paid holidays and vacation hours in lieu of an increase in pay last year. He has 30 years of experience, in town for 5 years and provides tutelage to the younger officers when time and the budget allows. The schedules rotate, which allows for some time working together. He works on sexual assaults, domestic violence follow-ups, and other cases in town which are overwhelming for a 32 hour a week schedule.

Selectman D’Angelo questioned who supervises the Wason Pond Park Ranger now that he was moved to the Recreation Budget. Chief Berube explained Recreation Director Reishus has daily contact and maintains his schedule and law enforcement issues are handled by the Police Department.

Police Department vehicle maintenance has been combined into one line and is less than the last budget. Selectman D’Angelo requested the spreadsheet with the year and mileage and service amounts for all town owned vehicles. Chief Berube explained the new cruiser was ordered in June and the order has been delayed and one cruiser was not retired last year. Ford indicated a 3-5%

increase in the price due to a chip shortage. The cruisers are maintained and kept clean for a higher resale or if giving to another department it will still have life left.

Selectman Landau inquired if the department has thought about electric vehicles in the future. Other than Wolfeboro’s donated car, no other NH agency has an electric vehicle. The F250 on the CIP was purchased with the intent to be moved to another department since that is no longer the case the next truck purchased will be a police force rated truck which will save the town money.

Selectman D’Angelo feels the \$14K holiday line will be a hard sell. Chief Berube explained with seven hourly officers the overtime line is \$28K and the Fire Department has two hourly employees with an overtime budget of \$15K. The Police Department works 24 hours a day 7 days a week which means every holiday the town pays 24 hours of overtime. If the holidays are taken out of the overtime line it leaves \$11K for court, training, open shifts, and holiday coverage when someone must fill a holiday shift.

Selectman D’Angelo inquired if the Sheriff’s Department can cover the town when it is needed. Chief Berube, if the Board wishes, can ask them to cover but the town will need to pay them as well. Selectman D’Angelo stated the Sheriff’s Department received grants from the state and are not charging the towns. Chief Berube noted the department has grown, and half the Sheriff’s Department is now doing patrols, but only during the day.

Chairman Myette mentioned the Board asked for the justification on the increases and it was done. Chief Berube stated he presented an appropriate budget, and he will no longer be the bad guy by adjusting schedules, so officers lose a day off without pay when they have to go to court or a training because there is no money in the budget. There will be turnover if we continue to modify the schedules and are not compensating the officers for missed days off.

Selectman Landau questioned what court is costing the town and why is an officer not getting a day off when there is court. Chief Berube pointed out when an officer is given another day off because they went to court the town has to pay another officer overtime to cover their shift. Selectman Landau inquired if more staff is needed to accommodate the issues.

Selectman Couture pointed out \$15K doesn’t seem like enough justification to ask for another officer and feels the Chief has done the analysis on what is a reasonable budget. The Chief has come before the Board over the last few months with this information. Chief Berube stated in the past the department relied on the part time officers to cover holidays and that is not an option anymore. The part timers are working their full-time jobs and on occasion they might pick up a holiday.

Selectman D’Angelo mentioned this is the first year of paying holiday pay. Chief Berube pointed out the town has paid holiday pay to the employees for the last 15 years, but the holidays were lumped into the overtime line leaving \$12K to cover court, training, and open shifts for seven hourly employees.

Chief Berube mentioned asking for another officer in the upcoming year. Surrounding towns have two officers per shift. In town the Fire and Highway Departments always have two people working together but we send one officer to handle a domestic violence call.

Chief Berube stated he presented an appropriate budget, and it is up to the Board of Selectmen to make cuts where they see fit. Chairman Myette commented the changes made make the budget more transparent and includes supporting documentation.

IV. Selectmen’s Business

4.1 Chairman’s Announcements

Chairman Myette announced the following meetings for next week:

Monday, October 18, 2021	Spring Hill Farm Meeting at 7:00pm
Tuesday October 19, 2021	ZBA Meeting at 7:00pm
Thursday, October 21, 2021	Board of Selectmen Meeting at 7:00pm

Chairman Myette announced the following events:

Saturday, October 16, 2021	Lions Club Food Drive 8:00am to 2:00pm
Sunday October 17, 2021	Hazardous Waste Day 9:00am to 12:00pm at the Transfer Station
Saturday, October 23, 2021	Covid-19 Vaccination Clinic and Drug Take Back Day at the Transfer Station from 10:00am to 2:00pm 300 th Anniversary Gala at 6:00pm
Saturday November 6, 2021	Scouting for Food at the Transfer Station
Saturday November 13, 2021	Scouting for Food at the Transfer Station

4.2 Town Administrators Report

Selectman D’Angelo asked about the “crisis intervention team” for the Police Department and their training. Chief Berube stated these are employees from the Center from Life Management assisting either in person or remotely for situations before officers must take a person in for an evaluation. Chief Berube is looking at a grant to get officers certified but the officers will not be doing evaluations, it is more for understanding what will happen when the crisis team responds.

Town Administrator Doda mentioned along with signs and storm grates, catalytic converters are continually being stolen. The Town Fair Committee is meeting in the MPR on Monday October 18th at 6:00pm.

4.3 Roundtable

Vice Chairman Owens:
Nothing to report

Selectman Couture received a response to the Solar Power RFP and will give an update at another meeting. The proposal covers the entire municipality’s electric bill with 2.5 acres of solar panels on the capped landfill.

Selectman Couture mentioned he will be helping with the feasibility study on the permanent bridge structure at Wason Pond.

Selectman D’Angelo has one non-public on reputation.

Selectman Landau asked State Representative Oliver Ford about why the town pays an officer to go to court but fines get paid to the state and not back to the towns. Chief Berube advised the town does get compensation put into the general fund from the state, but it is a very small amount. State Representative Ford will check into this and get back to the town.

Selectman Landau explained the town’s insurance company is a 3rd party risk management pool and they are telling the town they cannot cover a number of things. The state legislation was who got rid of the town’s insurance with Municipal Association. This should be looked at as it is costing the towns considerably more for insurance going with Primex.

Selectman D’Angelo advised when a vendor is brought in to do work, Primex requires a large amount of insurance coverage. Chairman Myette stated some vendors do not have the correct amount of coverage and it narrows the vendor base for the town.

Chairman Myette:

Nothing to report

4.4 Non-Public Session(s)

Chairman Myette announced there are four non-publics on reputation.

Selectman Landau motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to 91-A:3(II) (c) reputation. 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 9:44 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 11:04 PM.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of all four non-public sessions on Reputation for an indefinite period of time. 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.

V. Adjournment

Selectman Landau moved to adjourn the meeting. 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.

449
450 The meeting was adjourned at 11:08 PM.
451
452 Respectfully submitted,
453
454 Janis A. Jalbert
455 Recording Secretary