

**Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen’s Meeting
Thursday, December 2, 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
Equalization Ratio
Fire Department Update
Potential Revisit of Budgets
Warrant Articles
Solar Energy Letter of Intent
Holiday Schedule for BOS Meetings
Chairman’s Announcements
Roundtable
TA Report
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
Jeremy Owens
Steve Couture
Steve D’Angelo
Stephen Landau

Town Administrator Debra Doda

Members of the Public Present at various times:

Aaron Berube, Police Chief
Phil Gladu, Acting Fire Chief
Liz Lufkin, Town Clerk / Tax Collector (Remotely)
Stacy Manfrates (Remotely)
Nancy Myette

Jean Packard, Assistant Assessor (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

Chairman Myette and Selectman Landau each have one non-public.

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 Equalization Ratio

Assistant Assessor Jean Packard explained the Equalization Ratio is a tool the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) uses to make sure taxes are fair and proportional for each house. The Equalization Ratio is at 80% down 9% from last report and this means the town does not need to do a revaluation early. DRA recommends revaluations every five years to bring everyone back up to 100% of the assessed value.

3.2 Fire Department Update

Acting Fire Chief Gladu reported 41 calls for service in November; one of which was at the school. He mentioned a meeting with the School Principal, Superintendent, Police Chief, and Emergency Management to toss out ideas and lessons learned from the call. They will be having a “Tabletop” which is designed like a big board game they can play out different scenarios on.

Acting Fire Chief Gladu announced the forestry truck is out of service for the season. During the winter a new bed will put on courtesy of the Fire Association. New call member James Fleckenstein will be introduced at next week’s Board of Selectman Meeting.

Selectman D’Angelo asked what the traffic plan was for the tree lighting this Saturday. Acting Fire Chief Gladu will put cones on the road and people can park at Busche Academy and walk to Stevens Hall. Selectman D’Angelo inquired if extra officers would be at the event. Chief Berube replied he would be at the event.

Acting Fire Chief Gladu mentioned the Fire Association gave out 30 baskets on Thanksgiving and they would be having the Christmas Eve Santa ride again this year.

Chairman Myette asked if the communications tower on the CIP is still viable as it keeps moving to different years. Acting Fire Chief Gladu stated it is still viable, it is just hard to nail down when it needs to happen. Chairman Myette inquired if the town would be making arrangements with one of the four towers in town. The AT&T tower would be the only viable option.

3.3 Potential Revisit of Budgets

3.3.1 Police Department

Police Chief Berube announced the grant paperwork was received to purchase a radar trailer and message board. This was 100% Federal Funds from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, for the purpose of supporting municipalities with activities related to relaxed COVID-19 restrictions.

Selectman Couture motioned to accept \$20,543.00 from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 for the Police radar trailer and message board. Selectman Landau 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.

Police Chief Berube provided justification for a Full time Detective and some of the duties, although patrol will be priority when needed. The salary difference from part time to full time is small but there is an added cost in the benefits. The ideal candidate would have 5+ years’ experience with one year of investigative work. Under the current state guidelines, a retired officer can only work 26 hours per week, or their state benefits will be affected.

Chief Berube mentioned you cannot put a number of hours worked on cases as some cases could take months and hundreds of hours. Detective Richard (not present) has pointed out he worked harder in Chester than his whole career at the Derry Police Department.

Vice Chairman Owens asked if part of the detective’s job involved crime scene processing. Chief Berube indicated it is a function of this job. Each officer gets 8 hours of training in the academy and the rest is on the job training.

Selectman D’Angelo questioned the new line on the budget for On Call Supervisors. Chief Berube explained supervisors take calls on weekends and are not compensated for their time. With this program the officers on duty will know what supervisor to call when they have an issue. This will be similar to what the Fire Department does.

Selectman D’Angelo questioned the Holiday Coverage line on the budget. Chief Berube explained there has always been holiday coverage; it was the overtime budget which was under funded.

Chief Berube explained the legal expense budget line was just increased by 20%. Attorney Di Croce has decided to retire in December of 2022. The town has grown too much, and an increase is

needed. Attorney Di Croce is working with several assistant prosecutors and hopefully one of them will be willing to prosecute for Chester.

When a new prosecutor is chosen, they will be brought before the Board.

3.3.2 Transfer Station

Town Administrator Doda advised the Transfer Station has already overspent the cardboard/paper line in the budget this year. The Board approved a compactor for the cardboard and Town Administrator Doda adjusted the budget to \$14,100.00 to cover the rental and pickups.

It was suggested to either start charging to bring in cardboard or to enact Transfer Station Resident Stickers which would not be issued to commercial enterprises.

Selectman Landau reported tires were dumped on the sides of roads when the Transfer Station first started charging for tires. Selectman D’Angelo mentioned a warrant article to see how the town feels about having to purchase facility use stickers to offset some of the costs at the Transfer Station.

Town Administrator Doda pointed out the Planning Board added \$5K to the budget for office support from NH Planning Commission.

3.4 Warrant Articles: First Review

Selectman Landau mentioned a decision needs to be made on the proposed article for Road Agent. Chairman Myette proposed the formation of a committee to see if it would be a benefit for the town. Town Administrator Doda is working on getting the numbers that were requested a few weeks ago by Selectman D’Angelo for the discussion. Vice Chairman Owens pointed out with the current process of the Road Agent being elected; that can change every few years.

Selectman D’Angelo suggested a breakdown of the highway CIP projects for the town report and a policy for when to send out trucks for sanding and salting.

Selectman Landau questioned if 300th Anniversary warrant article is still needed or should it be renamed to Town Anniversaries.

A decision on the Solar project is needed. This is a lease longer than a year and there are about \$50K in upfront fees. Chairman Myette feels it is hard to sign a letter of intent prior to the Town Meeting.

Selectman Couture advised he would like to see the permitting and site costs worked into the agreement so it would be a zero investment for the town. He will meet with Town Administrator Doda about a revised agreement with ReVision.

With a Town Meeting in March there might not be an actual number for the Winter Road Maintenance article.

3.5 Solar Energy Letter of Intent

This was mentioned and discussed with the Warrant Articles discussion.

200
201 *3.6 Holiday Schedule for BOS Meetings*
202

203 Chairman Myette suggested having the December 23rd meeting and not meeting on December 30th.
204 All were in agreement.
205

206 **IV. Selectmen’s Business**
207

208 *4.1 Chairman’s Announcements*
209

210 Chairman Myette announced the following meetings for next week:
211

212 Monday December 6, 2021 Wason Pond Commission Meeting at 7:00pm
213

214 Wednesday, December 8, 2021 Planning Board Meeting at 7:00pm
215

216 Thursday, December 9, 2021 Board of Selectmen Meeting at 7:00pm
217

218 Chairman Myette announced the following events:
219

220 Saturday December 4th and Sunday December 5th, 2021 Christmas in the Village
221

222 Saturday December 4th, 2021 Christmas Tree Lighting and Community Caroling event at
223 Stevens Hall 5:00pm
224

225 *4.2 Roundtable*
226

227 Selectman Landau mentioned the ramp meeting at Spring Hill Farm went well and the builder for
228 the Community Center is having issues with subcontractors.
229

230 Selectman D’Angelo
231 *Nothing to report*
232

233 Selectman Couture pointed out impact fees could be collected for accessory dwellings. A copy of a
234 sample ordinance will be sent to the Planning Board.
235

236 Vice-Chairman Owens
237 *Nothing to report*
238

239 Chairman Myette asked Town Administrator Doda to confirm the Cole Road culvert qualifies for the
240 ARPA Grant.
241

242 He advised decisions are needed on the CIP about whether to keep some items on it such as
243 buildings. Is the Town going to move forward with building a Police Department or Fire
244 Department? Selectman D’Angelo feels a new building would need to be a bond, not an item on the
245 CIP. Would a sally port on the existing building be more feasible? Selectman Landau pointed out
246 that impact fees could be lost if the Police Department building is taken off the CIP. Vice-Chairman
247 Owens suggested a capital reserve fund for buildings.
248

Chairman Myette suggested a meeting be scheduled with Town Planner Hadik to go over the CIP.

4.3 Town Administrator’s Report

Selectman D’Angelo recommended Town Counsel look at the document mentioned on the Town Administrators report once it is finished.

4.4 Non-Public Session(s)

Chairman Myette announced four non-public sessions on reputation and employment.

Selectman Landau motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to 91-A:3(II) (a) public employees, (c) reputation, and (j) financial information. 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.

The meeting was closed to the public at 9:08 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.

The meeting was reopened to the public at 9:46 PM.

Selectman Landau motioned to leave the minutes of the first non-public session, on Financial Information, unsealed. 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.

Selectman Landau motioned to leave the minutes of the second non-public session, on Financial Information, unsealed. 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.

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.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the fourth non-public session, on Public Employees, for a period of ninety (90) 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.

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.

299 The meeting was adjourned at 9:48 PM.

300

301 Respectfully submitted,

302

303 Janis A. Jalbert

304 Recording Secretary