

**Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen’s Meeting
Thursday, April 7, 2022
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
Spring Hill Farm Appointment
PACT Appointment
PACT Reappointments
Police Department Update
Policies
Chairman’s Announcements
Roundtable
TA Report
Action Items
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

Members of the Public Present at various times:

Aaron Berube, Police Chief
Joe Biedrzycki
Robert Grimm
Katelyn Holland
Karl Knudsen
Cindy LeBlanc
Nancy Myette

Corinna Reishus, Recreation Director

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 7:01pm.

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.

III. New Business

3.1 Appointment to Spring Hill Farm

Ms. LeBlanc introduced Mr. Biedrzycki as the newest member to the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee and a great asset to the committee.

Mr. Biedrzycki has been attending the meetings and has been helping to mark and maintain trails at Spring Hill Farm. He is active in the Scouts and has also been working with the PACT and the Historical Society.

The Board members thanked Mr. Biedrzycki for volunteering.

Selectman D’Angelo motioned to appoint Joe Biedrzycki as a regular member of the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee with a term to expire on May 31, 2025. Vice Chairman 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.

3.2 Appointment to PACT

Mr. Grimm introduced Ms. Holland as the newest member to PACT. She has covered a few events in town for PACT such as the Christmas Tree lighting. Selectman D’Angelo mentioned Ms. Holland is a

senior at Pinkerton Academy and will be graduating this spring. She will be taking a gap year before heading off to college.

Selectman Landau motioned to appoint Katelyn Holland as a regular member of PACT with a term to expire on May 31, 2025. 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.

3.3 Reappointment to PACT

There were no questions for Mr. Grimm or Mr. Knudsen on their reappointment to PACT.

Selectman Landau motioned to reappoint Bob Grimm as a regular member of PACT with a term to expire on May 31, 2025. 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 reappoint Karl Knudsen as a regular member of PACT with a term to expire on May 31, 2025. 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.

3.4 Police Department Update

Police Chief Berube is at the meeting to speak about the needs for the Police Department. Retention is at a critical need point not only in the state but nationwide. There far fewer candidates coming into the profession. This could potentially hurt the community unless steps are taken to stay ahead of the curve.

Chief Berube mentioned some towns in NH are offering a great benefits package, retention bonuses, and up to \$20K in hiring bonuses. He feels it is far less to retain an officer than it is to train a new officer. Small towns such as Chester do not have the same opportunities as larger communities with scheduled overtime, abundant number of details, free health insurance, double coverage or earned time off.

Small towns have been adjusting their compensation to try to retain their officers. Similar communities to Chester are starting their officers at \$27.88 an hour. Our officers would be in the job four years before making that amount. Police Chief Berube suggested that the Board allow him to work on an abbreviated pay scale for the Police Department. Once complete he would bring it to the Board for consideration. Selectman Couture requested data for our loss rates and comparisons of what other communities have.

Chief Berube advised the Police Department does not have union representation like other towns. Union representation for the town would be costly, and the Board has always been fair in the past, so the topic has not been raised in the department. The matrix was positive when it was introduced but it is falling behind. People are going for the money.

Selectman Landau asked for a comparison on salaries and benefits. Benefits are one of the advantages of retaining people. Benefits will have to be looked at for the entire town not just first

responders. Selectman Landau stated the beauty of not having union representation is the town may be able to pay more.

Selectman Owens asked for a proposal with data to see where the town should be. There are not many people looking to become a First Responder or even joining the military. Selectman D’Angelo suggested an analyst to figure out what we need over the next few years.

Chief Berube mentioned there are three officers completing their working agreements, if the town is not comparable there is the potential to for them to move on.

Chief Berube reminded the Board of the upcoming retirement of the prosecutor in December. For the last few months, the Police Department has had interim prosecutors. Based on workload and funding none of the interim prosecutors are interested in taking Chester’s prosecution. The current budget for prosecution is \$15K and next year’s budget is \$18K. Chief Berube stated estimates from prosecutors has ranged from \$22K to \$30K.

Chief Berube mentioned the Town of Derry Police Department is willing to assume prosecution for the department with a contract similar to the Fire Dispatch and Ambulance service contract. Unfortunately, it will cost the town around \$25K for their services. One benefit is we will have fulltime attorneys, prosecutors, and administrative staff. The transition of the cases is quick, the town stays in the same court system. The courts have been made aware the town is changing prosecution.

The County Attorney will continue with all the felony cases. Selectman D’Angelo inquired about the length of the contract. Chief Berube advised the contract length is the discretion of the Board of Selectmen. Selectman D’Angelo proposed to have the Chief work with Derry on a contract for the town’s prosecution. All members are in agreement.

Chief Berube pointed out the Detective’s position has been posted for a month. He has received four external resumes for the position. All four candidates have expressed the starting salary is insufficient. Chief Berube mentioned the candidates range from 6 years to 30 years on the job. This is a perfect example for the salary pool to be utilized since the money is not in the budget.

Chairman Myette stated the position needs to be filled with the right person. Chief Berube will present the resume prior to bringing a candidate in for a meet and greet with the Board.

Chief Berube inquired if an electric car should be put on the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). There is one vehicle that could meet the needs of the town but not for patrol as the cage and computer cannot be mounted to the floor. Companies are working on a solution, but it may take a few years. Chairman Myette advised keeping a car in the CIP, and a decision can be made in the future if an electric car is viable.

Chief Berube mentioned the pickup truck is refreshed every six to eight years. The truck was purchased with the intention of transferring to another department. The truck is being used for picking up animals and evidence. It is also being used off road and during inclement weather.

Chief Berube mentioned with the hiring of a Supervisor of Roads, the heavy-duty pickup truck can be transferred to highway and a more suitable truck can be purchased for the Police Department. Selectman Landau suggested purchasing an electric pickup for the Police Department and transferring their truck to the Highway Department.

Selectman D’Angelo asked about an update on the shooting in town. Chief Berube advised the person involved is no longer in critical condition and is improving. State Police has requested to have no media releases from the Police Department. The only officer on duty that night was dispatched to a call for a person who had sustained a gunshot wound. He requested surrounding towns to assist. The scene was secured, and it was evident shots were discharged into the dwelling. The victim was transported with life threatening injuries and New Hampshire State Police and Major Crimes Unit were called to the scene and assumed responsibility of the investigation. Chief Berube stated there is no known threat to the community, no suspects and it is unclear if it was a random act or not.

Selectman D’Angelo pointed out what looked like a party at the end of the road near the power lines. Was the victim trying to scare off the people? Chief Berube advised it is unclear but there were numerous cars near the power lines. It is unclear the distance from those vehicles to where the casings were found. It is possible there will be a media release tomorrow.

3.5 Policies

No discussion on the policies until they are reviewed by counsel.

IV. Selectmen’s Business

4.1 Chairman’s Announcements

Chairman Myette announced the following meetings and upcoming events:

Monday, April 11, 2022	Budget Committee Meeting at 7:00pm
Tuesday, April 12, 2022	Conservation Commission Meeting at 7:00pm
Wednesday, April 13, 2022	Planning Board Meeting at 7:00pm
Thursday, April 14, 2022	Board of Selectman Meeting at 7:00pm
Saturday, April 23, 2022	Seniors Banquet in the MPR

4.2 Roundtable

Selectman Landau mentioned Southern NH Planning Commission is planning to do some culvert assessments and it was suggested to ask about the culverts in question in the town. The information will be passed to Town Planner Hadik (not present) to discuss with Road Agent Oleson (not present).

Chairman Myette stated the red listed bridge report has been sent to the town. Both Hanson Road and Shepard Home Road are on the report and on the CIP. The town is looking at engineering for both bridges. Town Planner Hadik is working on grants for the bridges.

Selectman Landau presented the memo from Maintenance Director Cavanaugh (not present). The Viper Fang floor scrubber is being serviced and repaired. There has been no service on the machine since 2014. Maintenance Director Cavanaugh feels the machine has reached its end of life.

Selectman Landau suggested allowing Maintenance Director Cavanaugh to purchase a new machine. Selectman D’Angelo requested an estimate prior to the purchase. Chairman Myette suggested renting until estimates for a new machine has been brought to the Board.

Selectman Landau advised that electrical wires need to be run from the road to the Transfer Station and it is the town’s responsibility.

Selectman Landau questioned what it would take to get the rest of Dump Road up to standard. Chairman Myette advised engineering and adding the road to the CIP. BOS Administrative Assistant Jalbert was asked to notify Road Agent Oleson to start the process.

Selectman D’Angelo passed out copies of the town’s insurance policy. He noted a few items the town was unaware of such as not for profits and volunteers are covered by the policy. Also, a personal vehicle is covered if it is work event. Policies can change yearly, and they should be reviewed.

Vice Chairman Couture advised there is a meeting with ReVision on April 20th at the Transfer Station.

Selectman Owens has one legal nonpublic.

Chairman Myette mentioned the 300th has inquired about insurance for the 300th Celebration regarding parking on private property. Primex wrote a policy for the Town of Brookline for both private and public parking during their 250th celebration. Selectman Landau will follow up with Primex for pricing. Suggested checking with Town Counsel about parking on private property.

Chairman Myette advised the 300th is still waiting on the Governor’s response for Proclamation Day. They have also asked for a Selectman to speak at the proclamation. The 300th will be attending a meeting with the Board of Selectmen about the transportation and traffic logistics for the parade in June.

Selectman Landau mentioned the town could possibly rent a 12–15-person electric golf cart for the day. Chairman Myette suggested the golf cart be discussed at the next 300th meeting.

Chairman Myette announced the senior’s banquet is on April 23rd in the MPR and they are planning a trip in June to Vermont to see Friesian Horses.

4.3 Town Administrator’s Report

Ms. Jalbert mentioned one item on the Town Administrator’s report that needs the Board’s attention. Selectman D’Angelo stated it would be discussed in non-public.

4.4 Action Items *Nothing to report*

4.5 Non-Public Session(s)

Chairman Myette announced four non-public sessions.

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.

The meeting was closed to the public at 8:47PM. Chief Berube remained in the room.

Chief Berube exited the room at 9:33pm.

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 9:46PM.

Selectman Landau motioned to seal the minutes of the first 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 second non-public session, on Pending Litigation, 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 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 Reputation, for a period of six (6) months. 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 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 adjourned at 9:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janis A. Jalbert
Recording Secretary