

**Town of Chester  
Board of Selectmen’s Meeting  
Thursday, July 21, 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  
Prosecution Contract  
Snowplow Contracts  
Goats on Spring Hill Farm  
Wage Matrix Discussion  
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 D’Angelo  
Steve Couture  
Jeremy Owens

Selectmen Absent:

Stephen Landau

Town Administrator Debra Doda

Members of the Public Present at various times:

Nancy Myette  
Mike Oleson, Road Agent  
Christy Ortins  
Nick Ortins

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 Prosecution Contract*

Selectman D’Angelo attended a meeting in Derry to discuss the contract for prosecution services . He explained while it is a 10-year contract there is a clause that allows either town to notify the other to end the contract in any given year. It was noted the contract has a 3% increase every year but with inflation the costs could rise more. The contract will be paid annually up front just like the Ambulance contract is paid. Both Towns will have the opportunity to address any issues in January of 2024.

Selectman D’Angelo mentioned the prosecutor will review new police officers in the Town of Chester.

***Vice Chairman Couture motioned to approve the prosecution contract contingent on the Town Attorney approval of the contract. Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Owens –aye, Couture – aye, Landau – absent. With four in favor, the motion passed with Landau absent.***

### *3.2 Snowplow Contracts*

Road Agent Oleson mentioned the contracts are the same as the prior year other than a request for a 10% increase in the rate. If the rate is increased the Town will have the same plow drivers as last

year. Vice Chairman Couture suggested an 8% increase. Road Agent Oleson feels he can retain the same crew with an 8% increase.

Road Agent Oleson stated the salt pricing has not been announced and he is nervous about that.

***Vice Chairman Couture motioned to approve an 8% increase to the hourly rate for plow drivers. Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Owens –aye, Couture – aye, Landau – absent. With four in favor, the motion passed with Landau absent.***

### *3.3 Goats at Spring Hill Farm*

Chairman Myette mentioned the Ortins currently renting the high tunnel at Spring Hill Farm have asked if they could bring goats to the farm. He recommended a memorandum of understanding (MOU) similar to that of the cattlemen and approval from the Rockingham Conservation Commission District.

Ms. Ortins explained this is a learning experience and they will be using the goats to help with invasive species on the farm. She explained the goats will be kept in a horse trailer at night for safety reasons. They will utilize mobile cattle panels to move the goats around the property. Chairman Myette mentioned the pasture can be reclaimed with the goats.

Selectman D’Angelo questioned if there is space already on site to possibly house the goats. Chairman Myette stated it may be possible to build another building or possibly use a building on the site.

Ms. Ortins mentioned the goats purchased are dwarf goats and could weigh between 150-200 pounds. They purchased six goats that were bred to be docile. Mr. Ortins stated the goal is to train the goats.

Vice Chairman Couture suggested a map that delineates where the goats are. Chairman Myette will attach the map to the document.

***Vice Chairman Couture motioned to enter into an MOU with the Ortins aka “The Shepherds” to house goats on Spring Hill Farm pending approval by Rockingham Conservation Commission District. Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Owens –aye, Couture – aye, Landau – absent. With four in favor, the motion passed with Landau absent.***

Ms. Ortins inquired if the goats could be brought to the farm this weekend or should they find temporary housing. Chairman Myette will find out the answer tomorrow.

### *3.4 Wage Matrix Discussion*

Selectman D’Angelo asked what changes have been made to the Matrix. Chairman Myette advised the longevity bump has changed and there is someone in line for the bump.

Selectman D’Angelo discussed wages with Tax Collector/Town Clerk Lufkin. The part time clerk is being paid the same wages as a person working at the Transfer Station. Vice Chairman Couture inquired if a position could be reclassified based on qualifications that are required. Selectman

Owens questioned why jobs were not classified correctly when the matrix was established in 2020. Selectman Owens suggested revisiting the matrix if it is not doing what was intended.

Selectman Owens suggested looking at all the employees’ wages and not just one based on experience and background. Selectman D’Angelo thought that was the purpose of the conversation tonight to use some of the encumbered money to make adjustments to wages.

Town Administrator Doda feels if someone is hired for one job and is able and doing more than what they were hired for then their wage should be increased. Chairman Myette advised they would have to wait for the review process and not increased during the year.

Vice Chairman Couture pointed out when a position is reclassified on the matrix it is always reclassified and the qualifications for the job would be higher. He feels the starting wage is not competitive and the matrix should be revisited. Selectman D’Angelo suggested a bonus for employees and not change the starting wages on the matrix. Chairman Myette recommended looking at classifications of jobs to verify they were classified correctly when the matrix was established.

Chairman Myette spoke to Town Administrator Doda previously about utilizing the bonus pool for people doing an above average job. Town Administrator Doda asked for consideration of wages for the part time clerk based on the fact the wage is not competitive and that other towns are starting this position at almost twice what we are paying.

Vice Chairman Couture has no issues with a reclassification process being part of the wage matrix with documentation for reclassifying a position in writing. He suggested a bonus for every employee and not picking and choosing who gets a one-time bonus. Selectman Owens feels the employees that make less are more impacted by getting a bonus than the employees on the top of the scale. Vice Chairman Couture questioned if the bonus was capped what grade would the cap be at? Selectman Owens suggested a tiered bonus.

Reviews should be done prior to the finalizing of the budget so the Town can budget for wages. Town Administrator Doda stated the budget increases for wages were based off the matrix. The reviews were done last season prior to budget season with the assumption every employee has a satisfactory review.

Town Administrator Doda mentioned there is no written policy for wage increases. Vice Chairman Couture is not in favor of a bonus based on reviews without a written policy in place. The recommendation is for the Board to base the bonuses on inflation have the bonus tiered based on grades in the matrix.

Selectman Owens suggested a comp analysis on the job positions every two years. Experience needs to be tied directly to the position.

The consensus is to pull all the information together and the Board will determine the percentages of the tiers for the inflation bonuses. In addition, a list of exceptional employees will also get an additional amount based on reviews.

Vice Chairman Couture summarized the three actions: inflation bonuses based on a pyramid, adding reclassification information to the document, and performance increases and or bonuses based on the annual performance reviews.

Chairman Myette suggested tying the matrix into the reviews. Selectman D’Angelo is still unclear on the timeline for reviews. Vice Chairman Couture stated the policy should be no review, no increase. It’s a requirement on an annual basis. Chairman Myette suggested the employee needs to do the self-evaluation to be considered for a wage increase in the next budget.

Vice Chairman Couture mentioned the comprehensive review of the matrix. Chairman Myette advised that is done every two years and a CPI review is done every year. Vice Chairman suggested budgeting for an outside agency to review the matrix.

Chairman Myette and Town Administrator Doda will work on this for the meeting in two weeks.

#### **IV. Selectmen’s Business**

##### *4.1 Chairman’s Announcements*

Chairman Myette announced the following meetings and upcoming events:

Monday July 25, 2022	Chester Historical Society Meeting at 7:00pm
Wednesday July 27, 2022	Planning Board Meeting at 7:00pm
Thursday, July 28, 2022	Board of Selectman Meeting at 7:00pm cancelled due to lack of a quorum.
Saturday, July 23, 2022	300th Anniversary 5k Race & Firemen's Muster at Wason Pond. 5K Race starts at 9:00am and Firemen’s Muster starts at 10:00am.

##### *4.2 Roundtable*

Chairman Myette pointed out the email from Mr. Chaze asking for an update on Carkin Street. There have been discussions with the homeowners and the Planning Board. An engineer will be onsite soon to sketch out where the water can go. Chairman Myette explained once the town knows the cost, they will be able to determine where in the budget it can fit.

Chairman Myette mentioned the report on Wason Road from the engineer should be available soon.

Selectman D’Angelo:  
*Nothing to report*

Vice Chairman Couture mentioned ReVision is getting the specifics about surveying the back property of the municipal buildings.

Selectman Owens:  
*Nothing to report*

Town Administer Doda mentioned Mr. Stuart (not present) of the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee has requested to utilize the electric signs for the car show on August 6, 2022.

***Selectman D’Angelo motioned to allow the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee to utilize the electronic signs for the car show on August 6, 2022. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Owens –aye, Couture – aye, Landau – absent. With four in favor, the motion passed with Landau absent.***

Chairman Myette mentioned Mr. Alex Brillhart, an employee at the Transfer Station, is heading off to college soon and has sent the Board a Thank You card.

***4.3 Town Administrator’s Report***  
***Nothing to report***

***4.4 Action Items***  
***Nothing to report***

***4.5 Non-Public Session(s)***

Chairman Myette announced one non-public sessions on public employees.

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

The meeting was closed to the public at 8:32 PM.

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

The meeting was reopened to the public at 9:01 PM.

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

***Selectman D’Angelo motioned to seal the minutes of the second non-public session, on Public Employees, for a period of ninety (90) days. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, D’Angelo – aye, Owens –aye, Couture – aye, Landau – absent. With four in favor, the motion passed with Landau absent.***

## **V. Adjournment**

***Vice Chairman Couture 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 – absent. With four in favor, the motion passed with Landau absent.***

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

301  
302 Janis A. Jalbert  
303 Recording Secretary