

**Town of Chester  
Board of Selectmen’s Meeting  
Thursday, January 26, 2023  
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)  
Consent Agenda  
Highway Department Update  
Conservation Commission  
Police Department Update  
Penultimate Review of Warrant  
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 6:00pm.

*1.2 Roll Call*

Selectmen Present:

Chuck Myette  
Steve Couture  
Jeremy Owens  
Stephen Landau (via Zoom)

Selectmen Absent:

Steve D’Angelo

Members of the Public Present at various times:

Aaron Berube, Police Chief  
Victor Chouinard, Conservation Commission  
Kevin Dolan  
Nancy Myette  
James Piper, Supervisor of Roads

and other persons unknown to the Recording Secretary.

51  
52 *1.3 Pledge of Allegiance*  
53

54 Chairman Myette led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.  
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56 *1.4 Chairman’s Additions or Deletions*

57 *None*  
58

59 *1.5 Public Comment*  
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61 Chairman Myette opened the meeting to public comment at 6:01pm.  
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63 As no Members of the Public wished to be heard, Public Comment was closed at 6:02pm.  
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65 **II. Consent Agenda**  
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67 *2.1 Minutes January 12, 2023*

68 *No comments*  
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70 *2.2 Rate Sheets*

71 *No comments*  
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73 ***Vice Chairman Couture motioned to approve the consent agenda as presented. Selectman***  
74 ***Owens seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, D’Angelo – absent, Owens –***  
75 ***aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With four in favor, the motion passed with D’Angelo absent.***  
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77 **III. New Business**  
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79 *3.1 Highway Department Update*  
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81 Mr. Piper updated the Board on the recent storms and the issue with birch trees on Crawford Road.  
82 The road became impassable with all the weight of the snow. Over the years, the department has  
83 removed birch trees from the town’s right of way. Now the issue is the remaining birch trees on  
84 private property. A loader was available for the Town to rent, and a path was made for emergency  
85 vehicles and residents.  
86

87 Chairman Myette suggested drafting a letter to the residents on Crawford identifying safety issues  
88 with the birch trees. Vice Chairman Couture explained the first step is to ask permission to access  
89 the properties to identify trees that the town would like to remove. Once that is done the Town  
90 would ask the homeowners for permission to remove the trees. Selectman Owens recommended  
91 making sure the homeowners understand what would be left after the trees were cut, for example,  
92 a stump would be left on the property. Town Administrator Doda will draft the letter and Mr. Piper  
93 will work on getting a cost estimate.  
94

95 Mr. Piper explained the winter storms the past couple weeks have been difficult with the freezing  
96 and thawing along with the snow. The storms have been very costly due to the longevity of the  
97 storms.  
98

Chairman Myette inquired about the progress of hiring a road laborer. Mr. Piper reported that no resumes have been received, but there was someone interested that Mr. Piper can reach out to. He is working on editing the ad to be posted.

Chairman Myette pointed out the budget needs to be refined. Mr. Piper has looked at where some lines in the budget could be cut. Chairman Myette pointed out if the budget needs to be increased then there should be justification for the increase.

Mr. Piper mentioned the new F550 has an oil leak and is at the shop. It should be returned at the beginning of next week. The older F550 had issues during the big storm and had to be parked. It is getting to the end of its useful life and needs to be replaced. It is in the Table 10 on the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for fiscal year 2024-2025. Mr. Piper pointed out he will be driving around in the older truck after another person is hired, however, if that truck dies or is too costly to fix, a vehicle will need to be purchased for Mr. Piper. A pickup truck with a sander and a plow will work.

Vice Chairman Couture asked Town Administrator Doda for the bond rates for the next meeting to compare rates for the equipment needed for the Highway Department.

### *3.2 Conservation Commission*

Mr. Chouinard reopened the conversation had at the previous meeting about surveying parcels of town owned property off of Ledge Road and funding. Vice Chairman Couture reported a third bid was not received due to the surveyor not meeting the timeframe to survey the property.

Chairman Myette pointed out the Board has not identified where the funds would come from. One option is a warrant article, and the second option is to have an easement on the lands and then Conservation can pay for the survey. Vice Chairman Couture inquired if this has to go to Town Meeting, would the current bidders hold the price? Mr. Chouinard can not speak for the surveyors. Mr. Chouinard explained the efforts put into lining up a surveyor.

With no funds identified in the budget, Mr. Chouinard questioned the process to utilize funds from the Town Forest fund. A warrant article would be needed to get the property approved as town forest. Mr. Chouinard stated with the ultimate goal for the property to be identified as town forest, could the Conservation Commission pay for the survey. Vice Chairman Couture pointed out this is similar to when the Conservation Commission purchases a property and pays for the survey. With the intent for the property to be town forest, some members of the Board would support the use of conservation funds.

Selectman Landau suggested a warrant article utilizing funds from the unassigned fund balance. Mr. Chouinard explained there has been issues with getting surveyors, the Conservation Commission has a bid from someone who can do the work now. Vice Chairman Couture suggested a warrant article and if it passes then the town pays for the survey otherwise the Conservation Commission would pay.

Selectman Landau requested a nonpublic session under reputation.

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

The meeting was closed to the public at 6:49 PM.

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

The meeting was reopened to the public at 7:07 PM.

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

Before moving to 3.3, a request for action was addressed.

Ms. Levesque, 96 Harantis Lake Road, explained during the storm a tree fell taking down lines. If more of the tree falls it could fall on a structure on her property. Ms. Levesque is asking for permission to pay for the removal of the tree that is on the towns right of way. Town Administrator Doda pointed out that the tree is on a Class VI Road and the town cannot expend funds to take the tree down, but permission can be granted to allow someone else to take down the tree at their own expense.

***Vice Chairman Couture motioned to give permission to take down the tree on Bridle Path. Selectman Owens seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, D’Angelo – absent, Owens – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With four in favor, the motion passed with D’Angelo absent.***

### *3.3 Police Department Update*

Chief Berube reminded the Board that there is a candidate currently in the hiring process for the Police Department. Both certified and non-certified candidates are applying; after further review some of the candidates may not be viable candidates for the community. Some candidates are interested; however, they have contracts that they would need to buy out.

Chief Berube asked for consideration of increasing the hiring bonus to make Chester more desirable. Some officers may use the bonus to buy out their contracts. It would be given in installments during the 36-month working contract. Selectman Owens requested more data from other towns on their hiring bonus amounts.

Chairman Myette recommended the bonus amount be determined on a case-by-case basis. He reviewed the amount in the salary pool budget line. Chief Berube mentioned he had concerns when the Budget Committee cut that budget line last year. The hiring bonus ad can be changed to “up to \$20K” with the understanding the Board of Selectmen preapprove the amount prior to making an offer to a candidate.

Selectman Owens suggested a strategy to attract younger people and keep them. Chief Berube mentioned in the Fire Department, Maintenance Department, and Highway Department there is a minimum of two employees working, but we send one officer to a domestic at 3:00am. That can be

tough on people. Currently NH State Police is down 107 officers. They are giving a 10% pay increase to all troopers to try to retain what they have.

Chief Berube mentioned the officer that was in the process for another larger agency made the decision to stay in Chester with all the positive changes within the department recently.

### *3.3 Penultimate Review of Warrant*

Chairman Myette presented the surveying warrant article being proposed so the Town understands the boundaries on certain parcels of land. There is a lot of development in the area.

Chairman Myette read the Special Warrant Article:

*Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) for the purpose of surveying the outer boundaries of the following parcels of Town-owned land: Map and Lots 8-14-1, 8-15, 8-16, 8-18-3, 8-18-3A, 8-18-4, and 8-18-4A. Further to authorize the transfer of thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) from the June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, unassigned fund balance for this purpose with no amount to be raised from taxation.*

***Selectman Owens motioned to carry the warrant article forward. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, D’Angelo – absent, Owens – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With four in favor, the motion passed with D’Angelo absent.***

Chairman Myette asked the Board if they would like to add another warrant article to address the use of the property. One suggestion was to label the property as Town Forest since it is close to other town forest land

***Vice Chairman Couture motioned to draft a warrant article to make the property a Town Forest. Selectman Landau seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, D’Angelo – absent, Owens – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With four in favor, the motion passed with D’Angelo absent.***

Chairman Myette mentioned the leaks in the buildings and lack of funds for emergencies with the buildings during the year. Town Administrator Doda is waiting to hear if the Town is able to utilize the Unassigned Fund Balance to pay for the repairs to the roof. Vice Chairman Couture supports a warrant article for building improvements and repairs. The Board decided to rename the Municipal *Complex* Improvement Capital Reserve Fund to Municipal *Property* Improvement Capital Reserve Fund. A decision on how to fund the article will be discussed at the next meeting either by taxation or drawing from the Unassigned Fund Balance.

Town Administrator Doda stated a decision needs to be made on how much to fund the two Capital Improvement Plans (CIP) and Fire Apparatus Fund. If the intent is to order the new pumper this year, the Selectman suggested adding \$250K to the fund.

There was a discussion about what roadwork would be done in next fiscal year. Road Agent Oleson (not present) had Halls Village Road on the list. Cole Road is in the early stages and constantly changing. Town Administrator Doda is meeting with Mr. Bourcier (not present) about Cole Road next week.

Selectman Owens inquired if Town Dump Road should be moved into next year. Most traffic on Town Dump Road is not from the Town. Chairman Myette asked that Mr. Piper (not present) to discuss with the other companies on Town Dump Road to possibly partner with the Town to pave Town Dump Road. Selectman Owens feels if Cole Road is pulled from the projects this year the amount needed for roads is doable at \$1.6K. Town Administrator Doda stated last year the warrant article for roads was funded at 1.5K. The roadwork will be discussed with Road Agent Oleson and Mr. Piper.

Town Administrator Doda pointed out the Selectmen will need to think about how much to fund the CIP warrant articles.

Town Administrator Doda explained a new warrant article is intended to replenish the Capital Reserve funds for the amount used for painting Stevens Hall.

Chairman Myette read the Special Warrant Article.

*Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of seventeen thousand dollars (\$17,000) to replenish the following Capital Reserve Funds: \$2,000 to the 2006 Municipal Complex Improvement Capital Reserve Fund, \$5,000 to the 2012 Unanticipated Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund, and \$10,000 to the 2013 300th Anniversary Celebration Capital Reserve Fund. Further to authorize the transfer of seventeen thousand dollars (\$17,000) from the June 30th, 2023 unassigned fund balance for this purpose with no amount to be raised from taxation.*

Selectman Owens suggested to keep this in the warrant and if the new warrant is approved this one can be tabled. It was decided to not move forward with the warrant article.

#### **IV. Selectmen’s Business**

##### *4.1 Chairman’s Announcements*

Chairman Myette announced the following meetings and upcoming events:

Monday January 30, 2023	Budget Committee Meeting at 7:00pm
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Wednesday February 1, 2023	Planning Board Meeting at 7:00pm
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Wednesday February 1, 2023	School Board Meeting at 7:00pm
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Thursday, February 2, 2023	Board of Selectman Meeting at 6:00pm
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Chairman Myette announced the passing of John R. Gilcreast Jr. Mr. Gilcreast was the Building Inspector for Chester for many years.

Registered voters in the Town of Chester may file their Intent for Candidacy for open offices in the Town Clerk's office beginning January 25th - February 3rd. Positions are posted on the Town's website.

Petitioned Warrant Articles must be submitted by Tuesday February 7, 2023, to the Town Clerk's office.

4.2 Roundtable

Selectman Landau:  
*Nothing to report*

Vice Chairman Couture:  
*Nothing to report*

Chairman Myette:  
*Nothing to report*

Selectman Owens questioned why the Eagle Scouts need to come before the Board for their projects. Selectman Landau advised it is a Town requirement. Chairman Myette mentioned the Scouts worked with one individual from Spring Hill Farm. Selectman Landau will inquire at the next Scout meeting if a waiver of liability is needed. Selectman Owens feels if the Spring Hill Farm Board is ok with the project he is in favor of signing a waiver. Chairman Myette will speak to the Spring Hill Farm member about the project tomorrow.

4.3 Town Administrator’s Report  
*No report this week*

Chairman Myette mentioned the tree that fell at Wason Pond on the back of the recreation building. Town Administrator Doda explained the outside of the building is not bad, unsure until tomorrow when a maintenance crew can get inside to look for damage to the interior.

Chairman Myette commended the crews that were working during the storms in the Maintenance, Fire, Highway, and Police Departments. Selectmen Owens mentioned seeing a Police Officer pulling trees from the roadway.

4.4 Action Items  
*None*

4.5 Non-Public Session(s)

Chairman Myette announced no additional non publics.

**V. Adjournment**

***Selectman Owens moved to adjourn the meeting. Selectman Landau seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, D’Angelo – absent, Owens – aye, Couture – aye, Landau – aye. With four in favor, the motion passed with D’Angelo absent.***

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Janis A. Jalbert  
Recording Secretary