

**Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen’s Meeting
Thursday, April 13, 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)
Permission for Monitoring Wells – Jonathan Remillard
Police Department Update
Organization of Board
BOS Rules of Procedure Update
Liaison Discussion
Website Updates
Consent Agenda
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
Dana Theokas
Dick Trask
Stephen Landau

Debra Doda, Town Administrator

Members of the Public Present at various times:

Aaron Berube, Police Chief
Justine Celentano, Town Clerk, Tax Collector
Nancy Myette
Corinna Reishus, Recreation Director
Bryan Remillard

Jonathan Remillard

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 added 2.3 Justine Celentano, 3.5 Impact Fees, 3.6 Appointment to Planning Board- Brian Sullivan. Vice Chairman Couture has one nonpublic on finance.

1.5 Public Comment

Chairman Myette opened the meeting to public comment at 6:03pm.

As no Members of the Public wished to be heard, Public Comment was closed at 6:03pm.

II. Appointments

2.1 Permission for Monitoring Wells – Jonathan Remillard

Mr. Remillard is asking permission to install monitoring wells on Town property, specifically north of the landfill. He explained that additional wells are needed now that the PFAS are outside the limits of his property on Dump Road and they need to know how far the PFAS have spread. Selectwoman Theokas inquired what the permit would entail. Mr. Remillard stated it would be for a year of monitoring. Chairman Myette mentioned the Federal Government issued new standards which are lower than the standards in NH.

Town Administrator Doda mentioned the agreement was approved by Town Counsel and the insurance certificates are attached to the documents.

Selectman Landau inquired about the proximity of the monitoring well to the town’s monitoring wells. Mr. Remillard believes the proposed monitoring well is between 500-700 feet away. He will look into having the town’s monitoring wells put on the map for reference.

Selectwoman Theokas asked about the next phase if the PFAS are either up or down. Chairman Myette explained the different phases but mentioned it is still early. Everything will depend on the results.

Selectman Landau motioned to allow access to the property and allow Chairman Myette to sign the agreement. Selectwoman Theokas seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

Chairman Myette added a non-public.

2.2 Police Department Update

Chief Berube mentioned a social media post stating the Chief was giving more information about the shooting on Old Chester Turnpike to the Selectboard and not to the public. Chief Berube stated that the information is inaccurate. Chief Berube is in contact with the County Attorney’s office who have advised the case is still under investigation. If there are any questions about the case they can be directed to the NH Major Crimes Unit.

Chief Berube updated the Board on the hiring process. One candidate with a questionable background has been removed from the process. The certified candidate’s background check by a third party is going smoothly, and the uncertified candidate is moving along. He hopes to present the certified candidate by the end of April and the other by mid-May in hopes of having him start the academy in June.

Chief Berube explained he will be within budget with the hiring and promotions for next year. Selectwoman Theokas inquired if the Town is paying for the academy and compensation for the officer while in the academy. Chief Berube stated that the Police Academy itself is funded through the state’s budget; however, the Town is required to compensate the officer while in the full-time academy.

Selectman Landau questioned if they would be required to sign a three-year contract. Chief Berube explained there would be a 36-month contract signed once the candidate is certified. Chief Berube spoke about the fitness training for the academy and field training after.

Chief Berube mentioned there are officers including himself who have vacation time left. He will be taking vacation days to work details otherwise he will lose his vacation time.

2.3 Town Clerk/ Tax Collector Update (moved to later in the meeting)

III. New Business

3.1. Organization of Board

Chairman Myette explained that every year a Chairman and Vice Chairman need to be appointed for the Selectboard.

Vice Chairman Couture motioned to reappoint Chairman Myette as Chairman of the Board. Selectman Landau seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken; Myette – aye, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

Selectman Landau pointed out that Vice Chairman Couture has done a great job in the position.

Selectman Landau motioned to reappoint Vice Chairman Couture as Vice Chairman of the Board. Selectwoman Theokas seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken; Myette – aye, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

3.2 BOS Rules of Procedure Update

Chairman Myette mentioned the Board’s Rules of Procedure was sent to the group to review with proposed changes. It is important for the group to get familiar with their responsibilities. There are courses the Board can take as well.

Chairman Myette suggested thinking about the master plan when looking at the liaison program. The liaisons should look at each department’s plans, needs, and wishes, and think about now and the future. As a liaison, we want to assist the department, not run it.

Vice Chairman Couture is proposing the Board meet the first and third week of the month. The Board needs to be more of a Board. The Board should be more strategic in where they invest their time. Items placed on the agenda need to be well vetted with ample time to review and develop. For this to work you need time and many things do not happen from week to week for significant decisions. Vice Chairman Couture stated this doesn’t mean if a time sensitive item needed attention the Board could not meet to discuss it. The meeting would need to be posted 24 hours prior.

Selectman Landau likes what is being proposed other than the meeting frequency. Once these things are established some people believe this is set in stone. For many years the Board has met less in the summer and around holidays and the Board would decide a few weeks in advance. During Budget season weekly meetings are necessary. He feels the proposed schedule should not be the standard.

Selectman Landau mentioned the increase in the stipend, and how he would feel he was not earning it by having fewer meetings. Chairman Myette would want everyone aware of the flexibility if something should arise if this is approved. He feels there is also not enough time to talk about things that are not on the agenda; for example, changes in town or strategic thoughts. Periodically there are five Thursdays in a month and Chairman Myette suggested having a workshop meeting on that Thursday.

Selectwoman Theokas inquired if the agenda gets too overwhelming and another meeting is needed, what is the requirement to notice the meeting. Town Administrator Doda stated twenty- four hours. Having a set schedule on the first and third Thursdays gives a sense of consistency and if something does come up another meeting can be added. Within a few months the Board will know if the adjusted schedule is working or not.

Vice Chairman Couture believes the consent agenda can be tightened up. And there will be time to have items publicly posted. Chairman Myette mentioned the Consent Agenda should be items that have already been discussed or they are just items that they just sign automatically.

Vice Chairman Couture motioned to adopt the Board of Selectmen Rules of Procedure as presented including the additional document of policy change.

Selectwoman Theokas suggested tabling the rules of procedure until the next meeting.

Vice Chairman Couture amended the motion to approve the policy statement document. Selectwoman Theokas seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken; Myette – aye, Trask– nay, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – nay. With three in favor, the motion passed.

The rules of procedure will be brought forward as a consent agenda item at a future meeting.

With the new meeting schedule, the Rules of Procedure have been revised. The Board will receive their meeting documents by the Friday before the meeting. Also, the packet sent to the Board would be placed on the town website for the public to view prior to the meeting.

2.3 Town Clerk/ Tax Collector Update (moved from earlier in the meeting)

The Board congratulated Town Clerk/Tax Collector Celentano on her recent election win.

Ms. Celentano said she has learned a lot about her new role and has discussed it with Town Administrator Doda. Ms. Celentano explained the different responsibilities in the position, and many require certifications. Motor vehicles, boats, dogs, vital records, marriage licenses, notary public, elections. They also handle the town records, collect money from the town departments, tax collection, and daily, monthly and yearly reconciliation.

Ms. Celentano met with Town Administrator Doda regarding compensation, benefits, and time off. This position is an elected position with compensation approved by the Town. Ms. Celentano has an expectation for her salary to be what was approved in the budget as well as benefits. She explained as an elected official, the Town Clerk/ Tax Collector is not an employee of the Town and not subject to the Town personnel policy with respect to vacation, sick time and hours of work per week. Ms. Celentano reiterated to the Board she is committed to the job.

Selectman Landau has been approached by many residents asking for hours on Fridays. He recognizes the Town Clerk can set her own hours, but the employees of the Town Clerk are Town employees. Selectman Landau mentioned the Town Clerk’s position has changed over the years.

Selectman Landau pointed out the deeding or lien process for lack of paying taxes should not be blamed on the Tax Collector. Ms. Celentano is reviewing the payment plans.

Ms. Celentano will take Selectman Landau’s suggestion about hours into consideration. She is comparing other Town Clerks’ office hours.

Chairman Myette had the same request to open the Town Clerk’s office on Fridays. Selectwoman Theokas asked how many hours are customer-facing vs back office. Ms. Celentano stated they are open to the public 28 hours per week.

Selectman Landau mentioned a lot of the Town’s records were sent to the state. There are numerous grants that are available to preserve old records. Ms. Celentano will look into the possible grants.

3.3 Liaison Discussion

The Board discussed who the liaisons would be for departments, committees, and commissions.

Department, Committee, Commission	Liaison	Discussion (if any)
Assessing	S. Couture	
Budget Committee	S. Couture	Vice Chairman Couture would like to work on the process and make improvements.
Building Department	D. Theokas	
Cemeteries	S. Landau D. Theokas (Backup)	Selectman Landau shared the history with having two sets of Cemetery Trustees.
Conservation Commission	D. Theokas S. Couture (Backup)	

Emergency Management	C. Myette	Recommendation is to have the same Liaison as Fire Department
Fire Department	C. Myette	
Facilities	S. Landau D. Theokas (Backup)	Recreation Director manages the facility usage
Finance	R. Trask	
Highway Department	R. Trask	Chairman Myette explained the liaison will need to work closely with Mr. Piper and the financials.
IT	D. Doda	
Joint Loss Management Committee	D. Doda	
Library	S. Couture	
PACT	D. Theokas	
Planning Board	C. Myette	Selectwoman Theokas will no longer be an alternate due to RSA restrictions.
Police Department and Highway Safety	D. Theokas R. Trask (Backup)	Chief Berube felt there should be an alternate as well.
Recreation	D. Theokas	
School Board	S. Couture	
Seniors	C. Myette S. Landau (Backup)	
Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee	S. Landau	
Technical Review Committee	D. Theokas	
Town Administrator	S. Couture	
Town Clerk	S. Couture	
Transfer Station	S. Landau C. Myette (Backup)	
Wason Pond Commission	S. Landau S. Couture (Backup)	
Welfare	S. Landau	
Zoning Board of Adjustment	R. Trask	

3.4 Website Updates

Town Administrator Doda spoke to School Board Chairman Richardson (not present) about the website changes requested by Selectman Trask. Mr. Richardson would like the link to Facebook and separate the daycares out. Town Administrator Doda will continue working on the changes.

Chairman Myette mentioned the Town generally takes the policy of not responding to outside web pages or Facebook. Many items are posted on other sites with incorrect information, if the Town wanted to comment, does the Town have an official Facebook page? Selectman Landau feels that commenting or correcting wrongful accusations would lead to more comments. Town Administrator Doda feels the Town webpage is where things should be released.

3.5 Request for Impact Fees: Fencing at Town Fields

Chairman Myette advised the request for fencing was approved by the Planning Board and sent to the Selectboard.

Recreation Director Reishus mentioned a meeting in 2021 to establish who is responsible for what on the town fields. In 2022 another walkthrough occurred to look at the damaged fencing. The fences are over twenty years old and have had minimal fixes.

Fencing was placed on the Capital Improvement Plans (CIP) last year. The quote received was \$11K plus a 10% increase after a certain amount of time had passed. Recreation Director Reishus advised the newest amount would not exceed \$12K. With the quote being more than the approved amount, Recreation Director Reishus will reach out to the various users to help with the costs over the approved amount.

Selectwoman Theokas is happy to see the different groups on the field.

Selectman Landau motioned to approve the release of \$11,283.36 for the purchasing of fencing for the Town ballfields. Selectwoman Theokas seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

3.6 Planning Board Appointment

Chairman Myette stated the paperwork has been fixed.

Selectwoman Theokas motioned to reappoint Brian Sullivan to the Planning Board with a term to expire May 31, 2025. Vice Chairman Couture seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

IV. Consent Agenda

4.1 HealthTrust Renewal Rates

Selectman Landau pointed out one of the medical plans with the most participation is being dropped in 2025 and he would like to know the reason. Vice Chairman Couture stated the plan is not an HMO.

A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – abstained. With four in favor, the motion passed with Landau abstaining.

4.2 Granite State Communications Contract

Vice Chairman Couture motioned to allow Chairman Myette to sign the contract on behalf of the Selectboard. Selectman Trask seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.

V. Selectmen’s Business

4.1 Chairman’s Announcements

Chairman Myette announced the following meetings and upcoming events:

Monday April 17, 2023 Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee Meeting at 7:00pm

Tuesday April 18, 2023 ZBA Meeting at 7:00pm

Thursday April 13, 2023 Board of Selectmen Meeting at 6:00pm

Saturday April 15, 2023 Rabies Clinic from 9am to 12pm in the Town Hall parking lot.
Must sign up by calling Ark Animal Homecare. More details on
ChesterNH.org

4.2 Roundtable

Selectman Landau:
Nothing to report.

Selectwoman Theokas:
Nothing to report.

Selectman Trask:
Nothing to report.

Vice Chairman Couture:
Nothing to report.

Chairman Myette:
Nothing to report.

4.3 Town Administrator’s Report

Vice Chairman Couture advised the request for funding should be a written request.

Town Administrator Doda mentioned the necessary repairs to the kitchen are not as bad as previously thought to be. Ceiling tiles can be purchased from Lowes and the floor can be fixed with epoxy. The largest expense will be the air gap and the quote received is around \$1500.00. The kitchen has netted \$9K in rental fees this fiscal year. Selectman Landau mentioned the renters of the kitchen are not necessarily residents of Chester.

With the new Board members, it was discussed on what to officially call the Board. They will be known as the Selectboard. Selectman Landau felt it should have changed many years ago.

Town Administrator Doda pointed out the stipends for the members. It was noted with the change in meeting dates the prior selectman will only be paid three quarters of the last year of their term. Chairman Myette felt the last quarter should go to the new members as they were officially on the Board for the quarter.

Vice Chairman Couture would like to discuss one item from the Town Administrator’s report in non-public.

350 4.4 Action Items

351 None

353 4.5 Non-Public Session(s)

355 Chairman Myette announced four non-public sessions.

357 ***Vice Chairman Couture motioned to go into non-public session pursuant to 91-A:3(II) (a) public***
358 ***employees, (c) reputation and (l) legal advice. Selectman Landau seconded the motion. A roll call***
359 ***vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With all in***
360 ***favor, the motion passed.***

362 The meeting was closed to the public at 7:50 PM. Police Chief Berube remained in the meeting room.

364 Police Chief Berube departed the meeting room at 8:26 PM.

366 ***Vice Chairman Couture motioned to come out of non-public session. Selectman Landau seconded***
367 ***the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye,***
368 ***Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.***

370 The meeting was reopened to the public at 8:58 PM.

372 ***Vice Chairman Couture motioned to seal the minutes of the first non-public session, on Public***
373 ***Employees. Selectman Landau seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye,***
374 ***Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.***

376 ***Vice Chairman Couture motioned to seal the minutes of the second non-public session, on***
377 ***Reputation. Selectman Landau seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye,***
378 ***Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.***

380 ***Vice Chairman Couture motioned to seal the minutes of the third non-public session, on Legal***
381 ***Advice. Selectman Landau seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask–***
382 ***aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.***

384 ***Vice Chairman Couture motioned to seal the minutes of the fourth non-public session, on Public***
385 ***Employees. Selectman Landau seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye,***
386 ***Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.***

388 ***Vice Chairman Couture motioned to seal the minutes of the fifth non-public session, on***
389 ***Reputation. Selectman Landau seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye,***
390 ***Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye. With all in favor, the motion passed.***

392 VI. Adjournment

394 ***Vice Chairman Couture moved to adjourn the meeting. Selectman Landau seconded the motion.***
395 ***A roll call vote was taken Myette – aye, Trask– aye, Theokas –aye, Couture –aye, Landau – aye.***
396 ***With all in favor, the motion passed.***

398 The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 PM.

400 Respectfully submitted,
401
402 Janis A. Jalbert
403 Recording Secretary