

**Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen Meeting
Thursday, February 16th, 2017
Municipal Complex
Approved Minutes**

I Preliminaries

Call the Meeting to Order
Roll Call
Pledge of Allegiance
Chairman’s Additions and Deletions
Public Comment
Approval of Minutes
Budgets
Acceptance of Sexual Harassment Policy
Computer Support and Managed Information Technology Services RFP
Roundtable
Non–Public Session
Adjournment

1.1 Call to Order

Chairman Landau called this meeting of the Town of Chester Board of Selectmen to order at 7:02pm.

1.2 Roll Call

Selectmen present:

Jack Cannon
Joseph Hagan (departed at 8:50pm)
Stephen Landau
Dick Trask

Selectmen absent:

Cass Buckley

Members of the Public present, at various times:

Tony Amato, Maintenance Supervisor
Aaron Berube, Police Chief
Joe Castricone, PACT
Andrew Hadik, Recycling & Solid Waste Committee
Bonnie Healey, Transfer Station
Mary Jennings, Library Trustee
Kandace Knowlton, Library Director
Richard LeBlanc, Spring Hill Farm Trustees and PACT
Deb Munson, Library Trustee
Chuck Myette, Agricultural Commission and Spring Hill Farm Trustees
Joanne Smith, Finance Director
Gary Van Geyte, Agricultural Commission
Maria Veale
Penny Williams, Tri-Town Times

1.3 Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Landau led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.4 Chairman’s Additions and Deletions

A non-public session on Reputation has been added.

1.5 Public Comments

Police Chief Berube stood and was recognized. He wished to make the Selectmen aware that there has been a spike in the number of burglaries recently, as much as three times the previous year’s amount since November of 2016. Today alone there were three actual burglaries and one attempt; the Police Department has been given descriptions of a suspects and vehicle. Candia also had multiple burglaries yesterday, but fortunately for them they were able to apprehend suspects.

He does not believe that the burglars are professionals, as the method of entry seems crude and opportunistic – for example, a door on Raymond Road was kicked in.

He has scheduled a Public Meeting for Tuesday, February 28th, 2017 at 7pm in the Meeting Room. Selectmen and residents are welcome to attend and hold an open dialogue on the situation. Part of the presentation will include ways that residents can enhance their own security.

Chairman Landau stressed to residents that the Town has 24-hour coverage, and that they should telephone the Police Department rather than attempting to take the law into their own hands.

As no other Members of the Public wished to be heard, Public Comment was closed at 7:10pm.

II. Old Business

2.1 Approval of Minutes

An approval sheet for previous weeks’ meeting minutes is in the signature folder.

III. New Business

3.1 Budgets

3.1.1 Transfer Station – Solid Waste

Andrew Hadik of the Recycling & Solid Waste Committee and Bonnie Healey, Transfer Station Manager, appeared before the Selectmen to discuss their budget.

The Transfer Station budget request is for \$191,522, a decrease of 2.37% over last year.

01-4324-1-340 TS Contracted Services was created this year to cover the cost of contracted Transfer Station employees. The initial request was for \$7k; this has been lowered to \$1k as employees have now been hired.

01-4324-1-571 TS Portable Toilet Rental is also a new line, at \$1,050. The current incinerating toilet is not working properly, and renting a portable is the most economical solution, as installing a conventional toilet would be difficult and costly.

01-4324-2-120 TS Facility Improvement has increased 445%, from \$1k to \$5,450k, due to the

need for a new aluminum trailer; the current one is on its last legs. The new one will have a larger body, which means fewer hauls and as such a lower cost. A second item, which is just being added to the budget request today, is for two garage door openers for the new garage doors. These new doors are quite a bit heavier than the originals and difficult to lift.

Mr. Hadik noted that he had performed a survey in December and discovered that the Transfer Station runs quite efficiently; the cost per capita of \$35.01 was quite a bit less than that of surrounding Towns at an average of \$71.19. These figures, of course, do not take into account residents who use private haulers, or Towns that do not have a Transfer Station. Revenues have also been rising.

Selectman Cannon queried why the Transfer Station continued to recycle glass and plastic, as those lines do not break even. Mr. Hadik stated that the cost to recycle those items is ~\$58 per ton, whereas the cost to dispose of regular trash is twice as much, ~\$116 per ton; as such it does not make sense to put them into the regular trash. Selectman Cannon suggested charging residents to recycle those items; Mrs. Healey responded that people who are charged to dispose of certain items might instead dump them off on the side of the road to avoid paying.

Mr. Hadik concluded by saying that recycling saved the Town ~\$25k in disposal costs last year.

After some edits were made, the Transfer Station budget request now stands at \$187,972, a decrease of 4.18% over last year.

Mr. Hadik and Mrs. Healey departed the meeting at 7:30pm.

3.1.2 Agricultural Commission

Chuck Myette and Gary Van Geyte of the Agricultural Commission appeared before the Selectmen to discuss their budget.

The Agricultural Commission budget request is for \$700, a decrease of 22.22% over last year.

Mr. Van Geyte stated that the mission of the Agricultural Commission was to raise public awareness of agriculture in Chester. Some items they have utilized are a flyer, a booth at Town Fair, and various educational classes (birdwatching, for example). They plan to use some of the upcoming Fiscal Year’s budget to purchase a pop-up tent to be used at Town Fair. They have also found that using Facebook for their advertising is effective and inexpensive.

The Selectmen had no questions on the Agricultural Commission budget. Mr. Van Geyte departed the meeting at 7:33pm; Mr. Myette remained in the meeting room.

3.1.3 Library

Kandace Knowlton, Library Director, and Mary Jennings and Deb Munson of the Library Trustees appeared before the Selectmen to discuss the Library budget.

The Library budget request is for \$164,480, an increase of 2.83% over last year. Fortunately, the Trust Fund income is also rising, which allows the Library to ask for less in tax dollars.

The largest increase is for wages, which are up ~6% over last year; the Library has found its employees leaving the Town’s employ as even smaller Towns pay more.

There was some discussion about the E-Resources line, which is extremely popular in Town.

Some of the items provided are e-books, genealogy databases, and foreign language tutorials.

The Selectmen had no further questions on the Library budget. Ms. Jennings, Ms. Knowlton, and Ms. Munson departed the meeting at 7:38pm.

3.1.4 Spring Hill Farm

Mr. Myette and Rich LeBlanc appeared before the Selectmen to discuss the Spring Hill Farm budget.

The Spring Hill Farm budget request is for \$5,610, which is the annual total of the 55% of farmhouse rent that the Town gifts back to the Trust. This is a new budget this year.

Their estimated expenses for the Fiscal Year are \$9,950, however, which is a shortfall of \$4,340. They have ~\$23k in the Trust’s savings account, and now that the Farm has been approved for 501(c)(3) status, they are eligible to accept donations, volunteer labor, and in-kind items, and will apply for grants – Granting Opportunities will be approached. Selectman Cannon added that the 55% originally agreed to was contingent upon the Trust providing a plan to the Selectmen; now that this has been done, he is open to discussing an increase in the percentage.

Some of the work planned for this year is the addition of a second bathroom in the Farmhouse, restoration of windows, building of sheds and/or a sugar shack, and work on the Barn. The plan is to make the property more functional.

There was some discussion about designating a spot on the property as a manure dump for the public, being that the Farm uses it for fertilization. Mr. Myette indicated that they had discussed this very subject with the UNH Cooperative Extension a number of years ago, but discovered that the necessary permits, facilities, and manpower were extensive and costly; none of those are required if one only uses the manure produced by one’s own animals.

Mr. Myette departed the meeting at 7:52pm; Mr. LeBlanc remained at the meeting table for the PACT discussion.

3.1.5 PACT

Joe Castricone and Mr. LeBlanc appeared before the Selectmen to discuss the PACT budget.

The PACT budget request is for \$4,250, an increase of 70% over last year.

Currently live-view and on-demand are only available for one channel, Channel 20, at a cost of \$4,776 annually; the Town and PACT each pay half of this cost, or \$2,388. The TV station is having issues with the provider, Livestream, and would like to change over to a new provider, Castus. This would provide all three channels both live-view and on-demand, and long term will be a cost savings for the Town.

The PACT fund currently contains ~\$35k; it receives ~\$16k/year from Comcast Franchise Fees. The Selectmen asked why, with such a balance, the PACT fund does not pay the entire cost of Livestream; this is because these funds are also used for equipment purchases, and the PACT Committee plans to have a Warrant Article requesting ~\$14k worth of equipment and labor in the upcoming warrant, or ~\$17k if they need to add the emergency notification system that has been discussed. (The Fire Department is currently searching for grants, which would be 50/50, for this portion of the project.)

Selectman Cannon noted that the PACT Committee has done a great job, but advised moving more slowly with adding equipment, suggesting that they pace themselves.

The Selectmen are opposed to using tax dollars to fund the streaming, which they believe should come out of the PACT funds. As a result, the PACT budget request was changed from \$4,250 to \$1.

Mr. Castricone and Mr. LeBlanc departed the meeting at 8:15pm.

3.1.6 Government Buildings/Stevens Hall

Maintenance Supervisor Tony Amato appeared before the Selectmen to discuss the Government Buildings budget.

The Government Buildings budget request is for \$340,579, an increase of 41.84% over last year.

The section of this budget that received the most attention was *01-4194-1-415 Major Projects*. This line requests \$81k to put roofs on the Salt Shed and on the Wason Pond Barn, to install new floors in and a roof/door/handicap walkway into the Police Department, and to install new carpets in some of the Town offices.

The Selectmen are opposed to putting new floors into the Police Department, as it is unknown at the present time when this building will be renovated or a new one built. They are also opposed to putting up two new roofs this year, and a suggestion was made that sufficient funds be raised and appropriated to purchase materials but instead of hiring contractors, ask the County Workers to install the roofs. Another suggestion was to ask the Chester Charitable Foundation to fund the Wason Pond Barn roof, as their obstacles for the Wason Pond Pounder are stored in the barn. Maria Veale was present, and indicated that the Foundation had cleaned out Wason Pond Barn in exchange for being allowed to store its obstacles inside. Funding the roof would decimate their donations, but she was willing to speak with the Foundation about it.

01-4194-1-441 GB Repairs & Maint (Fire) is up 150%, as the Maintenance Department has taken over the interior maintenance of the Fire Station. Also, some of these funds are earmarked for building a ‘ramp’ into the three Fire Department bays, as an existing 2” lip needs to be bridged. The Selectmen would prefer that this work be done and paid for in the Fire Department’s budget.

01-4194-1-572 GB Water/Heating System was zeroed out last year, with the requested funds going into the CIP. These funds are needed to maintain five boilers and should be reinstated.

01-4194-1-622 GB Supplies/Consumables is up 20%, based on actuals.

01-4194-1-650 GB Groundskeeping is up 60%. This includes the installation of a pipe for field irrigation, and the replacement and relocation of an electric panel from the outside to inside the snack shack, where it should last longer.

01-4194-1-743 GB Equipment Purch/Rental, which was previously for purchases only, now includes rentals, and is up 150%. This allows the Maintenance Department to rent equipment to dig trenches, clear trails, replace lights, etc. If the requested tractor is included in this year’s CIP, this line can be dropped from \$5k to \$3k.

01-4194-1-845 GB Dam Maint WP/Edwards Mill was previously a Fire Department line, and was moved to Maintenance this year. The Selectmen are opposed to this move and would like it

moved back.

01-4195-1-855 GB Spring Hill Maintenance contains \$3k; some of these funds will be used to run power into outbuildings at the Farm, as they are currently utilizing extension cords.

Maintenance Supervisor Amato informed the Selectmen that American Eagle will be clearing the Town’s flat roofs of snow tomorrow.

Maintenance Supervisor Amato departed the meeting at 8:50pm.

3.1.7 Information Technology

The Information Technology budget request is for \$87,218, an increase of 34.59% over last year.

01-4150-8-327 IT TC/TX Computer Maint/Software and *01-4150-8-319 IT Fire Dept Computer Maint/Software* represent the largest increase.

VOIP Telephones were also discussed; although there is a cost to switch over, and some groups still need traditional landlines, VOIP tends to be cheaper by ~\$7k each year, and the extra cost will be recouped in ~two years.

Finance Director Smith commended Town Clerk Newnan on her handling of the IT work.

3.1.8 Village Cemetery Trustees

Due to the recent passing of Cemetery Trustee Geoff Barnett, who handled the Department’s finances, this budget will be kept flat from last year. They now no longer have a dedicated vehicle, as Mr. Barnett was also their driver.

A third Village Cemetery Trustee is needed.

Finance Director Smith departed the meeting at 8:57pm.

3.2 *Acceptance of Sexual Harassment Policy*

As the entire Board was not present, this subject was deferred until next week.

3.3 *Computer Support and Managed Information Technology Services RFP*

An RFP for management and maintenance of the Town’s computer infrastructure has been drafted and reviewed by Town Counsel Gorrow, and should be sent out next week.

IV. Selectmen’s Business

4.1 *Roundtable*

Selectman Cannon:

- He attended the last meeting of the 300th Anniversary Committee. Jean Methot has requested that this Committee become official by motion of the Board of Selectmen, and then having members appointed. Chairman Landau added that the Town has the opportunity to procure Elm and Chestnut trees at a decent price, and perhaps this should be considered as a means of dressing up the Town for the 300th Anniversary Celebration.

Vice-Chairman Trask:

- Mike Bobinsky, who drafted the MRI DPW Study, will attend next week’s BOS meeting.
- It appears that employees are not interested in signing up for the Lumenos HSA insurance plan. Vice-Chairman Trask noted that perhaps the Selectmen should consider putting \$100 into each account to encourage use of the plan.

Selectman Hagan:

- Road Agent Oleson will need to utilize the Winter Road Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund this year.

Chairman Landau:

- He reiterated that the Town Clerk’s office will be closed on Saturday, February 18th, 2017 as the State DMV is having an upgrade; there will be no motor vehicle transactions possible until Wednesday, February 22nd, 2017.
- On Saturday, February 18th, 2017 at 6:00pm in the MPR, the Chester Police Benevolent Association will be hosting a Night of Comedy and Dancing. This event is 21+ and BYOB; snacks will be provided.
- There was some disagreement about whether the Recreation Commission’s request to move from a part-time to a full-time Recreation Coordinator should be in the budget, or as a Warrant Article. It was suggested that the Recreation Commission should prepare a Warrant Article just in case, and be ready to justify their request with the Budget Committee and the Legislative Body.

4.2 Public Comment

As there were no Members of the Public in attendance at this point, Public Comment was closed at 9:09pm.

4.3 Non-Public Sessions

Vice-Chairman Trask moved that the Board go into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (c) Reputation; Selectman Cannon seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Selectmen Buckley and Hagan absent; motion carried.

The meeting room was closed at 9:09pm.

The meeting room was re-opened at 9:23pm.

Chairman Landau moved that the Board come out of non-public session; Selectman Cannon seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Selectmen Buckley and Hagan absent; motion carried.

Chairman Landau moved that the minutes to the non-public session on Reputation be sealed for an indefinite period; Selectman Cannon seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Selectmen Buckley and Hagan absent; motion carried.

V. Adjournment

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be Thursday, February 23rd, 2017.

Chairman Landau moved to adjourn the meeting; Selectman Cannon seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Selectmen Buckley and Hagan absent; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:24pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra H. Doda
Recording Secretary