

**Town of Chester  
Board of Selectmen’s Meeting  
Thursday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
Municipal Complex Meeting Room  
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

2016-2017 Budget: Continued

Rich Antoine, Fire Chief: Updates

Public Comment

Roundtable

Non-Public Sessions

Meeting Adjournment

*1.1 Call to Order*

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

*1.2 Roll Call*

Selectmen Present:

Jack Cannon

Joe Castricone

Joseph Hagan, Vice Chairman

Stephen O. Landau, Chairman

Dick Trask

Members of the Public present, at various times:

Rich Antoine, Fire Chief

Greg Bolduc, Deputy Fire Chief

Eric Emerson, EMS Lieutenant

Phil Gladu, Fire Captain

Chris Hadik

Matt Rittenhouse, Tri-Town Times

Leroy Scott

Members of the Fire Department

Other Persons Unknown to Recording Secretary

*1.3 Pledge of Allegiance*

Chairman Landau led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

*1.4 Additions and Deletions*

Chairman Landau added a legal matter and Selectman Cannon added a brief Non-Public Session under reputation.

**II Old Business**

*2.1 Approval of Minutes*

Minutes were not addressed this evening; Chairman Landau mentioned that the Members of the Board had been providing approval of pending minutes to the Recording Secretary.

**III New Business**

*3.1 Public Comment*

No Members of the Public wished to comment at this time.

*3.2 2016-2017 Budget: Continued*

As per his participation in the March 14<sup>th</sup> Budget Committee meeting, Selectman Trask updated the status of the Committee’s budget discussions. A straw poll that evening showed that approximately half of the Committee supported the Board’s proposal to obtain a bond for funding. Those warrant articles involving the CIP must detail specific project intentions; instead of “road work,” actual road(s) must be named, for example. It was suggested that a warrant article be put forth, in which one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) be placed into the CIP in lieu of a bond to offset tax impact.

Chairman Landau noted that feasibility of a bond was markedly diminished at this late point in the budgeting process, per Joanne Smith, Finance Director. Selectman Cannon agreed, and suggested the Board commit to initiating the bond process for next year’s budget this October or November.

Clarification of the following warrant articles was made:

- The Fire Department’s proposal for Life Pak defibrillator units must indicate outright purchase (instead of leasing) with funding to be derived of the CIP.
- The Fire Department’s Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) warrant article must indicate funds would be derived of the CIP as well.
- Selectman Trask will consult Andrew Hadik, Planning Coordinator, to determine whether the Police Department’s request for a vehicle must specify “cruiser,” etc.
- The proposed road needs study (for sixty thousand dollars/\$60,000.00) may not be expended from the CIP as no such account presently exists.

Selectman Trask suggested proposing five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000.00) be placed into the CIP; Vice Chairman Hagan agreed such a warrant article would give voters the chance to speak.

The request for a new tanker for the Fire Department was addressed: Selectman Castricone was concerned that funding strategy still did not exist; Chairman Landau noted that a price quote of three hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$350,000.00) had been obtained from one dealer. Selectman Trask hesitated to give his approval without first having financing and interest figures; and also felt that \$350,000.00 may not be adequate funding. Vice Chairman Hagan proposed

financing with a ten (10) year lease instead of five (5)—allowing voters to respond, and perhaps improving the likelihood of acquiring the tanker.

Selectman Trask emphasized that the CIP should be regarded as a long-term planning tool; Vice Chairman Hagan responded that a great disparity still remained between the theory and the practice of utilizing the CIP, and that taxation comprised the bulk of its funding.

Vice Chairman Hagan made a motion to propose purchasing a tanker truck with ten (10) year lease agreement; with first year’s expense of ~forty two thousand dollars (\$42,000.00), for a sum no greater than three hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$350,000.00). Selectman Castricone seconded the motion; Selectman Cannon requested justification of such be clarified. Greg Bolduc, Deputy Chief, explained that a new tanker would yield three to five (3-5) additional minutes of water supply to a fire, as compared to the current tanker. Mr. Bolduc and Phil Gladu, Fire Captain, furthered that the current tanker’s lack of an interlock mechanism was indicative of obsolete and potentially dangerous design. Chairman Landau called the vote; which was unanimous in the affirmative, so moved.

Selectman Trask made a motion to place five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000.00) funding into the CIP; Chairman Landau seconded the motion for discussion. Vice Chairman Hagan felt that although this should be brought to the people; repayment strategies needed serious consideration before a solid business case could be made. Selectman Cannon understood Selectman Trask’s logic, but noted his desire to begin next year’s bond process several months in advance to ensure the best possible bond proposal be presented to voters. Vice Chairman Hagan suggested the Board consider both the funding of the CIP this year *and* the pursuit of a bond next year. Selectman Cannon agreed and felt it would be as important for the Town to operate at its current level at this point, as it will be to invest in the future. Selectman Castricone called the vote—Vice Chairman Hagan and Selectman Trask were in favor, Selectman Castricone and Selectman Cannon opposed, and Chairman Landau abstained—not moved.

Selectman Castricone introduced his proposition to merge the Wason Pond Conservation Commission and the Recreation Commission into a single Commission as a means integrate the governing of land and assets owned by the Town which are dedicated for recreational use—including parks, Wason Pond, Stevens Hall, Spring Hill Farm, etc.

Chairman Landau asked Selectman Castricone if the members of these groups, respectively, had been made aware of this idea; as of yet they had not. Chairman Landau questioned whether such approach would result in more government, instead of less. Selectman Cannon felt that communication with the members of these Commissions and others who may be affected by such a move was key. Vice Chairman Hagan agreed, and suggested bringing these groups before the Board—Chairman Landau agreed to proceed with placing such on the Board’s agenda, to take place after Town Meeting.

Selectman Trask announced that, in collaboration with the Finance Director and the Bookkeeper, development of new health insurance options for Town Employees had been underway in anticipation of the current plan’s expiration. A choice of one of three new plans would soon be offered: a twenty dollar (\$20.00) copay plan, a ten dollar (\$10.00) copay plan, and an HSA (Health Savings Account) plan. Selectman Trask explained that inquiry of payroll deductions (required for HSAs) had been made; detail was pending from TD Bank.

Selectman Cannon wished to be provided with cost projections and side-by-side comparisons of the current plan and the proposed plan; Selectman Trask agreed to bring these details to the Board within the week. Selectman Trask confirmed that the Board approved of the preliminary offerings, specifically the HSA; this was affirmed. Contrary to a common belief that HSA monies unspent are lost at year-end, Vice Chairman Hagan clarified that these funds are rollover-eligible.

Chairman Landau noted that Evelyn Noyes Lane was now eligible for acceptance as a Town road, pending the Board’s approval to schedule a public hearing. The Board agreed to designate an hour during their meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Notice of hearing shall appear in a circulated newspaper as required.

### *3.3 Rich Antoine, Fire Chief: Updates*

Rich Antoine, Fire Chief, appeared before the Board at 8:12pm, accompanied by Greg Boluduc, Deputy Chief, and Phil Gladu, Fire Captain. Mr. Antoine provided a detailed account of a fire which destroyed a Fremont Road home last Tuesday. Human life and limb was preserved, thankfully; however, the homeowner’s dog had tragically been lost. Mr. Bolduc explained that a mutual aid apparatus malfunction temporarily reduced water flow; and that all Town apparatus performed as expected. Crews from fifteen (15) towns assisted the many Chester Fire Fighters present; and Mr. Gladu noted that response time and amount of responders exceeded expectations as based on statistics. Mr. Antoine noted that certain members of the public arrived on scene and proceeded to make critical comments; which Mr. Antoine described as distracting to crews. Chairman Landau stressed his hope that such updates moving forward highlight safety and success during such events, and that irrelevant criticisms be disregarded.

Mr. Antoine informed the Board of an available grant for which funding for portable light towers and a portable message board may be obtained; and that application would be made should the Board approve. Mr. Gladu will pursue the grant; and the sum expected to be received is seventy thousand dollars (\$70,000.00) to match the expense of the new Multipurpose Room (MPR) floor. Mr. Gladu explained that the light towers were smaller versions of those utilized at the Soccer Field, and would illuminate the site of any major incident, such as a fuel spill or a house fire—but would also be available for community use to light parking lots, or Chester Street during Trick or Treat, for example. The portable message board would provide both a means to communicate emergency information (shelter locations, road closures) and to notify of community events such as the Town Fair or the Wason Pond Pounder.

Selectman Trask made a motion to allow the Fire Department to proceed with application for this grant; Vice Chairman Hagan seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative, so moved. Mr. Antoine agreed to provide the Board with status updates.

Mr. Antoine informed the Board that Comstar no longer provided per-call ambulance billing services, and had terminated the contract with the Town, citing too little business. Approximately ten to twelve (10-12) calls require billing per year, previously costing ten percent (10%) of amount billed; so about one hundred dollars (\$100.00) – Comstar is now only offering annual billing rate, which starts at about thirteen thousand dollars (\$13,000.00). Mr. Antoine suggested considering a contract with the Town of Raymond, which is one of few towns in the area offering reputable, in-house ambulance billing. Mr. Antoine is familiar with the personnel, and felt that Raymond would likely be willing to consider this as well. Selectman Trask asked if the County

may be utilized, and Mr. Antoine clarified that the County did not provide ambulance billing services.

Eric Emerson, EMS Lieutenant, appeared before the Board, noting that this was news to him.

Chairman Landau wondered if the Fire Department’s administrative assistant had been considered for performing these duties; Mr. Antoine explained that various software, training, and other resources would be required. Vice Chairman Hagan and Selectman Cannon encouraged Mr. Antoine to continue communicating with Raymond to determine feasibility of enlisting their ambulance billing services. Mr. Antoine agreed, and would also approach Derry (contracted for transport services) regarding this. In the meantime, the lack of a billing service equates to absence of revenue from this for the Town.

Mr. Antoine, Mr. Bolduc, Mr. Emerson, and Mr. Gladu departed the meeting table at 8:45pm.

#### **IV Selectmen’s Business**

##### *4.1 Public Comment*

Chris Hadik stood and was recognized. Mr. Hadik wished to provide the Board his interpretation of last week’s Budget Committee Meeting relative to the 2016-2017 Budget and the CIP; and was invited to sit before the Board. As a member of the Public in attendance of that meeting, Mr. Hadik noted that Selectman Trask’s comments earlier this evening provided partial details of the Budget Committee’s methodologies. Mr. Hadik felt that the Budget Committee’s focus on promoting the success of the CIP had become misinterpreted as unwillingness to compromise on the Budget. The Committee wishes to propose an eight hundred thousand dollar (\$800,000.00) warrant article; of which five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000.00) would be placed into the CIP, allowing three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000.00) for the Board’s proposed expenditures. Although an increase in tax rate would result initially, this plan would enable generating eight million dollars (\$8,000,000.00) via CIP over a period of ten years. Mr. Hadik noted that the Budget Committee would likely produce two (2) alternate proposals, contingent upon the outcome of the \$800,000.00 warrant article—requiring the Board to agree to accept the Committee’s proposed budget if the article is passed, and vice versa. Along with growing the CIP, the desire to minimize debt service as much as possible is a driving force in the Budget Committee’s strategy; Mr. Hadik noted a figure of three-quarters of a million dollars (\$750,000.00) in financing expense would be felt when all was said and done if the Board’s proposal passes as it stands with many lease agreements.

Selectman Cannon and Chairman Landau agreed to invite a member of the Budget Committee to the next Board meeting for further discussion.

Mr. Hadik departed the meeting at 8:54pm.

##### *4.2 Roundtable*

No further discussion was required by the Board.

##### *4.3 Non-Public Sessions*

242 Chairman Landau made a motion to enter non-public sessions, under RSA 91-A:3 II (a) reputation  
244 and (e) pending litigation; to then come out of non-public session, seal the minutes, and adjourn  
the meeting. Selectman Castricone seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the  
affirmative, so moved.

246  
248 The meeting room was closed at 8:54pm, Mr. Antoine departed the meeting but was asked to  
return to the meeting after a brief non-public session on reputation. The Board invited Mr. Antoine  
back into the meeting room at 9:06pm.

250 Mr. Antoine departed the meeting at 9:31pm.

252 Chairman Landau made a motion to come out of non-public session; Selectman Castricone  
254 seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative, so moved.

256 Chairman Landau made a motion to seal the minutes of the first non-public session on reputation  
for a period of six months; Vice Chairman Hagan seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous  
258 in the affirmative, so moved.

260 Chairman Landau made a motion to seal the minutes of the second non-public session pending  
litigation with Mr. Antoine present for an indefinite period; the vote was unanimous in the  
262 affirmative, so moved.

264 **V Adjournment**

266 The next meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for Thursday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 7pm  
in the Meeting Room.

268 Chairman Landau made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:35pm; the vote was unanimous in  
270 the affirmative, so moved.

272 The meeting was adjourned at 9:35pm.

274 Respectfully Submitted,

276 Caroline Rose Wilson, Recording Secretary

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