

**Town of Chester  
Board of Selectmen’s Meeting  
Thursday, January 14<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

Budget Meetings: Supervisors of the Checklist, Cemeteries, Executive,  
Executive – TA, Welfare – Direct & Intergovernmental, Health Agencies, Landfill

Rich Antoine, Fire Chief: Sign Proposal, Assessment of Fire Department

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 7:07pm.

**1.2 Roll Call**

Selectmen Present:

Joe Castricone

Joseph Hagan, Vice Chairman

Stephen O. Landau, Chairman

Dick Trask

Selectman Absent:

Jack Cannon

Members of the Public present, at various times:

Rich Antoine, Fire Chief

Geoffrey Barnett, Cemetery Trustee

Kathy Burke, Supervisor of the Checklist

Dianna Charron, Chair Supervisor of the Checklist

Aaron Mansur, Chair of Cemetery Trustees

Leslie Packard, Supervisor of the Checklist

Matt Rittenhouse, Tri-Town Times

Richard Schaefer, Cemetery Trustee

Leroy Scott

Joanne Smith, Finance Director

**1.3 Pledge of Allegiance**

52 Chairman Landau led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

54 *1.4 Additions and Deletions*

56 Chairman Landau made a motion at 7:08pm that a New Hampshire state flag and an appropriate flag  
58 pole be obtained for display in front of the Municipal Complex; the motion was seconded by Vice  
60 Chairman Hagan, who noted that such flags could be purchased for around twenty-five dollars (\$25.00)  
via the NH Historical Society in Concord. Chairman Landau stated that he already has a mounting for the  
flag; the vote was four in favor with Selectman Cannon absent, so moved.

62 Two non-public sessions were proposed: one on compensation, and one under Public Employees.

64 *1.5 Public Comment*

66 Leroy Scott stood and was recognized at 7:09pm. Mr. Scott stated that rumors were abound regarding town  
employees’ salaries as of late, expressing his hopes for the Board’s consideration of this; and urging the Board to  
68 take care of dedicated, long-time employees.

70 As no others wished to speak, Public Comment was closed at 7:10pm.

72 **II Old Business**

74 *2.1 Approval of Minutes*

76 Due to this meeting’s full agenda and the need to approve four (4) past meeting’s minutes, Chairman Landau  
suggested each selectman forward his approvals or otherwise to the recording secretary, pending later approval.

78 **III New Business**

80 *3.1 Budget Meetings*

82 *3.1.2 Supervisors of the Checklist 4140-2*

84 Supervisors of the Checklist, Kathy Burke, Diana Charron, and Leslie Packard appeared before the Board. The  
86 members requested their status as seasonal employees be changed to part-time; and thereby eligible for a recent  
fifteen cent (\$.15) per hour pay increase.

88 Chairman Landau made a motion that the Supervisors of the Checklist and ballot clerks at all times be considered  
90 part-time employees. The vote was four in favor with Selectman Cannon absent, so moved.

92 Selectman Castricone moved that the fifteen cent (\$.15) per hour pay increase be applied retroactively to July 1<sup>st</sup>,  
2015, to the Supervisors of the Checklist and ballot clerks. The vote was four in favor with Selectman Cannon  
94 absent, so moved. Ms. Smith stated that she will update the budget chart for that committee to reflect new  
retroactive raise.

96 Selectman Castricone questioned why the department requested budget funding for fiscal year 2016/2017  
98 nineteen percent (19%) less than the allotted 2015/2016 budget. Ms. Charron explained that additional funds

were added to the 2015/2016 totals due to anticipated need to elect a new sheriff; which never ended up being spent.

Chairman Landau asked the members if they had checked in with the new Acting Town Clerk on election business; Ms. Charron affirmed that time had already been spent with her, and she felt very confident in the Acting Town Clerk.

The members questioned which Selectman was their BOS liaison this year; uncertain, will find out. New photo ID badges were recently issued, to expire in five (5) years instead of three (3) for SOTC and ballot clerks. ID badges are collected at the end of each day they are used to ensure security.

Selectman Castricone moved that this department’s budget move forward; the vote was four in favor with Selectman Cannon absent, so moved.

Ms. Burke, Ms. Charron and Ms. Packard departed the meeting room at 7:23pm.

### *3.1.3 Cemetery 4195-1*

Cemetery Trustee Chair Aaron Mansur and Trustees Richard Schaefer and Geoffrey Barnett appeared before the Board. At Selectman Castricone’s request, Mr. Barnett explained the need for miscellaneous funds had decreased thirty-three percent (33%) due to the ability to accumulate adequate supplies (i.e., washers for sting trimmers, etc). Mr. Mansur remarked that the amount requested for flags remained stable at two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00), as few need replacing.

The department request for rock wall repair funds rose thirty-three percent (33%) as the Sanborn Cemetery rock wall is to be restacked: Each year for the next three (3), the department intends to pay Rich Bellemore one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500.00) to repair one-third (1/3) of the wall.

Selectman Trask suggested that inmates from the County Jail be enlisted to assist with this endeavor, which is Chairman Landau slated to begin in May or June 2016; Mr. Barnett agreed and stated he would look into it.

The installation of lighting and other enhancements to be installed at the veterans memorial at Town center was discussed; Mr. Barnett mentioned that solar lighting would not adequately illuminate; approval to contact Eversource about installing electricity was requested. Placement of more than one light pole and a flag was also suggested by Mr. Barnett. Current light pole is owned by the state, and it was felt that modifications would not be allowed; nor would placement of lines under the road be permitted. Selectman Trask suggested electrical outlets be included in the configuration to allow for use of microphones, etc., during events. Chairman Landau offered to provide the contact information of a new consumer relations representative at Eversource.

Two (2) second-quality Dutch Elm trees were offered to the cemetery trustees by Yvonne at the Elm Institute in Keene, at a discounted rate of seventy dollars (\$70.00) each. The Board agreed that these trees be purchased for placement at Wason Pond, exact planting decisions to be left to Wason Pond Committee; exact budget line to be determined. Ten (10) first-quality Dutch Elm trees have already been purchased at seventy five dollars (\$75.00) each, or seven hundred and fifty dollars (\$750.00) total. The trustees plan to pick up all twelve (12) trees in July for planting.

Chairman Landau noted that historically, Chester Street had once been lined with chestnuts, maples and elms; and expressed the hope that such trees flourish again in Town. Mr. Barnett noted that should the mature sugar

maple in the Village Cemetery nearest Kevin Scott’s property be felled or damaged by lightning again; it would need to be extracted by crane to preserve the Civil War era monuments at its base.

Selectman Castricone made motion to move forward with cemetery budget; the vote was four in favor with Selectman Cannon absent, so moved.

The cemetery trustees departed the meeting room at 7:40pm.

*3.1.4 Executive: Office 4130*

Ms. Smith stated that the executive budget was level; wages factored reflect current amount, with the .15 raise.

Selectman Castricone then posited that cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) be eliminated and that significant pay raises be put in place to bring town employee salaries commensurate with those of surrounding towns. Selectman Castricone suggested rough figures of five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) be added to part-time annual wage, and ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) be added to full-time annual wages. Selectman Castricone furthered that part-time police officers be paid the same rate per hour as their full-time counterparts.

Ms. Smith departed the meeting room at 7:45pm to obtain a spreadsheet recently generated in these regards; and returned at 7:47pm. Approximately fifty five thousand dollars (\$55,000.00) could be reduced from annual budget by cutting COLAs. Selectman Castricone pointed at implementing a warrant article to allow for department-by-department specifications and itemization, refraining from reference as a raise, and allowing for citizen feedback. Chairman Landau indicated that perhaps four warrant articles would appear at the coming May election; and felt that it would by nature be considered a raise. Ms. Smith also added that a warrant article would basically allow voters to decide town employee wages. Chairman Landau asked of the tax implications; Ms. Smith intends to have those calculations, as well as reports run by department and per position rather than by individual employee to ensure objectivity.

Chairman Landau questioned the increase in website expense; Ms. Smith cited an additional two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00) due for web page design. Selectman Castricone questioned whether the minutes salaries line was for all departments’ minute takers or just the BOS. Chairman Landau responded that, with the exception of the ZBA, this was a minutes pool. Chairman Landau explained that in the past when minutes funds were distributed, there were instances of unused minutes funds being spent elsewhere. Chairman Landau raised concern over whether a telephone increase could be anticipated, Ms. Smith was not as of yet aware. Dues & subscriptions were addressed; Chairman Landau expressed that NH Municipal Association (NHMA) membership and Lexis Nexis subscription (RSAs) of particular necessity; Ms. Smith agreed these were valuable, easily justifiable resources.

At 8:12p, Selectman Castricone made a motion to move forward with the executive budget as-is; the vote was four in favor with Selectman Cannon absent, so moved.

*3.1.5 Executive: Town Administration 4130-2*

Ms. Smith explained that the addition of a contract administrative assistant at thirty-five (35) hours per week had been factored into this budget. Contracted coverage had become split between Town Administration and Building Inspection and Code Enforcement offices.

194 Selectman Trask made a motion that the budget reflect fifteen (15) hours per week at each Town Administration  
office and Building Inspection and Code Enforcement office; for a total of thirty (30) hours per week. The vote  
196 was four in favor with Selectman Cannon absent; so moved.

198 Chairman Landau summarized printing expenses for the upcoming annual report: one thousand seven hundred  
and thirty dollars (\$1,730.00) for a quantity of saddle-stitched, thirty-five (35) page booklets containing only  
200 figures and warrant articles; plus eight hundred (800) of the standard, full-length reports, to total ~five thousand  
dollars (\$5,000.00); plus mailing expense to be determined by weight. felt it was possible to level this budget  
202 with the last year’s figured allowance (2015/2016 fiscal year).

204 Selectman Trask made a motion that the budget for annual report expenses be brought down from the proposed  
eight thousand five hundred dollars (\$8,500.00) to the 2015/2015 fiscal year allowed amount of seven thousand  
206 five hundred dollars (\$7,500.00). The vote was four in favor with Selectman Cannon absent; so moved.

208 Selectman Castricone made a motion to move forward with the town administration budget as proposed; the  
vote was four in favor with Selectman Cannon absent, so moved.

210  
212 *3.1.6 Welfare: Other Health Agencies 4419-1*

The proposed funding for 2016/2017 FY remained the same as the past two years’ allowance; with the exception  
214 that Sexual Assault Support Services (SASS) has merged with A Safe Place. Funding of one thousand dollars  
(\$1,000.00) in lieu of SASS was combined with funding of one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500.00) to reflect  
216 a total of two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00) allowance to A Safe Place inclusive of SASS.  
Selectman Castricone made a motion to move forward with the welfare/other health agencies budget as  
218 proposed; the vote was four in favor with Selectman Cannon absent, so moved.

220 *3.1.7 General Assistance 4442-1*

222 noted that the General Assistance budget has remained completely level with years past.

224 Chairman Landau commented that the burial allotment budget was impossible by nature to foresee; noting that  
other towns have allotted for funds to cover one (1) burial after not receiving a request for assistance for several  
226 years; then suddenly they might receive three (3) fund assistance requests within a year.

228 Vice Chairman Hagan made a motion to move forward with the general assistance budget to receive level  
funding; the vote was four in favor with Selectman Cannon absent, so moved.

230  
232 *3.1.8 Welfare: Intergovernmental 4444-1*

Ms. Smith noted that the intergovernmental welfare budget was level; Selectman Trask made a motion to move  
234 forward with this budget as-is, the vote was four in favor with Selectman Cannon absent, so moved.

236 *3.1.9 Landfill 4325-1*

238 Ms. Smith stated that the total proposed landfill budget dropped significantly (23.40%) from 2015/2016 FY budget  
due to a reduction in monitoring wells.

240  
242 Selectman Trask made a motion to move forward with the landfill budget as-is; the vote was four in favor with  
Selectman Cannon absent, so moved.

244 Ms. Smith stated that she would proceed to obtain town employee wage data and projections requested of her  
246 earlier in the meeting and would submit it as soon as it was available. Ms. Smith departed the meeting room at  
8:27pm.

248 3.2 *Sign Proposal*

250 Fire Chief Rich Antoine joined the meeting table at 8:27 to provide clarification as requested by the Board  
252 regarding a recent proposal to place an electronic sign in front of the Fire Station. Mr. Antoine explained that an  
emergency management / homeland security grant became available by the state of NH for the provision of  
254 lighted electronic signs, akin to those currently established in Auburn, Derry, Salem, etc. If approved via the grant  
application process, a sign valued at approximately thirty thousand to thirty-five thousand dollars (\$30,000.00-  
256 \$35,000.00) could be placed in front of the Fire Station; to display emergency information ONLY. Grant eligibility  
requirements include performance of a site review by a sign company along with cost estimate; and Mr. Antoine  
258 stated that this had been completed. Approval by the ZBA must be obtained, and hearing for this has been  
scheduled. If approved by ZBA, approval from the BOS is required; then application for the grant can officially be  
made.

260 Mr. Antoine explained the sign would be wired to supply the actual electricity; yet its display could be controlled  
262 wirelessly via installed program on a designated computer within the Fire Station. Selectman Castricone pointed  
that the current Town Sign was at Stevens Hall; and Selectman Trask wondered if placement in front of Police  
264 Department / Municipal Complex would be better since the Multipurpose Room (MPR) has emergency shelter  
capacities; and Chairman Landau suggested an arrangement with the letter board at the intersection of Murphy  
266 Drive and Route 102 be brought to the School Board in proposal.

268 The question of expense after initial installation was raised; Chairman Landau expressed hesitancy to approve  
grant-funded items, because eventually maintenance and therefore expense becomes necessary. Chairman  
270 Landau asserted that lighted electronic signs may not be met approvingly by many citizens; affected abutters  
were mentioned.

272 The insistence that such a proposal be presented as a means of *emergency notification only* was agreed upon by  
274 all Board members present and by Mr. Antoine. Chairman Landau and the Board furthered that appointment  
with School Board to present and propose such signage be made; Mr. Antoine agreed to accompany, and will  
276 cancel hearing with ZBA pending further BOS discussion and School Board appointment.

278 3.3 *Assessment of Fire Department*

280 Chairman Landau announced current plans to implement a third-party assessment of the Fire Department.  
282 Recent equipment purchase requests and proposal to hire additional fire fighter have prompted BOS to seek  
objective insight necessary for developing long-term plans. It is likely that services will be rendered through  
284 Municipal Resources Inc. (MRI). Mr. Antoine agreed that an impartial evaluation would be of benefit. Mr. Antoine  
departed the meeting at 8:59pm.

286 **IV Selectmen’s Business**

288 4.1 *Roundtable*

290

- Selectman Castricone announced that the Chester Public Access TV Studio is seeking volunteers of all kinds and encouraged anyone interested to join.
  - Vice Chairman Hagan announced that Road Agent Mike Oleson agreed to further discuss the Bid and Purchase Policy, including the possible increase of threshold for bidding; per Chairman Landau, Vice Chairman Hagan will request Mr. Oleson appear before the Board at next week’s meeting.
  - Chairman Landau requested that all members of the Board fully review the Bid and Purchase Policy in preparation for next week. Chairman Landau noted that two bids were obtained for the repair of Wason Pond fence; request to waive the requirement for a third bid was made (one of the bids received was approximately two thousand to three thousand dollars [\$2,000.00-\$3,000.00] less than the other.) The lower bidding contractor carries less than one million dollar liability coverage; and bid acceptance is also pending the Town’s insurance carrier’s waiver of their one million dollar requirement. This contractor has done work for the Town previously.
- Selectman Castricone made a motion that the requirement to obtain a third bid be waived; the vote was four in favor with Selectman Cannon absent, so moved.
- Chairman Landau announced that notice of excess property had been made by the state, which included a fireproof media filing cabinet and a court clock (among other items); Chairman Landau offered cabinet to Selectman Castricone for use in the Cable TV station, declined. Selectman Trask wondered if TVs listed on the notice were still available; the Recording Secretary commented that she learned that items not claimed by last Thursday were moved to an e-cycling bin. Selectman Trask opined that having a TV in the Meeting Room would be most useful; and that suitable TVs were quite inexpensive.

#### 4.2 Non-Public Sessions

As no one came forward upon the final opportunity given for public comment, Chairman Landau moved that the Board go into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (b) Employment. The vote was four in favor with Selectman Cannon absent; so moved.

The meeting room was closed at 9:14pm.

Chairman Landau moved that the Board come out of non-public session at 9:42pm. The vote was four in favor with Selectman Cannon absent; so moved.

Chairman Landau moved that the minutes to the first non-public session, on Employment, be sealed for a period of three (3) months. The vote was four in favor with Selectman Cannon absent; so moved.

Chairman Landau moved that the minutes to the second non-public session, on Employment, be sealed for an indefinite period. The vote was four in favor with Selectman Cannon absent; so moved.

#### IV Adjournment

The next meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for Thursday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016 at 7pm in the Meeting Room.

Chairman Landau moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:42pm. The vote was four in favor with Selectman Cannon absent; so moved.

340 The meeting was adjourned at 9:42pm.

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Respectfully Submitted,

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Caroline Rose Wilson, Recording Secretary

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