

**Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen Meeting
Thursday, February 1st, 2018
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
Items for Signature
Non-Public Session
Recommendations from Joint Loss Meeting
Budgets
Building Inspector Hours
Roundtable
Non-Public Sessions
Adjournment

1.1 Call to Order

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

1.2 Roll Call

Selectmen present:

Cass Buckley (arrived at 7:04pm)
Jack Cannon
Steve D’Angelo (arrived at 7:14pm)
Jeremy Owens
Dick Trask

Members of the Public present, at various times:

Tony Amato, Maintenance Supervisor
Aaron Berube, Joint Loss Management Committee Chairman
Andrew Hadik, Recycling & Solid Waste Committee
Chris Hadik
Bonnie Healey, Transfer Station
Chuck Myette, Conservation Commission
Nancy Myette
Erin Newnan, Town Clerk
Corinna Reishus, Recreation Director
Baron Richardson, Conservation Commission
Michelle Trask, Recreation Commission Chair
Penny Williams, Tri-Town Times
And other persons unknown to the Recording Secretary

1.3 Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Trask led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.4 Chairman’s Additions and Deletions

There were neither additions nor deletions.

1.5 Public Comments

As no Members of the Public wished to be heard, Public Comment was closed at 7:03pm.

II. Old Business

2.1 Approval of Minutes

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

2.2 Items for Signature

Chairman Trask urged all members to review and sign items in the Signature Folder.

III. New Business

3.1 Non-Public Session

Vice-Chairman Cannon moved that the Board go into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (a) Public Employees; Selectman Owens seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Selectmen Buckley and D’Angelo yet to arrive; motion carried.

The meeting room was closed at 7:04pm. Selectman Buckley arrived at 7:04pm.

Maintenance Supervisor Tony Amato entered the meeting room at 7:11pm.

Selectman D’Angelo arrived at 7:14pm.

Maintenance Supervisor Amato departed the meeting room at 7:20pm.

The meeting room was re-opened at 7:27pm.

Vice-Chairman Cannon moved that the Board come out of non-public session; Chairman Trask seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

Vice-Chairman Cannon moved that the minutes to the first non-public session, on Public Employees, be sealed for an indefinite period; Chairman Trask seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

3.2 Recommendations from Joint Loss Meeting

Police Chief Aaron Berube (who was appearing as Chair of the Joint Loss Management Committee), Town Clerk Erin Newnan, and Recreation Director Corinna Reishus appeared before the Selectmen to discuss recommendations made at the Joint Loss Management Committee’s meeting of Wednesday, January 31st, 2018. The JLMC is concerned that the issues these recommendations are based upon could cause liability to the Town if not corrected.

Firstly, the JLMC is concerned about what appears to be lax supervision of the County Workers. The School Superintendent had observed the Workers at the Snack Shack, smoking, and with no supervision. One was found in the Maintenance Office, unsupervised, where he had access to chemicals, tools, razor blades, etc. Another was found in the Employee Kitchen, unsupervised, going through the refrigerator. Some female employees have expressed discomfort with their presence; one who preferred to remain anonymous submitted a letter, which JLMC Chair Berube read aloud, and which is reproduced in its entirety below:

February 1, 2018

To The Board of Selectmen,

I am writing this narrative in reference to the state workers we hire from the prison. As a female town employee, I have not felt safe with their presence in town. The following is my experience from my point of view:

I work a lot of hours before and after, our building is opened, by myself. One morning, I pulled into my parking spot and a group of young men were standing in the lot smoking. As a female, we are always on alert in situations like this. We take in our surroundings and note everything. I proceeded to get out of my car and entered the building. Their eyes were on me the entire time. The hairs on the back of my neck stood up. Every morning they were there. Same time. Same lingering stares. At times there were a handful of them with an older gentleman, who I am assuming was in charge of them. But other times, the young men were alone. I began parking as close to my entrance as possible. When I inquired about them, I was told they were from the prison and they were doing maintenance around town. That made my guard go up even higher.

From my point of view, we are allowing strangers who have already done wrong, into our small sheltered community life, where they will learn the ins and outs of our small town. For me, that includes knowing my schedule, when I arrive to work each morning, and that I am alone. That thought is a scary one. Also, they can learn the layouts of other town buildings and schedules of other employees. I feel the money we are saving isn’t worth the risks we could potentially be taking.

Town Clerk Newnan noted that the Workers appear to be comfortable and familiar with their main point of contact in the Town, and the lack of supervision is disturbing. Recreation Director Reishus added that the Town’s employees receive no notice that the Workers are going to be on site, and this has caused conflicts with activities that are scheduled and/or ongoing in a location where the Workers suddenly appear. Both the LifeShare program and the Chester Seniors have been affected by this lack of notice.

Vice-Chairman Cannon noted that this is not the first time that the County Workers program has received complaints, and that the oversight from their main point of contact in the Town has been inadequate. Although the program definitely yields benefits, these should not be at the expense of the comfort of the Town’s employees. He suggested that Chairman Trask contact the County; is it possible that they need an additional officer with them for supervision purposes?

JLMC Chair Berube suggested that the program be suspended until a better safety protocol is in place. Chairman Trask suggested that they stay out of 84 Chester Street until this improved safety protocol is in

place.

Secondly, the JLMC has recommended that the 84 Chester Street ‘campus’ be made completely non-smoking, which includes smoking in vehicles. The Personnel Policy would need to be amended, the building properly posted, and the employees and public educated. The Selectmen will consider this recommendation.

JLMC Chair Berube and Recreation Director Reishus departed the meeting table at 7:37pm; Town Clerk Newnan remained in order to discuss her budget requests.

3.3 Budgets

3.3.1 Town Clerk

Town Clerk Newnan appeared before the Selectmen to defend the Town Clerk Budget request. She is asking \$59,380, which is an increase of 3.92% from last year’s budget.

She has requested an increase in line 01-4140-1-561 TC Training & Seminars, as the Deputy Town Clerk will be taking Word and Excel classes, and Town Clerk Newnan would like to enroll in a four year program to become a certified Town Clerk/Tax Collector.

Line 01-4140-1-625 TC Postage is a major expense for the Town Clerk’s budget; each month ~500 notices are sent out via the US Mail for vehicle registration renewals, six weeks before the registration expires. The software ClerkWorks has a feature that is capable of emailing these notices out to residents, so they are collecting residents’ email addresses and plan to use that method of contact rather than the US Mail. They hope this process will be complete within a year. The email will contain a link to the Town website so that the resident may take care of his business online.

The Selectmen had no further questions on this budget.

3.3.2 Tax Collector

Town Clerk Newnan remained before the Selectmen to defend the Tax Collector Budget request. She is asking \$55,315, which is a decrease of 0.59% from last year’s budget.

Some lines have decreased due to a change to less expensive vendors.

The Selectmen had no further questions on this budget.

3.3.3 IT

Town Clerk Newnan, who also heads up the IT Committee, remained before the Selectmen to defend the IT Budget request. They are asking \$111,127, which is an increase of 8.76% from last year’s budget.

It was noted that this is the first time that all IT items have been combined into one budget rather than each Department having its own lines.

Line 01-415-8-314 IT Hardware Management has increased to \$44,000, which is an increase of 55.60% over last year’s request for \$28,260. Town Clerk Newnan explained that our agreement with Block 5 covers support for all 46 computers in Town, not just the 11 leased and 15 break/fix computers that Boston Systems covered. Town Clerk Newnan added that although she had

spearheaded the switch from BMSI to Avitar this past year, if we had been contracted with Block 5 at that time, they would have managed it.

Line 01-4150-8-341 IT Phones/Internet has increased to \$24,000, which is an increase of 60.43% over last year’s request for \$14,960. (It was pointed out that the Town’s actual spending for last year for this line was \$24,500, so \$24,000 is actually a decrease.) Again, all Departments in Town will now be covered with VOIP telephones and internet, including places that never had it before. Only the Salt Shed will need wiring.

The Town will also be going to a ‘redundant system’ of Internet, contracting with both Comcast and Granite State. Since the Town relies so much on the internet, an outage can be a serious problem; having a redundant system means that it is unlikely that the Town will be down for any appreciable amount of time. Both Granite State and Comcast were considered for the primary; however, Granite State requires that there be a hard line telephone at each location where internet is desired, which is an additional expense. Comcast does not have such a requirement. Comcast is broadband, and the incoming speed is 150mb. Granite State is fiber, but the incoming speed is 100mb.

Town Clerk Newnan added that Granite State has been quite difficult to work with; for example, they are reluctant to port the Town’s telephone numbers over, even though the State has indicated that they must. They were asked to provide a quote to move one piece of equipment from the attic into the new server room in the Police Department; they quoted \$4,600. Finally, Comcast is willing to assign one permanent person in Manchester to be the Town’s contact for issues.

As a result, Comcast was chosen as the primary with Granite State as the backup.

As the Selectmen had no further questions on this budget, Town Clerk Newnan departed the meeting at 7:57pm.

3.3.4 Recreation/Wason Pond – Community Center

Recreation Director Reishus and Recreation Commission Chairman Michelle Trask appeared before the Selectmen to defend the Recreation budget request. The Department is asking \$77,773, which is an increase of 24.12% from last year’s budget.

Recreation Director Reishus’s position was increased from part-time to full-time at Town Meeting 2017. She has made many changes, offering new programming for all ages, adding pick-up games, open gym time, a teen group, a walking club at Wason Pond trails, kickboxing, bootcamp, yoga, etc. Her plan is to promote health and fitness for residents of all ages, from toddlers to seniors. She also works with Raymond Recreation, should they need assistance. Volunteers run many of these programs. The Department has also partnered with the Police Department for the Fishing Derby and a Self-Defense class.

Vice-Chairman Cannon inquired about line 01-4520-1-110 REC Salaries. This line is for \$48,115, which is a 40.02% increase over last year’s request. He asked if it could be spread out over multiple years rather than all at once. Recreation Director Reishus explained that at a recent meeting, it was suggested that Department Heads who believed that their salary was not in line with market rates should provide documentation and backup to support a request for an increase.

Line 01-4520-1-571 REC Portables is for \$2,120, an increase of 49.30% over last year’s request. This is due to the ADA mandate for a handicap-accessible portable toilet, which is larger and yet has a smaller tank. It is actually less expensive to have one HP and one standard portable toilet

rather than paying to have the HP portable toilet pumped more often.

It was agreed that the Spring Hill Farm needs more exploration for recreational purposes.

As the Selectmen had no further questions on this budget, Recreation Director Reishus and Recreation Commission Chairman Trask departed the meeting at 8:12pm.

3.3.5 Wason Pond Commission/Bath House/Cottage

These three budgets – Wason Pond Caretakers Cottage, Wason Pond Bath House, and Wason Pond Commission, have all remained flat over last year’s budget. They are requesting \$1,200, \$300, and \$954 respectively.

Although Chris Hadik was available to defend the requests, the Selectmen had no questions on these budgets.

3.3.6 Conservation

Conservation Commission Chairman Chuck Myette and Conservation Commission Treasurer Baron Richardson appeared before the Selectmen to defend the Conservation Commission budget request. The ConsCom is asking \$703, which is a decrease of 12.13% from last year’s budget.

Line 01-4619-1-110 CONS Admin Salaries has been reduced, since the Town has been providing any administrative assistance they might need, although they left \$50 in the line for easement filing.

Line 01-4619-1-560 CONS Dues Seminars has been reduced as attendance is down.

Line 01-4619-1-700 CONS Exeter River Watershed has increased, as annual membership dues for this organization have risen from \$150 to \$200.

Selectman D’Angelo inquired about the Conservation Commission’s additional funds. ConsCom Chair Myette identified the Forestry Account, which can be used for easements, a forestry plan, cuts, etc. He added that lumber cut from conservation lands has been used for repairing the Wason Pond Barn and two of its bridges. This fund contains \$38,390 at present.

He also identified the Conservation Fund, which contains ~\$650k at present. \$500k of this fund is being rolled over into CDs. The ConsCom is currently looking at four properties for easement or outright purchase.

There was a brief discussion initiated by Selectman D’Angelo about a Lull blocking access to a carriage path off of Fremont Road. ConsCom Chairman Myette stated that that path, Stowe Road, was formerly thought to be Class VI, but apparently it is not. The landowner, who owns the property on each side, parked the Lull there in order to prevent ATV traffic. Selectman D’Angelo inquired whether the landowner might be trying to take the property by adverse possession. This is not conservation land.

Selectman D’Angelo also asked about the function of the Wason Pond Commission. ConsCom Chairman Myette explained that the Wason Pond property is part recreation and part conservation, and the WPC allows both groups to work together on the property as a whole – staying true to the easements, maintaining the bridges, keeping it from being overdeveloped, etc.

As the Selectmen had no further questions on this budget, ConsCom Chairman Myette and

ConsCom Treasurer Richardson departed the meeting at 8:24pm.

3.3.7 Transfer Station-Solid Waste

Transfer Station Supervisor Bonnie Healey and Recycling & Solid Waste Committee representative Andrew Hadik appeared before the Selectmen to defend the Transfer Station budget request. The Transfer Station is asking \$189,338, which is an increase of 4.48% from last year’s budget.

There was a brief discussion about the need for an additional compactor, as originally discussed in November. Andrew Balch of ABI is currently tipping in Auburn under the Town’s account there in order to avoid having the Transfer Station’s compactor emptied more than once a week. Apparently this capital investment, which is in the ~\$25k range, is already in Table 10 of the CIP, perhaps for FY19/20. The Selectmen can move it up or back as they choose.

Additionally, plans to remove, recycle, and replace two garage doors on the south side have been moved into the CIP for the upcoming Fiscal Year.

Vice-Chairman Cannon asked why line 01-4324-2-125 TS Dump Stickers has been dropped down to \$1. Transfer Station Supervisor Healey stated that the company that previously produced their dump stickers had gone out of business, and as they either recognize all regular patrons, or introduce themselves to new patrons, they plan to stop utilizing the stickers. Selectman Buckley suggested keeping some on hand to give to brand new residents until they become recognizable; Vice-Chairman Cannon is not in favor of doing away with dump stickers.

Mr. Hadik noted that there has been a 6% increase in solid waste coming into the Transfer Station and added that there is no fat in this budget.

As the Selectmen had no further questions on this budget, Mr. Hadik and Transfer Station Supervisor Healey departed the meeting at 8:31pm.

3.3.8 Patriotic, Senior Citizens, Town Fair Fireworks

All three of these budgets have remained flat. Patriotic is requesting \$1,000; Senior Citizens are requesting \$10,000, and Town Fair Fireworks is requesting \$7,000.

The Selectmen had no questions on these budgets.

Budget discussions concluded at 8:32pm.

3.4 Building Inspector Hours

Building Inspector Bunker had suggested amending his hours in order to be open one night each week, and had chosen Tuesdays as that is the night that the Town Clerk’s office is open late. The Selectmen were in favor of this change; as Vice-Chairman Cannon noted, anything to provide more service to the residents is a good thing.

IV. Selectmen’s Business

4.1 Roundtable

Vice-Chairman Cannon:

- **Vice-Chairman Cannon moved that the Selectmen designate the entire 84 Chester Street ‘campus’ as non-smoking; Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote**

was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried. Signs will be ordered; it is unclear whether or not any ordinances need to be amended.

Selectman D’Angelo:

- The Public Hearing for the School budget is this coming Monday, February 5th, 2018 at 7:00pm in the Meeting Room. Some items of note are the addition of one new employee in Administration, and the new four-year teachers’ contract. The new Administration employee would be funded by eliminating two stipend positions totaling ~\$60k. With the additional cost of benefits, the entire position would run ~\$100k. The four-year teachers’ contract totals \$1.6M over the four years, with a \$350k home seeing a \$100 increase to their taxes each year. The School returned ~\$500k to the General Fund last year and currently is running a ~\$200k surplus.

Chairman Trask:

- Representative Kari Lerner had requested a letter from the Selectmen supporting the reconsideration of HB413, which would compel the State to fund 15% of the New Hampshire Retirement Systems costs for Police, Firefighters, and Teachers. Chairman Trask opined that this bill meant that the Town would be subsidizing other towns if they did not manage their budgets as well as Chester does. Selectman Buckley wanted to know where the funding would come from. As Representative Lerner was unable to attend tonight’s meeting, she will be asked for more details.

Selectman Buckley:

- Nothing to report.

Selectman Owens:

- Nothing to report.

4.2 Non-Public Session

Vice-Chairman Cannon moved that the Board go into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (e) Pending Litigation for two items; Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

The meeting room was closed at 8:46pm.

The meeting room was re-opened at 8:56pm.

Selectman D’Angelo moved that the Board come out of non-public session; Selectman Buckley seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

Chairman Trask moved that the minutes to the second non-public session, on Pending Litigation, be sealed for an indefinite period; Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

Chairman Trask moved that the minutes to the third non-public session, on Pending Litigation, be sealed for a period of one (1) year; Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

V. Adjournment

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be Thursday, February 8th, 2018.

Selectman D’Angelo moved to adjourn the meeting; Selectman Buckley seconded the

motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra H. Doda
Recording Secretary