

**Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen Meeting
Thursday, March 15th, 2018
Municipal Complex
Approved Minutes**

I Preliminaries

Call the Meeting to Order
Roll Call
Pledge of Allegiance
Additions and Deletions
Public Comment
Approval of Minutes
Items for Signature
Town Administrator
Public Works Department
Transfer Station
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 7:00pm.

1.2 Roll Call

Selectmen present:

Cass Buckley
Steve D’Angelo
Jeremy Owens
Dick Trask

Selectmen absent:

Jack Cannon

Members of the Public present, at various times:

Jerome Gesel
Andrew Hadik, Planning Department
Nancy Myette
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

Selectman D’Angelo asked to add a non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (e), Pending Litigation.

1.5 Public Comments

As no Members of the Public wished to be heard, Public Comment was closed at 7:01pm.

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 Town Administrator

Chairman Trask proposed that an Article authorizing the hiring of a Town Administrator be added to this year's Warrant.

Selectman Buckley is opposed at this point in time. It is unknown what this person's job duties will be, or how this position will impact the Town's current structure, both departmental and governing. The residents voted down a similar Warrant Article last year as the Selectmen had no plan; they've had a year to work on it, but did not, so there is still no plan.

Selectman D'Angelo stated that leadership was lacking in certain areas, and mentioned that he had been at the Transfer Station today, last week, and last weekend. Selectman Buckley countered that this was due to a decision the Selectmen had made, and that one could not expect a Town Administrator to staff the Transfer Station.

Selectman D'Angelo added that since he has been on the Board of Selectmen, they have been bogged down with a variety of issues – board/committee members with lapsed appointments, no oversight of the Maintenance Department, no written system of operations at the Transfer Station, Department Heads needing assistance with the budgets from a Finance Director only onsite two days a week, etc.. He would like to see a Town Administrator who could work with Department Heads to manage their Departments and budgets, work with other Boards and Committees, and then liaise with the Selectmen to keep them updated as to progress and to set future plans. After a two to three year transition period, it might then be possible to reduce the Board of Selectmen from five to three.

He added that the Town Administrator could also represent the Town with the School and other governmental entities, find grants, additional resources, etc. Funding for the position could be found without resorting to finding extra tax dollars.

Selectman Owens stated that there are eight weeks before Town Meeting, and a plan could be formulated. As it stands, many responsibilities fall on the Chairman. A day-to-day oversight person is needed to provide guidance to the Town's Departments.

Chairman Trask added that many projects get 'farmed out' to employees – for example, the Police Chief provided the Harassment training, the Town Clerk headed up the IT Committee, and the Recreation Director is managing the telephone switch-over. These are all projects that a Town Administrator could handle.

Selectman Buckley stated that the Selectmen could interview Town Administrators from surrounding

Towns as well as their Boards of Selectmen, as well as discussing how this position would affect existing employees in other Departments. He added that most towns with a Town Administrator still had a Finance Department. Chairman Trask suggested hiring a firm, such as MRI, to do this legwork. He also suggested that MRI could provide an interim Town Administrator, but that suggestion did not receive general agreement. Selectman Buckley is still of the opinion that there is not enough time before Town Meeting to craft a plan.

Andrew Hadik stood and was recognized. He suggested that a memo be sent out to all Department Heads, asking how they believed a Town Administrator would assist with their workload, and another request made of the surrounding towns that they provide the job description for their own Town Administrators.

Selectman D'Angelo moved that the Selectmen draft a Warrant Article to hire a Town Administrator; Selectman Owens seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Selectman Buckley abstaining and Vice-Chairman Cannon absent; motion carried.

Selectman D'Angelo will set up meetings with other Town Administrators.

3.2 Public Works Department

The hiring of a Director of Public Works was also discussed, with Chairman Trask stating that some of the wages from the open Maintenance and Transfer Station positions could be used for the salary. Selectman Buckley disagreed, stating that the funding would not be sufficient, as the Town would still need an employee to do maintenance and to staff the Transfer Station. He added that if the Town decided to hire a Town Administrator, a Director of Public Works would simply be another layer of management and not necessary.

It is unclear if a full time Transfer Station employee is required, but Selectman Buckley is of the opinion that a full time Maintenance employee is a necessity; Chairman Trask would prefer two part-time employees with proper supervision.

Jerome Gesel stood and was recognized. He asked what the purpose of a liaison was then; wasn't the job of the liaison to oversee his Department Heads? Selectman D'Angelo opined that Selectmen liaisons don't have enough time to oversee all of their Departments, but added that he expects employees to be honest and to do their job to the best of their ability, as they have a fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayer.

3.3 Transfer Station

Selectman Buckley stated that the Transfer Station has been unsupervised since the Healeys left. Today some snow slid off of the roof and damaged the paper and cardboard trailers. This snow has now been removed, and photographs were taken of the damage to be sent to Schwartz, who owns the trailers, and to Primex, the Town's insurance company. Fire Chief Bolduc believes the trailers are safe to use.

The Transfer Station employees have been invited to a meeting here at Town Hall on the morning of Tuesday, March 20th. A job posting will be created, and depending on the results of that meeting, an opening may be advertised. Current employees might want to step into a supervisory role. Chairman Trask opined that perhaps a previous Transfer Station employee might like to return. The job is expected to take 12-15 hours each week, Wednesday nights and Saturdays.

IV. Selectmen's Business

4.1 Roundtable

Selectman D'Angelo:

- The Budget Committee is on the agenda for next week's meeting. They have asked questions about the Maintenance Budget (Major Projects, Consumables, Groundskeeping, Equipment Maintenance, and Truck Maintenance) and the Police Budget (how many employees vs. how many vehicles). They are concerned that the Town used to purchase a new cruiser every other year, and now it's every year.

Selectman Owens:

- Nothing to report.

Selectman Buckley:

- Nothing to report.

Chairman Trask:

- A draft of the Selectmen's Report for the annual Town Report is in each folder; please read and make suggestions.
- An alarm system has been installed at Spring Hill Farm; also, the lock will be replaced with a keypad.
- The Transfer Station office lock will be replaced with a key pad.

4.2 Public Comment

Mr. Gesel stood and was recognized. He asked about the well for the Highway Department that was mentioned in this week's Tri-Town Times; it was clarified that this well was intended for the Salt Shed, not the Highway Garage.

As no other members of the Public wished to be heard, Public Comment was closed at 8:10pm.

4.3 Non-Public Sessions

Selectman D'Angelo moved that the Board go into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (b) Employment, (c) Reputation, (d) Acquisition, and (e) Pending Litigation; Selectman Owens seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Cannon absent; motion carried.

The meeting room was closed at 8:11pm. Mr. Hadik remained in the meeting room.

Mr. Hadik departed the meeting room at 8:58pm.

The meeting room was re-opened at 9:41pm.

Selectman D'Angelo moved that the Board come out of non-public session; Selectman Owens seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Cannon absent; motion carried.

Chairman Trask moved that the minutes to the first non-public session, on Acquisition, be sealed for a period of one (1) year; Selectman D'Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Cannon absent; motion carried.

Chairman Trask moved that the minutes to the second non-public session, on Reputation, be sealed for an indefinite period; Selectman Owens seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Cannon absent; motion carried.

Chairman Trask moved that the minutes to the third non-public session, on Reputation, be sealed for a period of one (1) year; Selectman Buckley seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Cannon absent; motion carried.

Chairman Trask moved that the minutes to the fourth non-public session, on Pending Litigation, be sealed for a period of one (1) year; Selectman D'Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Cannon absent; motion carried.

Selectman Buckley moved that the minutes to the fifth non-public session, on Employment, be sealed for a period of six (6) months; Chairman Trask seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Cannon absent; motion carried.

V. Adjournment

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be Thursday, March 22nd, 2018.

Selectman D'Angelo moved to adjourn the meeting; Selectman Owens seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Cannon absent; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:43pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra H. Doda
Recording Secretary