

**Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen Meeting
Thursday, March 22nd, 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
Review of Budget and Warrant
Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee
Transfer Station Status
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 7:03pm.

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:

Aaron Berube, Police Chief
Greg Bolduc, Fire Chief
Ben Clark, Deputy Fire Chief
Colin Costine, Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee
Jerome Gesel
Chuck Heuer, Budget Committee
Brennan Holmes, Budget Committee
Emily Kunelius, Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee
Kendall Kunelius, Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee
Rhonda Lamphere, Budget Committee
Chuck Myette, Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee
Nancy Myette
Brian Shankey, Budget Committee
Mike Weider, Budget Committee
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 7:05pm.

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 Review of Budget and Warrant - Budget Committee

Budget Committee Chairman Michael Weider, Budget Committee Vice-Chairman Lamphere, and Budget Committee members Chuck Heuer, Brennan Holmes, and Brian Shankey appeared before the Selectmen to discuss the Budget and Warrant.

Some of the questions they posed, and the subsequent answers, included:

01-4194-1-415 GB Major Projects: Projects for the upcoming fiscal year include lead paint abatement and painting of both the Maintenance and Highway Garages. Mr. Weider asked why these were not in the CIP; Chairman Trask responded that they were considered maintenance, and as such could not be in a program for capital improvements. Mr. Weider countered that adding to the life expectancy of the building made it a capital improvement. Mrs. Lamphere asked if the projects were still planned, as the employee who created the budget was no longer employed with the Town; they are. However, if the projects can be considered capital improvements, they certainly could be moved to the CIP.

01-4194-1-639 GB Gas/Oil/Diesel: This line had originally increased to \$3,800 but was reduced back to last year’s figure of \$2,300 in mid-February; it appears that some members of the Budget Committee did not have the latest version in their books.

01-4312-1-110 HSB Salaries: There was a query about this line, as it had increased quite a bit from the FY16/17 actuals. One employee had been terminated in December 2016 and not replaced until July 2017, thus the lower actuals; the number for FY17/18 in the budget books and the requested figure for FY18/19 were identical. Mrs. Lamphere noted that the difference between the budget number passed last year’s and the actual was an additional ~\$4,500; she will consult with the Finance Department.

Police Department: The Budget Committee inquired about the number of employees and vehicles; Police

Chief Berube joined the group at the table. He confirmed that there are seven full time officers, including himself, and one full-time Administrative Assistant. He added that the number of part time officers varies; there are four part-time employees on the payroll, and two Auxiliary officers, who work a shift at no cost to the Town.

The Police Department owns six vehicles; five cruisers, and one unmarked car which had been donated to the Town. The Police Department has had five cruisers since 2008. He was asked why he was asking for a new cruiser out of the CIP, as the oldest one is from 2014. He explained that this particular vehicle, which is the one that he drives, has 110k driving miles and 95k idle hours on its gauges, which translates to 204,875 miles on the engine. Its extended warranty expires this year and it will begin to cost the Town money for repairs. The other four cruisers, which are all under warranty, have anywhere from 200 to 116k miles on their odometers, with the hours on the engine idle meter bringing the engine mileage up to as much as ~400k.

When the Department is fully staffed (one officer has just finished Field Training, and one is still in the Academy), there are two officers on second shift on Thursdays through Sundays, inclusive, and one officer other evenings. On the day shift there is one officer, sometimes two, as well as Police Chief Berube and Detective Richard. Detective Richard, who is a retired LEO from Derry, works 32 hours a week, usually four or five days, and is on call for whenever he is needed; he does not patrol or act as the primary responder to a service call. His experience, training, and certifications – he is on the Drug Task Force as well as ICAC, the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force - benefit the Department as they do not need to call in outside agencies to handle that sort of situation.

Mr. Weider suggested that as the 2014 cruiser would be retired, the maintenance line could be reduced to zero; Police Chief Berube demurred, stating that that line covered snow tires, oil changes, and inspection stickers. He would be willing to reduce it from \$3,000, perhaps to \$600, if the Budget Committee supported the Warrant Article for a new cruiser.

Mr. Shankey asked about deductibles for warranty work; this is \$100, and is covered under the maintenance lines. This spurred a discussion about the cruiser that had been totaled after an accident in December 2017. Primex had given the Town ‘fair market value’, which was insufficient to purchase a new cruiser; ~\$4,600 had to be taken from Impact Fees to make up the difference plus that of the \$1,000 deductible. Although Primex will not cover the difference in cost, they should reimburse the Town for the deductible after the claim is subrogated. The majority of the upfitted equipment on the totaled cruiser was able to be transferred to the new one.

01-4210-1-221 PD Wason Pond Ranger: The Selectmen had asked Police Chief Berube for a proposal, which he drafted; he will send a copy to the Budget Committee. The position is slated for ~30 hours a week from mid-May to mid-September, weather dependent. The Ranger will be uniformed in some fashion and will have direct contact with the Police Department in case of criminal activity. S/he will be able to enforce ordinances him/herself. Police Chief Berube is thinking perhaps a college student with an interest in law enforcement or the environment. On certain days, when needed, an actual Police Officer will be on site.

Mr. Shankey asked if there had been any consideration of using an Auxiliary Officer as the Ranger; Police Chief Berube responded that if he could find someone to take the position for free, he certainly would. He then explained the function of the auxiliary program as a good opportunity for someone with interest in law enforcement to become a Police Officer. They pay for their own uniform and training at the Academy. If they prove themselves, they can be switched to part-time status.

Fire Department: The Ambulance and Dispatch contracts have been signed, and are both level funded for FY18/19. BOS AA Doda will send copies to the Budget Committee members.

Spring Hill Farm: Mr. Heuer asked about Spring Hill Farm, as there is no revenue coming in at this point. Chairman Trask stated that the hope was to keep any expenditure equal to whatever revenue the Farm generated. Selectman Buckley stated that the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee was working on best uses of the Farm, and had received a number of different proposals. They would be presenting these to the Selectmen once they were ready.

Chester Senior Citizens: Mr. Heuer asked the Selectmen to consider that the Senior Citizens had not received an increase in their funding in years. To Selectman D’Angelo’s answer that they had not requested one, Mr. Heuer responded that they were unlikely to request one.

Other: Mr. Heuer asked if there was anything still ‘in motion’ on the Budget. Selectman D’Angelo stated that supervision for the Maintenance and Transfer Station departments was still undecided, but that there are funds in the Budget to hire a person, a ‘working supervisor’, as Mr. Heuer said. Mrs. Lamphere stated that with one Maintenance position and two Transfer Station positions open, there would be no need to find additional funding for this ‘working supervisor’. Selectman D’Angelo and Chairman Trask are both in favor; Selectman Owens would like more definition, but is not opposed. Mr. Weider wondered if Road Agent Oleson might like to move into that role.

Selectman Buckley is opposed, as there has been no conversation on the matter, and pointed out that a maintenance position and a transfer station position would also need to be filled, not just a supervisor. This subject needs more conversation.

As there were no more questions on the Budget, the next topic was the Warrant.

The first seven articles, the Election of Officers and the Zoning Articles, did not require discussion, and neither did Article #b, the Budget, as it is not complete.

Article #c – CIP Funding: The Budget Committee did not disagree with the \$800k funding figure, but queried why the Unassigned Fund Balance was being used. Chairman Trask stated that the UFB was currently at 15%-16%. Mr. Weider asked what the plan was for next year; if one uses the UFB to offset CIP funding, it may not be available to be used for tax rate reduction. He stated that this made the budget artificially look smaller; Selectman Buckley agreed.

There was some discussion about the amount being funded vs. the amount being drawn down each year. The average being drawn down is \$735k. The funding and draw-down figures should be relatively level, or more should be funded than drawn down; otherwise the fund will dwindle.

Article #d – CIP Projects: The items in this Warrant Article are those that were on Table 10 for FY18-19. Mr. Weider stated that it was not necessary to buy all of them and asked if any could be pushed out a year. Chairman Trask replied that that was why the Fire Department had received three large items last year – they had been pushed back. Theoretically, this is the year that we would be caught up.

The Budget Committee had some items they would prefer to see removed from the Warrant Article:

Government Buildings – Zero Turn Lawnmower	\$20,000
Government Buildings – TS Garage Door, Wiring, & Openers	\$6,770
MPR – Netting, Floor Mats, and Wall Pads	\$20,000
Wason Pond – Goals and Lining Fields	\$9,500

Mr. Weider would like to see the zero turn lawnmower removed, as the Maintenance Department just got a tractor last year. He believes that the Transfer Station doors are a maintenance item. And Mrs. Lamphere is of the opinion that the MPR and Wason Pond items should be paid for out of the Recreation Department’s revolving fund. The Selectmen will look at this Warrant Article again.

Mr. Heuer asked why it would cost \$70k to have plans drawn up for the Police Station; apparently this is the going rate. Funding for the Police Station needs study was in the CIP Project Warrant Article from last May’s Town Meeting; Police Chief Berube has a proposal to show the Selectmen.

Article #e – Highway CIP Funding: No questions.

Article #f – Highway CIP Projects: There is a list of roads to be repaired; adding this figure to that in the CIP projects, the Town should get \$770k worth of roadwork done in FY18-19.

Article #g – Police Department Equipment: As the purchase of this utility vehicle would be funded from the Police Detail Special Revenue Fund, there would be no cost to the Town. Mrs. Lamphere stated, however, that since the Town is only reimbursed for the labor of the details, not the use or maintenance of the cruiser, that in effect there is a cost to the Town; Mr. Weider would like to see the Town reimbursed for the cruiser’s fuel use during details. Police Chief Berube stated that this fund benefits the Town and has saved it money; for example, last year the Town received \$20k worth of communications upgrades, among other things, with no tax impact.

Mrs. Lamphere asked why the vehicle cost \$35k, and why it needed a trailer. Police Chief Berube replied that they would like to purchase a four wheel drive, four-door enclosed utility vehicle with heat, perhaps a Yamaha or a Polaris, and the trailer is because it needs to be available at a moment’s notice. The utility vehicle belonging to the Fire Department is not enclosed, and cannot be used to transport an arrestee. Mr. Weider stated that other Towns that have these vehicles have had them donated, or have a large commercial tax base. He added that the Town will have to pay for its maintenance and its replacement. A discussion ensued about the Town’s population, with the Budget Committee arguing that population was not growing. The Budget Committee does not see the value of this vehicle.

Article #h – Winter Road Maintenance Fund: Although the exact figure is not known, it is expected that this Fund has already been tapped for this Fiscal Year.

Article #i – Revaluation: This request, for \$30k, is higher than previous years. The revaluation is being accelerated due to the new software and the Town’s equalization value being incorrect. It will be reduced back to normal in subsequent years.

Article #j – PACT: The Budget Committee did not have the backup that Joe Castricone provided when he submitted this Warrant Article; BOS AA Doda will forward it to them. Mr. Weider asked if there was any equipment for the school included in that backup; it is believed not. Selectman D’Angelo reported that no-one from the School Board ever attends the PACT meetings.

Article #k – 300th Anniversary: No questions.

Article #l – Keno: No questions.

Article #m – Town Administrator: Mr. Weider would like this to be a Special Warrant Article in order that any funds raised and appropriated can only be spent on a Town Administrator; that can be done. Some members of the Selectmen and Budget Committee would like this Warrant Article to be removed and the funding placed directly into the budget, although others argued that a change of this magnitude always has been requested via a Warrant Article and should continue to be done in that fashion in order not to attempt to go around the voters. Members of the Budget Committee argued that the Town has grown to the point that this position is a need, not a want. Selectman Buckley then pointed out that while discussing the Police Department budget, Mrs. Lamphere had stated that population was not growing, and yet when discussing the Town Administrator position, she was arguing the opposite.

In general, the majority of the Budget Committee and the Selectmen are supportive of a Town Administrator position; if they can create and properly present a plan, the Legislative Body may be more included to approve.

Chairman Trask suggested inserting the position into the Budget, but leaving the Warrant Article intact; in that case, if the Legislative Body removes the position from the Budget, there will still be an opportunity for the position to pass.

Article #n – Discontinue Wason Pond Recreation Capital Reserve: No questions.

Article #o – Tax Impacts: No questions.

Article #p – Reports: No questions.

Public Hearing for the Budget and Warrant is scheduled for Monday, April 9th, 2018.

Members of the Budget Committee departed the meeting at 9:16pm.

3.3 Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee

Colin Costine, Emily Kunelius, Kendall Kunelius, and Chuck Myette of the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee requested time in front of the Selectmen to give an update on the SHFAC’s activities.

Mr. Costine reported that as the land needs to remain open and they are in need of 200 bales for Norma the Cow, they are in the process of drafting an RFP to hay the 25 available acres. Mr. Myette added that they can expect 1,500 – 1,800 bales of hay from two cuts in a good year. The hay is all good quality, but varies – there is some mulch, some for cows, and some for horses.

Mr. Costine stated that three years ago, wood ash was spread on all of the fields. This should be repeated next year, or perhaps limed. The SHFAC would like to offer the haying for a two-year period, plus the ability to extend, in order to attract someone who is interested in proper upkeep of the land. Selectman Buckley has a rough outline of the RFP; Mr. Costine is willing to disseminate it if the Selectmen wish.

There is no update on the proposed Veterans’ Program; the Selectmen would like to receive recommendations from the SHFAC before making any sort of decision.

Mr. Costine, Ms. Kunelius, Mrs. Kunelius, and Mr. Myette departed the meeting at 9:31pm.

3.2 Transfer Station Status

The disposal fee price list was located at the Transfer Station, and a copy of it along with other pricing documentation was distributed. Selectman Buckley stated that the prices are set based on how much it costs to dispose of the item. Chairman Trask talked with Town Clerk Newnan, as representative of the IT Committee, about having credit/debit card payment options for items for disposal at the Transfer Station put onto the Town’s website, as well as accepting checks or cash in her office. It is unknown how much cash was being collected on a daily or annual basis. Selectman D’Angelo pointed out that the auditors had reported this multiple times.

There was a meeting with the Transfer Station employees on Tuesday morning. Rich Czarnec will be supervising, at least for the time being; as they are short-handed, another person will be hired. The job has been posted on the Town’s website and on NHWorks.com and residents should feel free to apply.

IV. Selectmen’s Business

4.1 Roundtable

Selectman D’Angelo:

- Nothing to report.

Selectman Owens:

- Nothing to report.

Selectman Buckley:

- Nothing to report.

Chairman Trask:

- He solicited a proposal from MRI to provide an interim Town Administrator or a DPW Director; he would like the other Selectmen to review it and be prepared to discuss.
- Chairman Trask asked if any of the other Selectmen had spoken with local Town Administrators; they have not. He spoke with Raymond’s Town Manager and received information about Town Managers and Town Administrators from various other Towns; a copy is in each folder.
- Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission sent a letter about pedestrian counting; as Chester has few pedestrians, there was little interest.

4.2 Non-Public Sessions

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

The meeting room was closed at 9:43pm. Police Chief Berube remained in the meeting room.

Police Chief Berube departed the meeting room at 10:00pm.

The meeting room was re-opened at 10:10pm.

Chairman Trask 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 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 second non-public session, on Public Employees, be sealed for a period of ninety (90) days; 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 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 fourth non-public session, on Pending Litigation, be sealed for a period of one (1) year; Selectman Owens 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 29th, 2018.

Chairman Trask 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 10:11pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debra H. Doda
Recording Secretary