

**Town of Chester
Board of Selectmen Meeting
Thursday, November 2nd, 2017
Municipal Complex
Draft 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
Storm Clean-Up Update
Setting of Tax Rate
New Fire Department Hire
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 (arrived at 7:07pm)
Steve D’Angelo
Jeremy Owens
Dick Trask

Selectmen absent:

Jack Cannon

Members of the Public present, at various times:

Greg Bolduc, Fire Chief
Ben Clark, Deputy Fire Chief
Keith Culligan
Kari Lerner, State Representative
Nancy Myette
Scott Newnan, Fire Department Lieutenant
Michael Oleson, Road Agent
David Veale
Maria Veale
Penny Williams, Tri-Town Times
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

State Representative Kari Lerner stood and was recognized. She thanked residents for voting in the September election and stated that she planned to represent Chester as best she could and increase communications between the Town and State. Next week she and State Representative Jess Edwards will begin presenting “Legislative Updates” on the Public Access Cable TV channel.

She updated the power situation in Town; Isaac Foss Road and Raven Drive should both be up now, there is a tree down on Shepherd Home Road, and five homes with NHEC are still out.

A vote was held today on Zoning Board regulations; the Governor had vetoed this bi-partisan bill, and the veto held. There are currently 1,100 bills in front of the Legislature.

She can be reached at Kari.Lerner@leg.state.nh.us and always welcomes constituent input.

As no other Members of the Public wished to be heard, Public Comment was closed at 7:06pm.

II. Old Business

2.1 Approval of Minutes

An approval sheet for the previous weeks’ 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 Storm Clean-Up Update

Road Agent Oleson appeared before the Selectmen to update them on the clean-up from this past weekend’s wind storm.

Many trees and limbs were blown down during the storm. This week on Monday and Tuesday the Highway Department cleared the main roads, and they are currently working on the side roads. Next week they will be grading the dirt roads on Monday through Thursday. He will need to rent a bucket truck at some point next week to remove any hanging limbs. In order to pay for this unexpected expense, he has cancelled the crack fill work that was planned for next week and those funds will instead be funneled to the clean-up.

Road Agent Oleson departed the meeting table at 7:08pm.

3.2 Setting of Tax Rate

The 2017 tax rate has been tentatively set by Finance Director Smith and DRA at \$23.78. This is a .58% decrease from the 2016 tax rate of \$23.91. There is \$2,460,622 in the Unassigned Fund Balance (UFB), which is 15.76%; DRA recommends somewhere between 5% and 17%. Therefore, some of these funds

could be used to lower the tax rate and/or to add to the CIP account.

Selectman Buckley stated that although the rate is down, valuations are going up and as a result tax bills will increase. He also noted that although the School portion of the tax rate is down, in his opinion the Municipal portion is growing more quickly than it should. According to the State, a larger amount in the UFB leads to better interest rates on loans, but as the Town is utilizing the CIP for its large purposes, no benefit is being received from having a large amount in the UFB. As a result, he recommends using some of the UFB to lower the tax rate.

Chairman Trask would prefer putting more of the UFB into the CIP account rather than using it to artificially lower the tax rate, which then might spike in a subsequent year.

Selectman D’Angelo suggested that since ~\$400k was returned to the Town from the School and Municipal budgets for FY2016-2017, the same amount could be applied to the tax rate and the CIP, perhaps \$200k towards each.

Selectman Owens moved to apply \$200k from the Unassigned Fund Balance towards lowering the tax rate, setting it at \$23.41; Selectman D’Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Cannon absent; motion carried.

3.3 New Fire Department Hire

Fire Chief Bolduc and Deputy Fire Chief Clark appeared before the Selectmen to introduce their new prospective hire for the open full time Firefighter/EMT position, Keith Culligan.

Mr. Culligan, who is from Brentwood, was chosen from a field of 22 qualified candidates. He serves as a call Firefighter for the Town of Brentwood and was most recently employed as a full time employee of the Danville Highway Department. He has been an EMT for a year and a half and recently became an Advanced EMT. He holds all the necessary qualifications for the position other than Inspector, but is enrolled in the class for that which begins in January and ends in mid-March. He is willing to sign the three-year contract. His first day will be Monday, November 6th, 2017.

The remainder of this appointment will take place in Non-Public session at the end of the Public meeting.

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:

- Veterans’ Day will be marked on Saturday, November 11th, at 11:00am at the Post Office near the Soldiers’ Monument. The MPR will be utilized in case of rain. The American Legion will be holding a breakfast, free to all veterans, from 8am – 10am at Post 108. Non-veterans are also welcome and are asked to make a donation. Poinsettias may also be ordered during this event.
- The New Hampshire Municipal Association Annual Conference will be held on Wednesday and

Thursday, November 15th and 16th, 2017.

- The Road Naming Advisory Committee still needs two-three new members. There are several roads planned for acceptance in April 2018.
- The new Spring Hill Advisory Committee was discussed. Selectman Buckley would like the Selectmen to work with the existing Trust if at all possible; he is willing to set up a meeting at a neutral time and place, act as facilitator, and start the conversation. Should this exercise fail, the new Advisory Committee should move forward. Selectman D’Angelo added that he and Selectman Owens had been interviewed on a PACT program this weekend, trying to get the Selectmen’s point of view about Spring Hill Farm out to the residents.

4.2 Public Comment

Maria Veale stood and was recognized. She stated that she had watched the program on PACT about Spring Hill Farm and wanted to be sure that residents know that the Wason Pond Pounder will continue to be held on Wason Pond, not on Spring Hill Farm property. The next Wason Pond Pounder will be held on May 5th, 2018; registration will be open in a few weeks.

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, 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 7:46pm. Fire Chief Bolduc, Deputy Fire Chief Clark, and Mr. Culligan remained in the meeting room.

Fire Chief Bolduc, Deputy Fire Chief Clark, and Mr. Culligan departed the meeting at 7:57pm.

The meeting room was re-opened at 8:21pm.

Selectman Buckley moved that the Board come out of non-public session; 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 first non-public session, on Employment, be sealed for a period of ninety (90) days; Selectman Buckley seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Cannon absent; motion carried.

Selectman Buckley moved to hire Keith Culligan as a FT FF/EMT at the agreed-upon rate of pay, with his first day being Monday, November 6th, 2017; 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 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.

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 an indefinite period; Selectman Buckley seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor with Vice-Chairman Cannon absent; motion carried.

Chairman Trask moved to proceed with the Spring Hill Farm eviction process; Selectman D'Angelo seconded the motion. The vote was three in favor with Vice-Chairman Cannon absent and Selectman Buckley abstaining; motion carried.

V. Adjournment

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be Thursday, November 9th, 2017.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debra H. Doda, Recording Secretary