

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

Town of Chester, Connecticut
Special Board of Selectman Meeting
Wednesday, November 29, 2017
Community Meeting Room
Chester Town Hall
Chester, Connecticut

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectwoman Gister called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. In attendance included First Selectwoman Gister, Selectwoman Janecek, Selectman Grzybowski, Chief Brainard, Liz Netsch, John Williams, Scot Mills and approximately 5 audience members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Charlene Janecek made a motion to approve the minutes from the 11/8/17 BOS meeting as presented. Lauren Gister seconded the motion. Charlene Janecek and Lauren Gister voted in favor of the motion. James Grzybowski abstained from voting on the motion. The motion passed.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

As previously reported, there is one vacancy on the Valley Shore Emergency Services Board and two individuals (Mr. Alonzo and Mr. Schaefer) interested in serving on the Board. Both gentlemen were invited to the BOS meeting. Mr. Schaefer was not available for this evening's meeting and will attend a future meeting.

Mr. Alonzo provided a brief background on his qualifications to serve on the Valley Shore Emergency Service Board including:

- Over 30 years experience in emergency services (13 plus years in Chester).
- Familiar with the Valley Shore's operations; knows many of its members and has a good working relationship with Valley Shore
- Service on Fire Department
- Ham Radio operator
- Currently employed by Wesleyan University in their Communications Dept.

James Grzybowski reported that Mr. Alonzo is qualified for the position but questioned his eligibility to serve as Chester's representative because he is a resident of Haddam. Lauren will follow-up to clarify eligibility requirements.

Lauren reported that that BOS routinely re-appoints individuals to Boards/Commissions unless there are issues with attendance, etc. During the

recent election, few races were contested. One contested race was for a BOF alternate position. The BOF alt. candidate with the winning number of votes was a Democrat. Due to minority representation rules, this individual could not be seated; therefore, a Republican was seated. Subsequent to the election a resignation was received from the Republican BOF member. The DTC recommends that Michael Joplin be appointed to the alternate BOF position. Mr. Joplin received the majority of the votes during the November election.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to appoint Michael Joplin as a BOF alt. with a term to expire 11/21/23. James Grzybowski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Lauren Gister made a motion to appoint Betty Perrault, Richard Schreiber and Whitelaw Wilson to Citation Review Board with a term to expire 11/19/19. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to appoint Betty Perrault, Peter Zanardi and John Diivis to the Board of Fire Commissioners with a term to expire 11/16/21. James Grzybowski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to appoint John Williams and Dawn Saunders to the Park & Rec. Board with terms to expire 11/1/20. Lauren Gister seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to appoint Charlie Greeney to the Valley Shore Emergency Services Board of Directors with a term to expire 11/16/19. James Grzybowski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to appoint Robert Blair III to ZBA with a term to expire 12/31/21. James Grzybowski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to appoint Scot Mills as Tree Warden with a term to expire 11/19/19. James Grzybowski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to appoint John Bennet as Town Attorney with a term to expire 11/30/19 and Jacobson and Associates as Town Engineer with a term to expire 11/19/19. James Grzybowski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to appoint Jon Lavy to P&Z with a term to expire 11/19/19. James Grzybowski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

TWENTY WATER STREET RENTAL

As previously reported, the town owned 20 Water Street property is currently vacant. The location does not have potable water and the space is heated by electricity. The goal is to find a long term tenant for the property.

Lauren will develop an application for the rental of the property and present same to the BOS for review and comment.

BOS MEETING SCHEDULE AND BUDGET MEETING SCHEDULE

The meeting schedules were not available for this evening's meeting.

Lauren Gister made a motion to table the discussion on the meeting schedules. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT OPTIONS

As previously reported, Lee Vito, Sanitarian/Health Director plans to retire on January 1st. Dr. Kotrady also plans to retire on January 1st but will be available until July 1, 2018. He will continue to provide services to the Fire Department.

Lauren continued that this is an opportunity for the Town to review options for Health Department services including a partnership with Deep River (possible satellite office), joining the Health District, continuing with a town health department.

Currently, Chester does not meet the standards established in a 1998 law that require all towns to have a Health Department working at least 35 hours per week and various other parameters of that law including a Health Education program.

The BOS discussed services of the Health District vs. a Town Health Department and the possibility of sharing staff with a neighboring town. It was reported that if Chester joined the Health District, permit fees would go to the District not the Town. Services that would be provided by the District would include: health education (required by state statute and currently not provided), restaurant inspections, and sanitarian inspections. Chester's Health Department does currently provide restaurant inspections and sanitarian inspections. It was reported that the local health departments typically provide a better response time to residents.

A Town Meeting vote is required to join a Health District. Approximately 10 years ago, a Town Meeting rejected joining the Health District.

Lauren will gather additional data on the pros/cons of joining a Health District and she will invite Jim Monopoli CRAHD (Health District) to a BOS meeting.

PARK & REC. REQUEST

John Williams and Liz Netsch submitted a letter to the BOS (attached) outlining a request for much needed enhancements to North Quarter Park. The letter was

developed in response to the recent rejection of the NQP/Library initiative. Their request includes:

- The purchase of playscape equipment
- Paving/parking lot enhancements
- Basketball court improvements
- Disc golf course
- Drainage work
- Landscape upgrades – field work

There was a brief discussion on a possible boardwalk from the NQP area into downtown. It was suggested that perhaps the Rotary Club would be interested in funding some upgrades to NQP. Also, a portion of the project may be able to be done “in house” by the Public Works Dept.

The BOS thanked John and Liz for their presentation. Further discussion will take place during the budget process.

DISCUSSION OF BALLOT -ELECTED VS. APPOINTED POSITIONS HISTORY

Lauren reported that Chester has the second longest ballot in the state and many of the elected positions on the ballot are not required by statute to be elected. In the past, a prior BOS discussed this issue and did eliminate some positions from the ballot.

The BOS discussed the difficulty in finding individuals interested in running for an elected seat on a board/commission. Many people are willing to volunteer to serve but for a variety of reasons, do not want to “run” for the seat.

In approximately 2009, a Referendum to change some positions from elected to appointed failed.

Lauren suggested that the BOS review all positions and applicable statutes; specifically the terms of the BOS. Because of the deep learning curve, she proposed that the Selectmen term be 4 years. Jamie suggested that the parameters of the BOS term be discussed separately from other Boards/Commissions.

Lauren will begin gathering data on the matter and will ask the Registrar for some statistical information on number of individuals voting on the entire ballot, etc.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS - EVERBRIDGE

The BOS discussed the protocol for communicating with town residents via the Everbridge system. Lauren reported that she currently does not have the ability to send a broadcast message, in the event of an emergency, to Chester residents without going through Valley Shore. A \$5,000 subscription fee would be required

for Lauren to have the ability to forward messages without going through Valley Shore.

Jamie and Lauren will follow-up with their respective contacts regarding the capabilities and requirements of the Everbridge system. The BOS will review the information distributed by Lauren for discussion at the next BOS meeting.

REVALUATION – BID PROPOSALS

Copies of bid proposals from Municipal Valuation Services, LLC (\$59,000) and eQuality (\$35,000) Valuation Services, LLC were included in the BOS packet. eQuality is the current revaluation contractor and the Assessor recommends continuing with them.

James Grzybowski made a motion to approve the proposal from Equality as presented. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

SELECTMEN REPORTS

State Budget – The State’s approved budget showed a loss of \$38,000 in revenue to Chester however; Chester budgeted for a \$130,000 loss. As a result of last week’s State Budget correction, Chester lost an additional \$50,000. It is anticipated that additional cuts will be realized in January/February.

Status of Street Lights – The cobra heads have all been converted to LED. The E - Team audited all lights and will be meeting tomorrow to review their findings. The decorative lights that are streetlights have not yet been converted. It is anticipated that they will be converted within the next several weeks.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Scot Mills, Tree Warden, distributed documentation (itemized bill including traffic control expenses) and reported that he will be overbudget (currently \$5,000 overbudget) and need additional funding to address the many diseased trees, dead trees and safety concerns throughout Chester. Mr. Mills has identified several more trees that need to be addressed. Additional areas of concern regarding trees include Parker’s Point and Cedar Lake.

Lauren reported that several trees have fallen on vehicles; fortunately, no injuries resulted from these incidents.

The BOS discussed various options including the role of Public Works vis a vis tree removal and additional bids for tree work.

James Grzybowski expressed concern that trees have been identified and have not yet been addressed. Lauren responded that we have a priority list and a plan to address same. As long as the Town has taken steps to address the concerns, liability is limited.

Scot will provide list of trees in need of attention and approximate costs for the remainder of the fiscal year. This information will be forwarded to the BOF for additional discussion/action.

ADJOURNMENT

Charlene Janecek made a motion to adjourn at 9:53 p.m. James Grzybowski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk