

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

CHESTER BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING
Tuesday, July 17, 2018
203 Middlesex Ave.
Community Meeting Room
Chester, CT

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectwoman Gister called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. In attendance included First Selectwoman Gister, Selectwoman Janecek, and Selectman Grzybowski (arrived late).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Charlene Janecek made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 27, 2018 BOS meeting. Lauren Gister seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Lauren reported that current board and commission vacancies will be distributed via a town-wide e-mail.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to re-appoint Thomas Brelsford, Christopher Frixell and Nancy Burn to the Cedar Lake Watershed Commission with terms to expire 7/1/20. Lauren Gister seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

An Inland Wetland representative seat on the Cedar Lake Watershed Commission remains open.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to re-appoint Margaret Wilson to the Connecticut River Gateway Commission with a term expire 7/1/20. Lauren Gister seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Positions on the Region 4 Grounds Maintenance and Oversight Committee remain vacant. The committee has not been active recently but the committee will meet in August.

2019 MUNICIPAL ELECTION BALLOT

The BOS discussed and reviewed the current Chester ballot. As previously reported the ballot is extremely lengthy and includes positions that do not necessarily need to be elected and could be appointed positions. The difficulty in finding individuals willing to serve on boards/commissions was discussed. Lauren reported that there are individuals that may be willing to serve on boards/commissions but do not wish to "run" for the respective seat or are unaffiliated and do not wish to go through one of the established political parties to get onto a Board/Commission. Through the years, some appointed positions were changed to elected positions (via Town Meetings) which lengthened the ballot. Any change to the ballot would require a Public Hearing, Town Meeting or Referendum.

The BOS's goal is to have a better election process and to make the representation on Boards/Commissions more inclusive (R, D, U, Green Party). The importance of Board/Commission members attending meetings was stressed.

The following positions, per Statute, must be elected: Selectmen, Town Clerk, Town Treasurer, Tax Collector, Constables, Registrar, BOE, BOF and Library Directors. The statute provides that the Constables, Treasurer, Tax Collector and Town Clerk can be appointed but only via Ordinance. Remaining Boards/Commission members have no requirement to be elected. In addition, the Statute does not reference any requirement for alternates. The Town does have an Ordinance that provides for BOF alternates (they are appointed by the BOF).

Charlene Janecek researched the last 3 municipal elections (2013, 2015, 2017) and reported that no one ran (in either party) for many of the available "seats" on various Boards/Commissions. The BOS reviewed and discussed information provided by Selectwoman Janecek. Currently there are up to 48 positions listed on the ballot and, at times, the same individual will run for different boards/commissions.

Charlene recommended that Board of Assessment Appeals, Zoning Board of Appeals, Inland Wetlands, WPCA, and alternates for P&Z and ZBA be removed from the ballot. The BOS discussed the recommendation and determined that P&Z alternate should remain on the ballot. The possibility of an Ordinance allowing the Tax Collector and Town Clerk to be appointed was discussed.

Lauren reported that in some surrounding towns, some positions are appointed by the BOS and then validated/approved at Town Meeting.

Lauren recommended a Referendum vote on any changes to the ballot to allow the opportunity for as many individuals as possible to vote on the question. Jamie suggested a survey be placed on the town's website prior to a referendum to determine if it would be cost effective to vote via referendum. He continued that, in his opinion, a referendum would not garner additional voters. Also, at a Town Meeting, a resident can request a referendum for the vote. Additionally, the Public Meeting on the item may provide a "gauge" on which protocol, Referendum or Town Meeting vote, is appropriate.

Lauren recommended that the BOS go to various Board/Commission meetings to update them on the BOS's rationale for proposed ballot changes and ask Boards/Commissions for their input on the proposal.

The BOS discussed the possibility of eliminating some elected positions and changing the term for the BOS from a two year term to a four year term. Currently the Town Clerk, Registrar, Treasurer and Tax Collector have four year terms. A four year term allows the new BOS members the time to familiarize themselves with the position, protocols, budgets, etc. prior to running for re-election. However, the opportunity to change BOS members and "vote them out" will be a longer process if the term of office is changed from 2 years to 4 years. The various pros/cons of a 2 year term versus a 4 year term for the BOS were discussed by the BOS. Jamie suggested putting the discussion regarding a change in the length of the term for the BOS in front of the Town at a Public Hearing to garner the public's interest/feedback on the proposal.

The next steps include informing Boards/Commissions of the BOS's proposed changes to the ballot followed by a Public Hearing on same. Lauren will develop a draft letter to Boards/Commissions and forward same to BOS members for comment/approval.

SELECTMAN'S REPORTS

The BOS discussed the following:

- Jamie reported that the Hose Company re-elected the Chief and new officers. Due to the “split off” of the Ambulance, new positions were added. Various Hose Co. training sessions have been scheduled.
- Jamie reported that he has some concerns with the procedures/protocols of the Main Street Committee.
 - Lauren reported that she is in the process of scheduling a meeting with Mike Joplin regarding administrative responsibilities associated with the Main Street Committee.
- The BOS discussed the requirements for Ad Hoc Committee meeting’s agenda and minutes postings. FOIA requirements are the same for Ad Hoc Committees.
- Jenny is developing a written protocol for posting meetings, reserving meeting room space, etc. for Board/Commission meetings. This protocol will be forwarded to all Boards/Commissions.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None.

ADJOURNMENT

Charlene Janecek made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jamie Grzybowski seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk