

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SPECIAL MEETING  
Monday, February 10, 2020  
Chester Town Hall  
Conference Room C

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectwoman Gister called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. In attendance included: First Selectwoman Gister, Selectwoman Janecek, Selectman Englert, Tom Brelsford, Julia Worth and Susan Wright.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Ms. Wright requested that a representative from the BOS participate, at least quarterly, in the EDC meetings. The group meets the second Monday of each month. Charlene Janecek will attend EDC meetings.

Mr. Brelsford reported that the Cedar Lake Watershed Commission has been discussing the status of invasive species and their effect on Cedar lake. Measures to control the species have included hydro raking; if the hydrilla plant gets into the lake, chemical treatment would be necessary to eradicate the weed. These invasive species are transmitted to the lake via boat trailers, motors, etc. A suggestion was made to close the boat ramp; however DEEP will not permit closing the launch. The Town owns the lake. A proposed Ordinance was suggested that would prohibit the use of trailers and water-cooled outboard engines on the lake. The Watershed Commission developed a draft ordinance for BOS review. Enforcement of any Ordinance, considering the lack of staff, was discussed.

Lauren reported that any Ordinance would require Town Meeting approval. The Town of Coventry spends approximately \$100,000 per year to combat invasive species in its lake. The BOS will review the Cedar Lake Watershed's draft ordinance relative to invasive species/use of lake and forward to the Town Attorney for further review and comment. A Public Information Session regarding the issues will be scheduled prior to a Town Meeting vote.

Lauren continued that RiverCOG and CCM have been discussing invasive species throughout the state. Senator Needleman is scheduling a meeting with RiverCOG, Legislators, First Selectmen and DEEP to discuss the issues.

Mr. Brelsford reported that the use of Cedar Lake has changed throughout the years; swimmers routinely swim the length of the lake and paddle boards; kayaks and canoe use has expanded while fishing seems to have realized a decrease. The importance of updating Chester residents, via Public Hearing, on the threat of invasive species was stressed.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Peter Zanardi has resigned from the Board of Fire Commissioners.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to appoint Robert Quale to the Board of Fire Commissioners with a term to expire 2/16/21 (completing Mr. Zanardi's term). Tom Englert seconded the motion.

Discussion followed.

Mr. Quale's credentials were included in the BOS packet.

Tom Englert commented that perhaps both Town Committees may not have had ample time to submit a candidate to fill the position since Mr. Zanardi's resignation.

Charlene Janecek withdrew the above motion.

Tom Englert made a motion to table the appointment of Robert Quale to the Board of Fire Commissioners. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### NON-PARTICIPATING MAIN STREET PROJECT COSTS AND MAPLE STREET PARKING LIGHTS – RELEASE OF FUNDS

As previously reported the Main Street LOTCIP project was approved through RiverCOG and was forwarded to the DOT for further approval. The Town has received the "Commitment to Fund" letter from the State. Subsequently, design documentation was forwarded to DOT for review. Additional documents, requested by DOT, have been forwarded and reviewed by the State. The Town has received a "Project Authorization Letter" approving the project. The Town received a list of participating and non-participating project costs developed by DOT. There is approximately \$152,000, plus contingency, in the cost estimate that the State considers the responsibility of the Town.

Bid documents were issued with the non-participating costs as "bid alternates". The non-participating projects are integral to the Main Street project - portions of Spring Street, the guardrail, Chester Wall and staircase. The staircase is considered by the State to be non-ADA compliant and therefore will not be funded by the State. Complementary to this phase and moved forward from a future Main Street Project phase is Maple Street parking lighting and improvements (the antique lights will be removed and stored at Public Works for future use),

Charlene Janecek made a motion to release the remaining funds from the Main Street III Capital account in the amount of \$199,846.00 (including \$24,500 from CWC) for items in the approved Main Street III design that DOT has deemed "non-participating" and including the Maple Street parking lot improvements and forward to the BOF and Town meeting for further discussion. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### ACCEPTANCE OF CDBG GRANT – CHERRY HILL AND AUTHORITY TO SIGN ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT

As previously reported, the Town has applied and received a Small Cities Grant (\$800,000) for upgrades to Cherry Hill. No Town funds are required to administer the grant or fund the project.

Lauren Gister made a motion to accept a Small Cities Block grant in the amount of \$800,000 to be used to update and improve facilities at the Cherry Hill housing complex and to authorize First Selectwoman Gister to sign contractual documents for same and forward to the BOF and Town Meeting for further discussion. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### SMALL CITIES GRANT REHABILITATION PROGRAM COMMENTS

The BOS discussed further the draft plan for reinstating the housing rehabilitation program funded by the repayment of Small Cities grants. This program offered qualified homeowners a no or low interest

loan for necessary home projects. The loans are to be paid back when the property is sold or ownership is transferred. To date, approximately \$195,000 has been paid back to the Town. The Town will need to go out to bid for environmental specialists and rehab consultants for the program. These consultants will be paid out of the grant, no Town funds are required. Mr. Kroop, Grant Writer, will be directed to pursue finalization of the plan to reinstate the housing rehabilitation program.

#### MIRA LETTER OF INTENT

The South Meadows Waste and Recycling facility, located in Hartford, is in disrepair and requires extensive refurbishment. The plant is publicly owned and operated. Waste is converted to energy at the plant and approximately 50 towns belong to MIRA. Note that the City of Hartford does not want the facility to be located in Hartford.

The costs to redevelop and renovate the plant total approximately \$330 million. The towns are being asked to voice their interest in continuing membership in MIRA (30-year commitment) and the redevelopment of the plant (non-binding). The Town's current contract with MIRA expires in 2027. This Statement of Interest states that the Town has a conceptual agreement and potential interest in project participation. The Tip Fee would almost double per ton (to \$145 per ton). Other sources of funds would be pursued to potentially lower the Tip Fee. This Statement of Interest is due by the end of February with binding agreements due in May/June.

Options include a "pay to throw" program and residents would "purchase" a garbage bag(s) to dispose of their garbage, building a new plant or shipping garbage to landfill in another state.

Private haulers would transfer the increased tipping fees to their customers. Currently MIRA member towns pay \$0 for recycling.

RiverCOG is active in MIRA discussions. DEEP has been tasked with the rehabilitation and redevelopment of the MIRA plant.

Tom Englert made a motion to authorize the First Selectwoman to sign the non-binding Information Statement of Interest with MIRA as presented dated 1/27/20. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### APPROVAL OF TOWN MEETING CALL

A copy of the draft Town Meeting Call tentatively scheduled Thursday, 3/5/20 was included in the BOS packet and reviewed/discussed by the BOS. The BOS "wordsmithed" the document and Lauren will update the Call accordingly. Items on the draft agenda include: LED lighting retro-fits, acceptance of the Small Cities Block grant, transfers associated with the Main Street project, release of Main Street funds, acceptance of the Annual report and discussion of BOF members positions pertaining to public issues.

The BOF voted to approve the match dredging funds (\$25,000), funded through BOF Contingency. They did not identify to which account they were transferring the funds. Logically, the funds would be transferred to the Harbor Management Outside Contractor. Lauren will research if this item needs Town Meeting approval.

Tom Englert made a motion to add to the Town Meeting Call the request for transfer of the \$25,000 dredging funds. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Tom Englert made a motion to approve the Town Meeting Call as amended. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### BID FOR MEETING HOUSE FLOOR REPAIR

A copy of the bid for the Meeting House floor repair project, submitted by Skip Broom, was included in the BOS packet. The cost is more than anticipated because it includes work to the front entryway. The bid does not include moving of electrical and plumbing (will use current individuals). An additional \$8,000 is included for those items. Lauren confirmed that the work can be done in the timeframe. The RFP called for Oak planks to be used; however, it was suggested that Heart Pine be used if possible to keep within the timeframe and character of the building. The estimate did not change if "wide" Heart Pine was used for the flooring. Note that only one bid was received for the project.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to accept the bid as presented. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### SELECTMAN REPORTS

Tom Englert reported that the Supervision District budget increase, as a result of the last budget workshop was lowered to a 2.7% increase or \$209,000.00. Chester's share of the increase is down just under \$21,000 over last year (due to ADM shift). The Region 4 budget is being presented this evening and CES will discuss their budget on 2/11.

Lauren reported that the Region 4 Financial Task Force has been discussing Health Insurance. The District has experienced high claims and costs will increase. The Health Insurance Reserve fund has been depleted greatly (nearly at \$0) and we have been advised that the fund should be at \$1 million to \$1.7 million based on claim history. The appropriateness of "housing" this account in Region 4 was discussed. If funds are needed in the Reserve Fund, they would be budgeted over a 5-year period. Additional information requested included: the process for the allocation of these funds and a protocol for fairly allocating the Reserve fund.

The bids for the Main Street project are due 3/2/20. To date, 12 contractors have viewed the bid documents on the DAS website.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Charlene Janecek made a motion to approve the 1/22/20 BOS meeting minutes. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Tom Englert made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski  
Clerk

