

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, January 22, 2020
Chester Town Hall
Community Room

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectwoman Gister called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. In attendance included: First Selectwoman Gister, Selectwoman Janecek, Selectman Englert, Susan Wright, and Virginia Carmany, BOF Chairman.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – None.

NON-PARTICIPATING MAIN STREET PROJECT COSTS

As previously reported, the DOT is considering work on Maple Street (past the flagpole) as a participating project. They do not consider the continuation of Spring Street as a participating project; however, the area to approximately the staircase is considered a participating project. The area from the staircase to the storm drain is considered a local road and the responsibility of the Town.

Additional non participating elements of the project include the upgrade of the guardrail and weather boards of buildings (sidewalk area). The “wall” staircase is not a participating project because it is not ADA accessible.

Lauren expressed concern with the response time of DOT relative to information the Town has sent to them, at their request. In a discussion with a DOT representative last week, he reported that the PAL (Project Authorization Letter) has been done; however the Town has not yet received it. The Town does not have authorization to proceed with the bid process until the PAL letter is received, signed and returned to DOT. Once the bid is awarded, the Town can decide which non-participating items they wish to pursue. Local Legislators have been contacted for assistance as well as RiverCOG relative to the DOT’s response time. Because of DOT delays, the project is approximately 3 weeks behind schedule. It is anticipated that construction will begin in April and be completed in June, with “punchlist” items addressed in July. Lauren will brief the Merchants on the schedule.

Bid documents allow for a 24 hour construction period; meaning that contractors will be able to work multiple shifts per day to extend the work day. It is anticipated that the road will be open 90% of the time (probably one way) for the term of the major construction. Construction will be “buttoned up” on Fridays to accommodate weekend events.

Susan Wright suggested that people may wish to donate for non-participating items; i.e. the guardrail.

The BOS discussed strategy for upcoming events including the Duck Race, Farmer’s Market and Road Race. Lauren is developing a list of events for coordination purposes with the contractor when chosen.

POLICE STAFFING REQUEST

As previously discussed, Trooper Ward is requesting additional hours (24 hours per week, \$43,000 per year) for Constable Decrosta for increased needs in the community; particularly in the Summer at Cedar Lake, security at schools, churches, temple, etc. Updated costs projections for State Troopers were received from the State and indicate that the State has lowered the fringe benefit rate thus saving the Town money. There is money currently available to fund the request for additional hours for Constable Decrosta. Note that the Town is reimbursed for Constable private duty.

The BOS discussed protocol for hiring a State Trooper. While the Town is involved in the interview process, the final candidate is chosen by the State.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to authorize additional hours (24 hours per week) for Constable DeCrosta in the current fiscal year and to submit a request in the 20/21 budget for consideration. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

BUDGET ISSUES- GENERAL

Lauren updated the BOS on budget items including:

- Engineering - dam inspections, bridges
- Trash/MIRA – the disposal plant located in Hartford is in serious disrepair. DEEP is considering options to repair or rebuild. Lauren will distribute a You Tube video developed relative to the status of the plant. Additional options for trash disposal include trucking it to another state (not environmentally friendly). It is anticipated that costs associated with trash disposal will increase and affect Chester's budget. The Legislative Session begins on 2/5 and this will be a topic of their discussion.
- Funds will be necessary to address/manage invasive species, both aquatic (Cedar Lake) land based.
- BOS members were encouraged to forward any additional items to Lauren.

RESTATED SMALL CITIES GRANT REHABILITATION PROGRAM

As previously reported, Dale Kroop, Grant Writer, is developing a 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. A copy of Mr. Kroop's rough draft was included in the BOS packet. BOS members were encouraged to submit their comments on the draft document. It is anticipated that application process will begin in last Spring.

CBDG ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT

The Town was awarded, on behalf of Cherry Hill, Small Cities Grant funds (\$800,000) for rehabilitation projects associated with the Cherry Hill property.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to accept the Small Cities Grant, authorize First Selectwoman Gister to sign all appropriate documentation relative to the Grant and forward to Town Meeting for further action (if necessary, pending legal review). Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Charlene Janecek made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 8, 2020 BOS meeting. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

AUDIENCE

Virginia Carmany, BOF Chairman, reported that the BOE will hold a Special Joint Meeting on 1/27/20. Tom Englert will be in attendance at the meeting. It is anticipated that the status of the medical insurance reserve will be discussed.

SELECTMEN REPORTS

Charlene Janecek made a motion to add to the agenda "Selectmen Reports". Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Tom Englert reported that he attended the Supervision Budget Workshop. The "first cut" of the budget indicates a 3.57%, \$276,046.00 increase. No staff changes are included and the increase is driven by contractual salary increases of 1.27%, an error in 19/20 budget causing 8.6% increase in Network Tech insurance and increases in maintenance and transportation costs. Note that as teachers retire, their replacements are hired at a lesser salary. The next Supervision Workshop is scheduled 1/28/20 @ 6 p.m. at JW.

ADJOURNMENT

Tom Englert made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 p.m. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk