

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, May 13, 2020
ZOOM Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectwoman Gister called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. In attendance included First Selectwoman Gister, Selectwoman Janecek, Selectman Englert, audience members included Richard Strauss, BOF member, Terry Englert, Elizabeth Reinhart, Virginia Carmany, BOF Chairman, Rob Ferrigno, Earthlight, Jon Joslow, BOF member, and James Grzybowski, Fire Chief.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – none.

Joel Severance, Emergency Management Director will retire effective June 1, 2020. The BOS will discuss his replacement at the next BOS meeting. Mr. Severance is willing to facilitate the transition as Deputy Emergency Management Director. The new Director will work with Lauren as the Long-Term Recovery Coordinator (Covid crisis).

COVID 19 UPDATE AND RE-OPENING PLANS

Lauren reported that Chester has realized 33 positive Covid 19 cases; most at Aaron Manor (either residents of Aaron Manor or health care workers). There have been 9 deaths; all elderly nursing home residents. Several “positive” individuals were reported as Chester; however, they work in Chester and are not residents. The Health District is pleased with Chester’s social distancing efforts that have flattened the curve.

Lauren reported that she is in the process of forming a Re-open Chester Committee and has been in contact with several individuals (merchants, restaurateurs, EDC Chair, Zoning rep., etc.) interested in serving on same. A town-wide survey may be sent to provide input to the committee. Chester’s grant writer is developing a rough draft of a document that may be beneficial in accessing competitive grant funds vis a vis the CARES Act.

A copy of the “Re-open Connecticut” (Phase I) documents, developed by the State of Connecticut was included in the BOS packet for informational purposes. In addition, the Governor’s website contains a list of FAQs that is updated regularly. Note that these documents are “fluid” and updated regularly.

Lauren participated in the Governor’s call today. The State has addressed the issues individuals have realized relative to accessing unemployment/Covid assistance due to the antiquated IT systems at the State. To date 92% of claims have been processed. The State could not guarantee that next year’s revenue to towns would remain unaffected. Other items discussed on the call included:

- The plastic bag ban was extended through 6/30.
- Outdoor activities will be restricted to 5 person groups through June
- Awaiting guidance relative to parks and beaches, summer camps, playgrounds, etc.
- Many salon and beauty parlor owners are protesting being part of the Phase I opening. They do not feel that they are able obtain appropriate PPE equipment.

Lauren reported that the Farmer's Market will take place as a "drive through" at CES. Representatives from the Farmer's Market are working with Central Office staff to facilitate.

2020/21 TOWN BUDGET, AUTHORIZATION VOTE

Due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, Governor Lamont's EO 71(3) prohibits in-person public meetings and the public will not have an opportunity to vote on the 20/21 budget.

Lauren Gister made a motion to authorize the budget making authority, the BOF, to adopt the 2020/21 budget and set the mill rate sufficient to meet the Town's obligations for the upcoming fiscal year. This action is deemed necessary to permit the orderly operation of the municipality and is due to the need to act immediately and during the duration of the public health and civil preparedness emergency in order to avoid endangering public health and welfare, prevent significant financial loss, and is necessary for the protection of persons and property within the Town of Chester. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

A copy of the notice placed in the Valley Courier relative to the 5/27 BOF meeting was included in the BOS packet. May 27th was the original date for a Town Meeting vote on the budget. At the meeting, the BOF will adopt the budget and set a mill rate. The agenda will also include the approval of the method of payment and due date of installments of property taxes.

EARTHLIGHT LED LIGHTING CONTRACT AND 0% LOAN VOTE

A copy of the Earthlight LED Lighting Contract was included in the BOS packet.

Details relative to the LED replacement at CES were not available when the BOS took action, several months ago, on similar projects at the Town Hall and Firehouse.

Lauren outlined the parameters of the contract including:

- \$33,519.96 – total cost of project
- Minimum \$8,378.38 – Conservation Incentive
- Estimated net cost of project - \$25,141.58
- Eversource is offering additional incentives due to the Covid-19 crisis
- 0%, 4-year loan, from Eversource - approx. \$22 per month on bill
- After 4 years, the savings to the Town is approximately \$500 per month/\$6,000 per year (at CES).

Both the BOS and the BOF have been briefed on the project.

Tom Englert made a motion to authorize First Selectwoman Gister to enter into an agreement for a Connecticut Energy Fund Loan in an amount up to \$26,000 at 0% interest for 4 years to fund the cost of the LED light retrofit at CES. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to authorize First Selectwoman Gister to enter into a contract with Earthlight Solar and Energy Solutions to replace LED lights at CES, as presented. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Charlene Janecek made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the April 22, 2020 BOS meeting. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

SELECTMEN REPORTS

Charlene has visited and observed appropriate social distancing measures at downtown businesses.

Lauren reported on the Main Street Project as follows:

- Currently in the 4th week of the project
- 10-hour days
- Issues in getting materials are being addressed
- Contractors working through difficulties with curbing
- Jacobson and Ed Meehan on site regularly

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None.

ADJOURNMENT

Charlene Janecek made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 p.m. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski, Clerk