

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, August 12, 2020
ZOOM Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectwoman Gister called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. In attendance included First Selectwoman Gister, Selectwoman Janecek, Selectman Englert, Elizabeth Reinhart, Jamie Grzybowski, Fire Chief, Virginia Carmany, BOF Chairman, Ray Guasp, Emergency Management and several members of the audience.

Lauren Gister made a motion to add to the agenda the waiving of Building Department Fees associated with the LED lighting upgrades at CES, Town Hall and the Fire Dept. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Lauren Gister made a motion to add to the agenda the waiving of the Building Department Fees associated with the Cherry Hill rehabilitation project (Small Cities grant). Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

APPOINTMENTS – OFFICIALS, BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

Tom Englert made a motion to re-appointment Jenny Kitson to the Connecticut River Gateway Commission with a term to expire July 1, 2022. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Tom Englert made a motion to appoint Thomas Brelsford, as a member to the Connecticut River Gateway Commission with a term to expire 7/1/22. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Tom Brelsford provided a brief background on his credentials and thanked the BOS for the opportunity to serve on the Commission.

END OF YEAR TRANSFERS

A copy of the proposed year end transfers was included in the BOS packet as follows:

Board of Selectmen

- **At the First Selectwoman's request, please transfer the following:**

| | | | |
|------|-------------------|--|--------|
| From | 10-01-01-1000-106 | Board of Selectmen – Outside Clerical | \$ 405 |
| To | 10-01-01-1000-111 | Board of Selectmen - Temporary Part-Time | \$ 405 |

To accommodate the Selectman's office when Administrative Assistant was out of the office.

Harbor Management

- **At the First Selectwoman's request, please transfer the following:**

| | | | |
|------|-------------------|------------------------------|-------|
| From | 10-05-55-1000-325 | Employee Benefits – Medical | \$ 62 |
| To | 10-01-19-1000-485 | Harbor Management – Supplies | \$ 62 |

Park & Recreation Commission

• **At the First Selectwoman's request, please transfer the following:**

| | | | |
|------|-------------------|---|----------|
| From | 10-01-11-1000-365 | Assessor – Outside Contractor | \$ 7,562 |
| To | 10-01-24-1000-111 | Park & Rec Comm – Temporary Part-Time | \$ 3,197 |
| To | 10-01-24-1112-230 | Park & Rec Comm – Equipment Maintenance | \$ 4,365 |

Funds were used to replace sand, dirt and grass at the town parks and beaches as a result of the September 2019 storm. The timing of FEMA reimbursements necessitated the transfer. Damages paid out of the prior year FEMA reimbursement.

Highway

• **At the First Selectwoman's request, please transfer the following:**

| | | | |
|------|-------------------|--|----------|
| From | 10-05-55-1000-325 | Employee Benefits – Medical | \$ 4,648 |
| To | 10-02-30-1080-103 | Highway – Gen Main – Regular Payroll | \$ 3,652 |
| To | 10-02-30-1080-230 | Highway – Gen Main – Equipment Maintenance | \$ 996 |

Extra Public Work seasonal staff needed to accommodate unanticipated repairs and clean-ups. The current year's budget includes hours for the seasonal staff.

Highway

• **At the First Selectwoman's request, please transfer the following:**

| | | | |
|------|-------------------|---|----------|
| From | 10-02-30-1081-367 | Highway – Tree Maint – Out Cont – Tree Warden | \$ 3,497 |
| To | 10-02-30-1081-103 | Highway – Tree Main – Regular Payroll | \$ 3,497 |

The shift of the Tree Warden from a contractor to an employee necessitated this transfer.

Chester Hose Company

• **At the First Selectwoman's request, please transfer the following:**

| | | | |
|------|-------------------|---|----------|
| From | 10-03-42-1040-106 | Chester Hose Company – Outside Clerical | \$ 700 |
| From | 10-03-42-1040-135 | Chester Hose Company – Building Maintenance | \$ 2,016 |
| From | 10-03-42-1040-220 | Chester Hose Company – Electric | \$ 1,006 |
| From | 10-03-42-1040-250 | Chester Hose Company – Gas and Oil | \$ 5,077 |
| From | 10-03-42-1040-326 | Chester Hose Company – Medical Exams | \$ 2,060 |
| From | 10-03-42-1040-365 | Chester Hose Company – Outside Contractor | \$ 1,028 |
| From | 10-03-42-1040-395 | Chester Hose Company – Professional Development | \$ 4,214 |
| To | 10-03-42-1040-103 | Chester Hose Company – Regular Payroll | \$16,101 |

The Covid-19 Pandemic necessitated the transfer for additional staff.

Police

• **At the First Selectwoman's request, please transfer the following:**

| | | | |
|------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|
| From | 10-05-55-1000-325 | Employee Benefits – Medical | \$22,229 |
| From | 10-03-45-1000-112 | Police – Resident Troop Private Duty | \$ 1,866 |
| From | 10-03-45-1000-117 | Police – Resident Trooper | \$30,711 |
| From | 10-03-45-1000-124 | Police – DUI | \$11,616 |
| To | 10-03-45-1000-103 | Police – Regular Payroll | \$ 3,207 |

| | | | |
|----|-------------------|------------------------------------|----------|
| To | 10-03-45-1000-106 | Police – Outside Clerical | \$ 84 |
| To | 10-03-45-1000-119 | Police – Resident Trooper Overtime | \$ 1,851 |
| To | 10-03-45-1000-123 | Police – Constable Private Duty | \$61,280 |

Note that Private Duty funds are reimbursed.

Emergency Service

- **At the First Selectwoman’s request, please transfer the following:**

| | | | |
|------|-------------------|--|--------|
| From | 10-05-55-1000-325 | Employee Benefits – Medical | \$ 371 |
| To | 10-03-47-1060-200 | Emergency Communications – Emergency Comm Serv | \$ 371 |

Due to miscalculation of Valley Shore fees.

Animal Control

- **At the First Selectwoman’s request, please transfer the following:**

| | | | |
|------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|
| From | 10-03-50-1000-126 | Animal Control – Boarding Expense | \$ 85 |
| To | 10-03-50-1000-103 | Animal Control – Regular Payroll | \$ 85 |

Due to unforeseen boarding expenses.

Municipal Insurance

- **At the First Selectwoman’s request, please transfer the following:**

| | | | |
|------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|----------|
| From | 10-05-55-1000-325 | Employee Benefits – Medical | \$ 3,664 |
| To | 10-05-57-1000-175 | Municipal Insurance – Comp Bus Policy | \$ 1,367 |
| To | 10-05-57-1000-285 | Municipal – Commercial Crime | \$ 2,297 |

Additional funds needed to insure the Skyview property (the intent is to sell same) and for a Commercial Crime Policy (now paid for the next 3 years).

Tom Englert made a motion to approve the proposed transfers as presented and forward to the BOF for further action. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

STORM ISAIAS STATUS UPDATE

Lauren thanked Ray Guasp, Chief Grzybowski and the Public Works Director and staff and all others who assisted the residents of Chester during and after the storm. To date, power has been restored to Chester residents; however, issues with cable and internet service in some areas are on-going.

While additional information is anticipated, in general, the utility companies were not prepared for the storm. In addition, Eversource’s “reporting software” crashed and residents were unable to report outages to Eversource. The same issues; i.e. lack of preparedness and long restoration times persist from storm to storm.

Mr. Guasp worked closely with Eversource’s Chester liaison Marvin Bellos. Fresh water stations were opened at the Deep River and Chester Fire Houses and John Winthrop, while not opening as a shelter, did provide food and charging stations. Chester’s Fire Department also hosted a cooling station and a charging station. The Hose Auxiliary provided meals to crews working on restoration and clean-up.

Eversource's lack of appropriate tree maintenance in and around utility wires throughout the State was discussed. In addition, Chester's expenses are increased because if the town has identified a dangerous tree and Eversource, who is responsible for the tree, will not remove it, the Town will remove the tree.

MAIN STREET PROJECT REPORT

Lauren provided an update on the Main Street project as follows:

- Main Street has been rough graded and compacted
- Catch basins and manhole covers will be "ramped"
- Merchants planted flowers in barrel planters
- Work is on-going on the Wall stairs and the stairs in front of the French Hen
- Belgium block work is on-going
- Project remains "on budget"
- Eversource moved wires
 - Currently waiting for other utilities to move their wires and once completed, the old pole will be removed.
- New conduit in the area of Otto will be laid as appropriate.

- Farmer's Market will be located at the Town Center on August 23rd
 - Smaller market
 - Will be set up for appropriate social distancing
 - Will have individuals shop for any residents not comfortable walking through the market.

BUILDING FEE WAIVERS

As previously reported, the Town submitted and was awarded, on behalf of Cherry Hill, a Small Cities Grant in the amount of \$800,000.00. The rehabilitation project includes the replacement of doors and windows, new siding and paving of the parking lot and the installation of sidewalks.

The contractor chosen, after an appropriate bidding process, was Pelletier Construction Management. A request has been made to waive the \$5,095.00 Building Permit fee. It is anticipated that the rehabilitation work will begin at the end of August.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to waive the \$5,095.00 Building Permit Fee for the Cherry Hill Rehabilitation project as requested. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Lauren reported that Cherry Hill is the Town's only dedicated affordable housing and senior facility in Chester.

As approved by the BOS, Earthlight Technologies was contracted to provide LED upgrades at CES, the Town Hall and the Fire Department. A request was made to waive the Building Permit fees as follows:

- CES - \$385.02 (total cost of project \$37,030)
- Town Hall - \$215.00 (total cost of project \$20,750)
- Fire House - \$155.00 (total cost of project \$14,840)

Charlene Janecek made a motion to waive Building Permit fees for the Earthlight Technologies projects at CES, Town Hall and the Fire House as presented. Lauren Gister seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF JULY 8, 2020 MINUTES

Charlene Janecek made a motion to approve the minutes from the 7/22/20 BOS meeting. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Note: proper spelling Madaline Meyer, Tax Collector

SELECTMEN REPORTS

Tom Englert provided an update on the Region 4 re-opening plan as follows:

- 3 options presented to the State
 - Full on-site classes
 - Full distance classes
 - Hybrid classes
- Plan as follows:
 - Hybrid model
 - Monday/Tuesday – 50% of students at school (cohort A)
 - Thursday/Friday – other 50% at school (cohort B)
 - Wednesday – full distance learning and thorough cleaning of school facilities
 - Custodians, Administrators will be present on Wednesdays
- All plans are dependent on the health of students and staff and other situations that may arise.
- Parent surveys show that parents are comfortable sending their children to school.
- Principals have sent out communications to parents.

Charlene reported that the 8/11 Primary went well and was a good “trial run” for the November General Election.

Lauren reported that at a future BOS meeting, she would like to discuss the protocol for allowing signs, tents, etc. in the parking lot (at an appropriate distance from the polls) during the November election.

Lauren reported:

- Covid-19 - Chester has had no new cases since the beginning of June.
 - Surrounding towns are doing well too.
 - Stressed the importance of remaining vigilant with masks, social distancing, etc.
 - Health District and Police have addressed complaints of businesses not observing regulations
- The Long Term Recovery Committee and Sub-Committee are developing proposals for BOS review.
- FEMA assessment of storm damage is due next week. Items not covered by FEMA will be submitted to OPM.

- The STEAP Grant deadline was extended to August 28 and will be discussed at the next BOS meeting.
- The Governor's Executive Orders expire on 9/9. Lauren will talk with P&Z to discuss potential action necessary to extend outdoor dining permits. Liquor licenses fall under the jurisdiction of the state
- A Joint P&Z and RiverCOG Meeting is scheduled on 8/13/20 @ 7:30 p.m. Agenda includes a discussion on the Regional POCD.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS/ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD

Virginia Carmany thanked individuals for their work relative to the storm and commented that the tree budget was reduced from \$100,000 to \$60,000 in the current budget.

Virginia had several questions as follows:

Main Street project

- Issues with granite – Lauren responded that the contractor is currently looking for a solution as the granite in front of Simons is unacceptable.
- Circle around flagpole - will be Belgium block and flush with the asphalt. Grades will not change.

FEMA Covid Reimbursement

- Timeframe/end date – Lauren responded that submissions are being sent to FEMA quarterly for 75% reimbursement. We will submit all costs and anything not covered by FEMA to the State (OPM) who has assured towns that as long as it fits into their parameters, they will cover it.

Ray Guasp provided a brief status report on storm recovery. He thanked Jamie Grzybowski and all of the volunteers who were instrumental in getting Chester's power restored and damage cleared. He agreed that Eversource and other utilities failed miserably and should have been better prepared. He noted that while Eversource's tree maintenance is lacking, residents often do not allow Eversource on their property to remove/maintain the trees.

Jamie Gyzybowski reported that the Long Term Recovery Committee will present recommendations to the BOS; hopefully at a Special BOS meeting, date to be determined (delay due to the storm).

ADJOURNMENT

Tom Englert made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. Charlene Janceck seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk