

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
REGULAR MEETING  
Wednesday, August 26, 2020  
ZOOM Meeting

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, Terry Englert, Richard Strauss, BOF member, Elizabeth Reinhart, and Virginia Carmany, BOF Chairman.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to amend the agenda to add a discussion and potential vote on restricting the use of the town hall parking lot for poll standing and signs during the elections. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

This item will be discussed before the “Approval of Minutes” agenda item.

APPOINTMENTS – OFFICIALS, BOARDS & COMMISSIONS – None.

STEAP GRANT RESOLUTION

Lauren reported that the State opened an additional STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) application period (due Friday, 8/28). The maximum amount to be awarded per town is \$128,000. This round of applications is designed to help towns recover from the pandemic. The intent is to request funding to install wifi capabilities in the downtown area. The streetlights, that were purchased by the Town several years ago, have the capacity for enhancements such as wifi. The E-Team purposely had streetlights installed that would accommodate expansion.

The application requires a Municipal Resolution (draft resolution included in the BOS packet). Typically grants are accepted via a Town Meeting; however, due to Covid-19, Governor Lamont’s Executive Orders 7S and 7CC allow the BOS to act on behalf of the Town Meeting.

Lauren read the resolution as follows:

Municipal Certification of Resolution – STEAP 2020

I, Debra Germini Calamari, Town Clerk of the Town of Chester, a municipality organized and existing under the laws of the State of Connecticut, hereby certify that the following is a true copy of the resolution adopted pursuant to Governor Lamont’s Executive Orders 7S and 7CC at the Chester Board of Selectmen’s regular meeting held on August 26, 2020.

“RESOLVED, that First Selectwoman Lauren S. Gister be, and hereby is, authorized to accept on behalf of the Town Chester, a 2020 Connecticut STEAP Grant up to the amount of \$128,205.00 for the Town of Chester Public Wifi Project; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the First Selectwoman Lauren S. Gister is hereby authorized to enter into and execute any and all agreements, contracts and documents necessary to obtain said 2020 STEAP Grant with the State of Connecticut.”

AND I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that the above resolution has in no way been altered, amended or revoked and is in full force and effect.

AND I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that Lauren S. Gister is the First Selectwoman of the Town of Chester, and has been since November 17, 2015.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the Town of Chester this 27<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2020.

Lauren Gister made a motion to approve the above resolution as presented. Tom Englert seconded the motion. Discussion:

The BOS had an extensive discussion regarding the potential for on-going expenses of the proposed project to install wifi in the downtown area. Cost estimates for same were unavailable in time for the BOS meeting and are expected in the Selectman’s office tomorrow. Any on-going costs would be the responsibility of the town and would need to be included in the budget. The proposed wifi would be a “stand alone” system and include virus security and would not be connected to any of the town’s files.

The BOS discussed the potential need for oversight of material accessed on the town’s wifi. Lauren reported that the Town would have no liability with regard to the materials accessed by the public on the town’s wifi.

The benefits of town center wifi include:

- Enhanced communications; especially in emergency situations.
  - Currently many cell phone users have no connection in the town center
  - Note that if the power is out, the wifi will also be out.
- Attract businesses to Chester
- Allow individuals to access town maps, restaurant menus, lists of businesses, local businesses’ websites, etc.
- Reduces isolation in the “Covid-19” environment
- Equity for all demographics – wifi for participation in the hybrid school re-opening
- Allow for broader access to transit services (9TT app).
- Benefit property values
- The Main Street Project includes a kiosk with information on businesses website, maps, etc. without wifi, this information will not be accessible to visitors with wifi.

If the Town is awarded the grant, a vote to expend the grant monies is required. Note that the grant is a “reimbursement grant”. The above motion authorizes the town to apply and accept a grant but it doesn’t outline the terms of acceptance. It is anticipated that all on-going cost estimates will be available on Thursday, 8/27/20.

VOTE ON MOTION - The motion passed unanimously.

### ROAD SAFETY AND CITATIONS

A memo from Bettie Perreault, Citation Review Board, outlining the Board's request to relocate traffic control signage was included in the BOS packet. The Board has reviewed citations issued at two locations; the Stop sign on Straits Road at the intersection with Maple Street and citations related to signage at the entrance to the Parker's Point boat launch.

Recommended remediation measures include:

- Relocation of the stop sign on Straits Road to approximately 10 to 15 feet closer to the Deep River town line.
- Provide additional signage advising the requirement for a Town of Chester permit to be placed on the fence post abutting the launch pad.

After discussion, the consensus of the BOS was that the stop sign on Straits Road should remain at its current location. Moving the sign 10 to 15 feet as requested would place the sign in the middle of the intersection posing a safety concern. The issue is not sign placement but individuals not stopping for it. It was suggested that perhaps an "all ways" sign and/or painting "stop ahead" on the roadway could be beneficial at the intersection. The BOS agreed that additional signage should be installed at the boat launch, as recommended. Lauren will follow-up with Bettie on same.

### VILLAGE CENTER GARBAGE OPTIONS

As previously discussed, the Long Term Recovery Team has recommended that the BOS consider assisting business owners (in town center), with trash removal by potentially locating dumpster(s) at the Maple Street parking lot. Jamie and Ray are currently collecting information for BOS consideration.

Lauren reported that this topic has been discussed in the past. Trash receptacles located on the sidewalks are unsightly, smell, etc. Several of the restaurants have used dumpsters located in lots adjacent to their establishment; however, those lots, due to Covid, are now used as dining areas.

Note that the Town is not responsible for insuring that an independent business has trash removed; typically it is an agreement between a landlord and a business owner. The BOS discussed the possible development of an Ordinance regarding trash cans, garbage and related matters.

Additional items of discussion by the BOS included:

- A potential financial incentive for businesses to collectively have garbage picked up.
- The potential for a "user fee"; similar to WPCA fees; however, the development of metrics to accurately measure would be difficult.
- Can the Town mandate that a business uses the service?
- Who is responsible for maintaining the dumpster and surrounding area?
- Location at Maple Street lot may be "unwelcoming" to visitors parking in the lot.

The BOS will discuss further when the Recovery Team submits their findings.

### MAIN STREET PROJECT REPORT

Lauren reported:

- Binder pavement laid last week
  - Final paving scheduled the week of 9/14
- Belgium block at base of wall installed
- Rebuild of the stairs is on-going – issue to address degraded concrete under the stairs.
- Utility poles and wires relocated.
- Unacceptable block in front of Simons as been addressed.
- Landscaping – planting of trees to occur in October
- Project on budget
- Farmer’s Market returned to town center last weekend.

USE OF TOWN HALL PARKING LOT FOR POLL STANDING AND SIGNS

Charlene updated the Board on concerns relative to political parties setting up tents, etc. in the Town Hall parking lot and during elections. Some voters have reported feeling uncomfortable walking past them in order to vote. The Board discussed allowing tents, tables, etc. at the side of or in front of the Town Hall.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to prohibit the use of tents and poll “standing” in the Town Hall parking lot on Election Day. Tents will be permitted, on the side of or in front of the Town Hall. Lauren Gister seconded the motion. Discussion followed.

The Board discussed safety concerns with tents, etc. being set up in the parking lot and interfering with traffic and individuals.

Lauren reported that she will discuss either a BOS policy or an actual Ordinance on the matter and enforcement options (Election Moderator vs. Constable) with Town Attorney Bennet.

The motion was withdrawn pending Town Attorney review and recommendation.

A suggestion was made to “stripe” the parking lot prior to the November election.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Tom Englert made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 12, 2020 and August 18, 2020 BOS meetings. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

SELECTMEN REPORTS

Charlene reported that signage at the Maple Street parking lot will be installed by Public Works by Friday, 8/28/20.

Lauren updated the BOS on new requirements, per State Statute, relative to an Affordable Housing Plan. RiverCOG is coordinating a proposal to do a Master Plan on same. This plan will fulfill Chester’s requirement per statute.

The BOS discussed the Cedar Lake Watershed Committee’s proposed Ordinance for permitted uses on Cedar Lake. This proposal was presented to the BOS in the Spring but put “on hold” due to the pandemic. In an effort to stop the spread of invasive species, the proposed Ordinance would not permit motor boats on the lake. The proposed Ordinance has been forwarded to the Town Attorney for review.

The BOS discussed various options for public input on the matter; i.e. postcards, extended time frames for public comment, publicity on the issue via the newspaper, website, town newsletter, etc. A Town Meeting is necessary to consider/take action on any Ordinance.

Members of the Cedar Lake Watershed Committee will be invited to a BOS meeting to present their data.

Richard Strauss recommended that the BOS consider forming a committee to review nominations, submitted by the public, relative to the dedication on the Town's Annual Report. Typically the BOF votes on the dedication placed on the Annual Report. Said Committee would be charged with soliciting and reviewing nominations received from the public and making a recommendation on same. Soliciting nominations from the public would broaden the list of potential individuals or groups to be considered.

Lauren will research any Statute, Ordinance or Town Policy relative to the dedication of the Annual Report.

#### AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

To address questions posed by BOF Chairman Virginia Carmany, Laruen reported:

- Additional information on the upcoming expiration of the Governor's Executive Orders is not yet available, vis a vis protocol for Town Meetings. Lauren reported that clarification is expected from the Governor's office within the next 2 weeks. The Declaration of Emergency will be extended and it is anticipated that some of the Executive Orders will also be extended.
- BOE Task Force – Mutual aid for sharing teachers throughout the schools, possibly through the Supervision District, due to the potential for some teachers not returning due to Covid.
  - Lauren reported that she has no additional information to share regarding the proposal.
  - The Health District cancelled its bi-weekly meeting with First Selectmen to consult with schools regarding re-openings.

Tom Englert suggested that new "No Parking" signs be installed in the 4 Water Street area since the signs currently in place are faded and unreadable. Lauren will follow-up on same.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Charlene Janecek made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:17 p.m. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski  
Clerk