

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
REGULAR MEETING  
Wednesday, October 28, 2020  
ZOOM Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectwoman Gister called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. In attendance included First Selectwoman Gister, Selectwoman Janecek (exited the meeting at 7:30 p.m.), Selectman Englert, Terry Englert, Kimberly Megrath, Richard Strauss, BOF member, Virginia Carmany, BOF Chairman, Elizabeth Reinhart and Susan Wright.

APPOINTMENTS – OFFICIALS, BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

A list of vacancies, including those resulting from individuals not wishing to be re-appointed, will be available at the next BOS meeting.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to re-appoint Sandy Prisloe, U, and Margo Burns, D, to the Conservation Commission for 4-year terms (expiring 11/1/24) and Dawn Saunders, U, to the Park and Rec Commission for a 3-year term (expiring 11/1/23). Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

SOCIAL SERVICES SUB COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

A copy of the Social Services, Spirituality, Emotional Wellness Committee's recommendations was included in the BOS packet and "screen shared" at the meeting. Highlights of the report include:

- Rename and expand the Chester CARES Fund, soliciting donations and expanding the categories of household expenses eligible for emergency aid.
- Organize Chester into hubs, recruit volunteers and implement a Mutual Aid Collaborative.
- Create and maintain a Resource List.
- Charity Tracker Data System - \$2,160
- Purchase 5 tablets for Mutual Aid Volunteers - \$1,500
- Provide Internet Access for 1 year to 10 Chester households \$1,200

Ms. Megrath updated the BOS on social services data (2019), including energy assistance, food and clothing assistance needs, etc. provided by Rosie Bininger.

In June, 135 families reported, via a survey, that they had experienced a job loss in recent months due to the Pandemic. The United Way updated their ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) data. In Chester, 24% of households meet the criteria for ALICE. One goal of the Committee was to build/expand capacity to meet the needs of Chester residents. To that end, Ms. Megrath outlined a Charity Tracker Data program that could facilitate to use of volunteers to assist the social services department in identifying and providing services to meet the needs of Chester residents.

Ms. Megrath was available to address questions posed by BOS members.

As previously discussed, the BOS expressed concern regarding confidentiality and the use of volunteers to facilitate social service programs.

Lauren recommended that BOS members review the information provided this evening and forward any questions/concerns to her/Ms. Megrath. Data discussed this evening has not yet been reviewed by the Long-Term Recovery Chairmen. A meeting of the Long-Term Recovery Team is in process. In addition, Ms. Binger will be invited to a BOS meeting to discuss the information.

The Board thanked Ms. Megrath for her time and efforts on the Social Services, Spirituality, Emotional Wellness Committee.

2021 BOS CALENDAR APPROVAL – typically 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday

Lauren proposed the following dates for 2021 BOS Regular meetings: 1/13/21, 1/27/21, 2/10/21, 2/24/21, 3/10/21, 3/24/21, 4/14/21, 4/28/21, 5/12/21, 5/26/21, 6/9/21, 6/23/21, 7/14/21, 7/28/21, 8/11/21, 8/25/21, 9/8/21, 9/22/21, 10/13/21, 10/27/21, 11/10/21, 12/1/21, 12/15/21.

The BOS will discuss further and vote at the next BOS meeting.

APPROPRIATION – Trees

The BOS discussed funding necessary to address dying and dead trees throughout Chester. Currently, approximately \$20,000 worth of tree work is required in two cemeteries located in Chester. Safety is of the utmost concern and there are additional trees throughout the Town in need of attention. Lauren has been negotiating with Eversource to potentially address some of these trees and it is anticipated that a special appropriation in the amount of \$50,000 will be necessary to remove trees.

Lauren Gister made a motion to approve and forward to the BOF for further action, a Special Appropriation request in the amount of \$50,000 for tree maintenance. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Note that said special appropriation will require Town Meeting approval. Due to the Pandemic, and per Executive Order, if necessary, the BOS may act in lieu of Town Meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 14, 2020

Lauren Gister made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the 10/14/20 BOS meeting. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Correction – spelling – page 1 – “Sikora”, not “Sicora” is the proper spelling of the ACO’s name and “Ziemann” not “Zieman” as reported for Park & Rec appointee.

SELECTMEN REPORTS

Lauren reported:

- Main Street Project:
  - The trees for the tree wells have been ordered. It is anticipated that some trees will be planted on Friday. The other variety of tree order is not yet in its dormant phase and will be planted in the second week of November (estimate).
  - The Pear tree in front of the Villager will be replaced with a tree complimenting the others on Main Street. Public Works has removed the Pear tree with no damage to the sidewalk.

- Awaiting the arrival of the handrails for the Chester Wall
- Punch list items being addressed.
- Covid-19
  - Numbers continue to increase throughout the state.
  - The Health District is using color coding based on prior 2 weeks of data
    - Chester currently in Orange Zone
    - It is predicted that within the next 6 weeks, most of the state will be in the Red Zone.
    - The increase is attributed to “gatherings”; i.e. family birthday parties, etc., not to the re-opening of schools.
    - The Virus is constantly mutating. It is more contagious but less lethal.
    - Stressed the importance of masks, social distancing, CDC guidelines, etc.
- Election
  - Staff has developed plans, as previously discussed, regarding PPE, masks, safety protocols.
  - Contingency plans are in place and no concerns are anticipated.
  - Of the 1,231 Absentee Ballots requested, to date 1,037 have been returned
    - All Absentee Ballots will be counted on Election Day
    - Any delivered to the box outside on Election Day will be collected at the end of the day after lists have all been checked.
    - A “conditional count” is expected in Chester on Election night.
  - Tents, poll standing, etc. in the parking lot of the Town Hall will not be permitted.
  - The parking lot will be “striped” prior to Election Day. Recent rain has delayed the project.
- Interviews of the Assessor’s Clerk position will be conducted the week of November 9<sup>th</sup>.
- P&Z is establishing a Sub-committee to develop a job posting for ZEO. They anticipate filling the position by early 2021.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None.

ADJOURNMENT

Tom Englert made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Lauren Gister seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski  
Clerk