

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, November 18, 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, Selectman Englert, Kim Megrath, Rosie Bininger, Richard Strauss, BOF member, Susan Wright and Virginia Carmany, BOF Chairman.

SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT AND DATA/VOLUNTEER INITIATIVES

At the 10/28/20 BOS meeting, the Social Services, Spirituality, Emotional Wellness Committee, chaired by Kimberly Megrath presented recommendations to the BOS including the use of volunteers to assist in Chester's Social Services department.

Rosie Bininger, Social Services, provided an overview of some of the services she provides to residents and an update on the needs that cannot be met by the Town; i.e. rent payments. The Small Cities Housing Rehab Grant can be beneficial for items such as handicap ramp, new furnace etc. These expensive projects cannot be funded with the Town's Community Fund. She reported that the majority of her clientele is elderly and are staying home due to Covid-19. She commended the Committee's development of a Resource List and commented that the best use of volunteers vis a vis social services may be wellness calls, raking leaves, grocery shopping etc. Due to privacy and boundary concerns, she did not advise the use of volunteers to facilitate programs; i.e. SNAP, heating assistance, renter's rebate, etc.

Rosie continued that if a client requests assistance with a volunteer appropriate activity; i.e. grocery shopping, etc., she will contact Lauren. Lauren will communicate that there are people available to help individuals and how to contact said volunteers.

The BOS briefly discussed the possibility of "tracking software" for the Social Services Dept. Rosie reported that programs she offers to clients, CRT, Rental Rebate, Energy Assistance, are tracked by their respective departments at the state level. Peter Evankow keeps track of town funds distributed by Rosie. She knows of larger towns using the tracking software; some find it beneficial, others do not. She reported that the software would be useful when developing data for the Annual Report.

Kim Megrath commented on the importance of mutual trust and confidentiality while strengthening the safety net and providing for the needs of the community. Wellness checks are a path forward in the use of volunteers.

The BOS thanked Ms. Megrath and Ms. Bininger for their participation in this evening's meeting.

APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST – STEAP GRANT MATCH AND ELECTION

As previously reported, the Town received a STEAP Grant to facilitate a downtown wifi project/installation. The parameters of the project are still being developed and a \$10,000 match is required from the Town. An RFP will be developed to facilitate the WIFI installation on to the

streetlights. Mike Jordan has contacted Comcast to determine variables that may affect on-going costs associated with the WIFI. No action is necessary at this time.

Lauren reported on the herculean efforts of the Town Clerk, Registrars and Moderator with regard to the recent election. Beginning late summer, these individuals sometimes worked 7 days per week to facilitate the absentee ballots and continued changes in protocols per the Secretary of State's office.

Lauren recommended that these individuals be compensated for these duties that were well beyond their job descriptions.

Lauren will develop a draft recommendation for BOS and BOF consideration. Said draft will recognize the unprecedented efforts of the Town Clerk, Registrars and Moderator.

2021 BOS CALENDAR APPROVAL

Charlene Janecek made a motion to approve the 2021 BOS Regular Meeting schedule as follows: 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 and 12/15/21 (all meetings begin at 7 p.m. in the Community Room). Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Note that November has one meeting due to the Thanksgiving holiday. A special meeting can be called if necessary.

ORDINANCE PROVISIONS FOR GARBAGE REMOVAL

As previously discussed and recommended by the Long Term Recovery Committee, the BOS has considered placing a garbage dumpster at centrally located, town owned property to facilitate garbage pick-up for downtown businesses; in particular the restaurants. Due to Covid-19, many restaurants have been utilizing their parking lots, (that previously housed their garbage receptacles) as dining rooms.

Lauren invited all downtown restaurants to a meeting to discuss the parameters (where it would be placed, fees, etc.) of the proposal. Several restaurants did not respond and one was not interested in participating; one restaurant owner did attend the meeting but was uninterested in utilizing a centralized dumpster. The Chair of the Merchant's Committee was also in attendance. Lauren informed attendees that the BOS was considering an Ordinance to address garbage concerns in the downtown area.

The BOS discussed parameters of a Garbage Ordinance as follows:

- Appropriate times that garbage cans may be permitted on the street and what time garbage cans must be removed from the sidewalk after pick-up
- An appropriate number of garbage cans, per establishment, that may be placed on the sidewalk. The consensus of the BOS was that 3 cans per establishment is an appropriate number.
- An appropriate number of pick-ups per week.
- Establishments will not be permitted to place their cans in parking spots.
- Establishments may only place their garbage cans in front of their own business.

Enforcement of the Ordinance will be the responsibility of the police. Lauren will research the appropriate amount of an infraction as well as any applicable Zoning or Health Code regulations.

The draft Ordinance will be forwarded to Attorney Bennet prior to BOS action.

ANNUAL REPORT DEDICATION

The BOS discussed a recommendation to be forwarded to the BOF relative to the dedication of the Annual Report.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Tom Englert made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 28, 2020 BOS meeting as amended. Lauren Gister seconded the motion. The motion passed with Charlene Janecek abstaining from the vote.

Note: Terri Englert - proper spelling Terri, not Terry as recorded.

SELECTMEN REPORTS

Charlene reported that the Fair Grounds are being considered as a possible Covid-19 testing site.

Lauren reported the following:

- Covid-19 Update
 - There are more than 200 testing sites throughout the State.
 - Covid Alert System – in conjunction with Apple and Android phones has been well received with over 660,000 activations to date.
 - Note that your phone must be up to date with all operating system upgrades to facilitate the Alert System.
 - Chester’s Covid cases are increasing at a faster rate than in the spring
 - Schools are currently “remote”
 - Concerns relative to Thanksgiving gatherings
 - Town Hall may go back to appointment only status.
 - RiverCOG conducted a survey of towns and all have a different protocol
- Main Street Project
 - Remainder of the trees have been planted
 - Scott Mills has been contacted to address the “low hanging” branches.
 - Belgium Block work completed
 - Handrails at the Chester Wall Stairs are in and will be installed
 - Lauren will develop a report; including a budget status of the project
- P&Z is working on the job posting for ZEO
- Peg Metcalf, Deep River Land Use Dept., will be assisting in the Land Use Department to organize files. It is anticipated that she will work 4 to 6 hours per week on a temporary basis.
- Marie Hall has been hired as the new Assessor’s Clerk. She is fully trained as an Assessor and will begin coming in on Fridays in December and more regularly in January.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS - None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Lauren Gister made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:12 p.m. for the purpose of a discussion on real estate matters. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Virginia Carmany was invited into the Executive Session.

Regular Session resumed at ___ p.m.

No action taken.

ADJOURNMENT

___ made a motion to adjourn the meeting at ___ p.m. ___ seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk