

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, January 27, 2021
ZOOM Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectwoman Gister called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. In attendance included First Selectwoman Gister, Selectwoman Janecek, Selectman Englert, Dawn Parker, Melissa Hays, Sandy Dauer, Kim Adams, Lori Clymas, Susan Wright, Allison Abramson, Elizabeth Reinhart, John O’Hare, Kim Megrath, Richard Strauss and Virginia Carmany.

Charlene Janecek made a motion to add to the agenda, after item 7, an Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS –

Kim Megrath reported that the Town of Chester, in collaboration with the Long Term Recovery Task Force Committee, was awarded a grant in the amount of \$4,000 from the Middlesex Community Foundation.

Lori Ann Clymas, Kim Adams, John Chillock and Deb Vilcheck congratulated the Social Services Wellness Committee for the grant award.

Susan Wright reported that residents have been surprised and pleased that the Town has been reaching out to senior citizens to assist with registration for Covid vaccine. She congratulated the Committee on their excellent efforts.

COVID VACCINE UPDATE

Lauren reported the following:

- The VAMS system (to register for the vaccine) is very difficult to navigate. The system is a Federal program and complicated. Individuals wishing to register for the vaccine must have an email address and access to a computer.
- Members of the Long Term Recovery Task Force Wellness Sub Committee, appointed by the Town, have been contacting Chester residents 75 and older to assist in facilitating administration of the Covid-19 vaccine. Members of the committee include: Kim Megrath, Dawn Parker, Melissa Hays, Sandy Dauer, and Kim Adams, Lori Clymas, Susan Wright, Allison Abramson, Deb Vilcheck, Rev. Frogett, Charlene Janecek, Linda Carlson, and Rosie Binninger.
- Kim Megrath reported:
 - The Committee used the Voter Registration list to identify those 75 and older (total of 421 residents)
 - Many of these individuals are in nursing homes or assisted living facilities and received the vaccine.
 - The Committee contacted the remaining 275 residents and, using a “script” offered assistance to access the VAMS system to register for the vaccine.

- There is a tracking system in place and the town is assisting in coordinating transportation to the vaccination site.

Lauren reported that her office has received calls from out of state individuals thanking the town for assisting their parents. On the Governor's call today, options for supporting those without computers, email addresses, smart phones etc. were discussed. The possibility of allowing organizations; i.e., social services staff to upload a roster of people into the system for appointments is being discussed. In addition, many organizations, businesses have volunteered space to hold vaccination sites; however, the lack of vaccine availability remains an issue. The State is confident that the current sites are sufficient to administer the vaccine that we currently receive (approx. 46,000 does per week for the entire state).

Lauren will follow up with the Health District regarding the availability of the second dose of vaccine to ensure that an adequate number is being held in reserve for those individuals who have already received their first dose.

The BOS thanked the Committee for their efforts on behalf of the residents of Chester.

LTR Social Services Sub-Committee Grant

Kim Megrath reported that the Town was awarded a \$4,000 grant from the Middlesex County Community Fund for the purchase of the Charity Tracker software program that will enable the Social Services department to build capacity and strengthen the "safety net" and support struggling families in Chester. The Committee is recommending that it be expanded and that 4 more individuals be added; a representative from the BOS, a recipient, a representative from the educational system and an individual from a civic organization.

Dawn Parker provided a comprehensive overview of the software's capabilities. She interviewed users of the system (Madison, Old Lyme and Old Saybrook); these towns provided favorable feedback. Ms. Parker participated in a demonstration of the system and is confident that the software will benefit the Social Services department.

Alison Abramson provided an update on the use of volunteers vis a vis the Charity Tracker software and the Social Services department. Assessments have identified emerging needs of the community and an appropriate volunteer will be able to meet those needs; understanding the importance of confidentiality.

Melissa Hays provided an update on the resource list that can identify agencies and resources available to residents.

Kim reported that the Committee applied for a \$4860 grant and was awarded \$4000. Options to fund the remaining \$860 were discussed and include eliminating the number of volunteers thus eliminating expenses associated with same; i.e. one tablet and Charity Tracker license.

The grant award letter must be signed and returned to the Middlesex Community Foundation by 2/1. Allison Abramson will attend the mandatory meeting for grant recipients.

The BOS profoundly thanked the Committee and the work they have done to benefit the Town of Chester.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Charlene Janecek made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 13, 2021 BOS meeting, as amended. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Clarification – page 2 – note that the Supervision shows an increase of \$278,000 not \$265,000 as reported.

Page 1 – change “LeWitt Josephy” to Carol LeWitt

SELECTMEN REPORTS

Tom Englert reported that the Supervision Budget will go to Public Hearing on 2/1 @ 7:00 p.m. Chester’s share of Supervision District shows an increase due to ADM.

Charlene Janecek reported that calls to Chester residents 75 and older have been well received. In addition she continues to work with the Resident State Trooper relative to signage in downtown. A report, including recommendations, will be developed and forwarded to the BOS.

Lauren reported that bids are still being developed for work at the Chester Wall and Flagpole Wall. As previously reported, several bids were received for cleaning and repair to walls. These bids range from \$3,000 to \$17,000. Any work on the walls cannot commence until the spring.

Lauren reported that the town is eligible for FEMA funds (75%) relative to damage as a result of Storm Isaias. In the next two weeks, she expects to discuss reimbursement with representatives from FEMA and DEMHS.

Lauren reported:

- A professional roads evaluation is being developed
- Specs for the public WIFI project (funded via a STEAP Grant) are being developed
- Several departments will be accepting payment on line due to the Pandemic
- The first joint budget workshop is scheduled on 2/4 via ZOOM

The Governor has extended the Emergency Declaration until April 2021. A meeting is scheduled with the State on 1/28 to discuss how the EOs will be adjusted. It is anticipated that there will also be discussion on how to facilitate a vote on town budgets during the Pandemic.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Lauren Gister made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:24 p.m. to discuss a personnel matter. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Regular session resumed at 8:49.

No action taken.

ADJOURNMENT

Charlene Janecek made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk