

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, April 28, 2021
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, Brianna Jewczyn, Steve Cline, Kristina Pollack, John O’Hare, Kate Hair, Sandy Dauer, Rick Nygard, Jennifer Rannestad, Jen Rice, Mike Jordan, Virginia Carmany, and several other audience members.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS –

John O’Hare, BOF member, reported that he reviewed the 3 resumes submitted for the open alt BOF seat. He endorsed Ms. Pollock for the position.

Sandy Dauer, Chairman of the Library Board, expressed disappointment that neither she nor the librarian was updated on the potential donation/installation of Little Libraries, as reported in the minutes of the 4/14/21 BOS meeting. She offered the Friends of the Chester Library to manage/steward the project. Lauren commented that the project has not yet been fully approved.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

The resumes from the candidates to fill the alternate BOF open seat were included in the BOS packet. This open alt. seat was created when a BOF member (full member) moved out of town and an alt. member was moved to fill that open full member seat. Whoever is appointed to the seat must run for it at the November election.

Lauren reported that there is some clarification necessary; i.e. can the BOS appoint an individual who is not a Republican to fill this seat? None of the candidates interested in filling the seat are “R’s”; however the RTC did endorse Ms. Pollock. Due to minority representation protocol, the seat cannot be filled by a Democrat.

The BOS thanked the individuals interested in filling the seat and proceeded to review their resumes and “interview” the candidates with the understanding that no appointment would be made at this evening’s meeting.

Ms. Pollock gave a brief update on her background and credentials and was available to address questions/comments posed by BOS members. She reported that there are 2 meetings remaining on her term as a BOE member and she does not intend to run for the BOE seat in the Fall.

Mr. Jordan gave a brief update on his background and credentials and was available to address questions/comments posed by BOS members.

Mr. Cline gave a brief update on his background and credentials and was available to address questions/comments posed by BOS members.

No BOS action taken. Lauren will seek further legal clarification on the appropriate protocol to seat an alt. BOF member.

COVID VACCINE UPDATE

Lauren reported that CRAHD reports 11 new cases in Chester since the beginning of April; none hospitalized and no deaths. The Pandemic is not over yet. The Old Saybrook vaccine site is still active but there has been a drop in demand for testing and vaccine. Walk-in vaccine sites include: CRAHD, Mitchell College, and Wesleyan University.

The ZEO is addressing the placement of tables on the sidewalks in front of Chester restaurants. The Fire Marshal will also inspect to ensure the safety and well-being of Chester residents.

The Town Hall will open to the public, without the need for an appointment, on Monday 5/3. A sign in sheet will be placed in the lobby. Residents are still encouraged to do business by mail, e-mail, etc. All CDC guidelines are in place and will be enforced as the Town Hall re-opens to the public.

DREDGING OF CHESTER CREEK – Status and Next Steps

Lauren reported that the Bond Commission did approve the \$100,000 grant for the dredging of Chester Creek. As previously reported, the permit received in April from the Army Corps of Engineers called for work to be completed by March 31; to accommodate spawning fish, the Harbor Commission's request for an extension was denied. It is anticipated that the project will commence in the Fall. Clarification from Docko, DEEP and the Army Corps will be provided relative to bid documents, scheduling and related matters.

GARBAGE ORDINANCE – and Other Proposed Ordinances for Future Town Meeting

The proposed Garbage Ordinance and several other items (Building Dept. fees, property located on the river) require Town Meeting approval. Due to the Pandemic, no in-person meetings have taken place in the past year. The parameters of the proposed Garbage Ordinance are being reviewed by the Town Attorney.

As previously discussed, the Conservation Commission and Cedar Lake Watershed have made recommendations for the use of Cedar Lake vis a vis invasive species (Hydrilla). This item also needs public input, Town Meeting, etc.

The BOS discussed posting requirements and options to safely hold an in-person Town Meeting; i.e. venue, CDC requirements, etc. It is anticipated that an in-person Town Meeting will be held sometime in late June/early July.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Charlene Janecek made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 14, 2021 BOS meeting, as amended. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Note proper spelling "Pollock" not "Pollack" as reported. In addition, Ms. Pollock is a "U", not an "R" as reported. She is endorsed by the RTC.

Clarification – No BOS action taken on the "Little Library" and this project has not yet been fully approved. In addition, the Chester Leadership Fund, not the Middlesex Foundation, is potentially funding the "Little Library".

SELECTMEN REPORTS

Charlene reported:

- The masonry work in the downtown area has started; the Chester Wall and flagpole area were power washed. The contractor is attempting to coordinate the work with the Little House Brewery.
- The Chester Fair will take place and many vendors have already confirmed their attendance. All CDC guidelines will be followed.

Lauren reported that she has been approached by a restaurant owner seeking permission to have their garbage picked up at the Maple Street parking during the Summer to facilitate outdoor dining as extended per Executive Order. They have 8 cans, picked up 3 times per week (4 cans at a time). They will secure the cans with bungee cords. Representatives from the establishment have a meeting scheduled with the Sanitarian regarding their request.

The BOS discussed the request including the need for an enclosure for the garbage cans as neighboring property owners may express concern about the unsightliness of the cans, smells, bees, animals, etc. Last year, when the lot was offered to restaurant owners for trash pick-up, the state was in "lock-down" and the lot was not being fully utilized; this year, however, the lot is being more fully utilized.

Lauren reported that 3 to 4 individuals have expressed an interest in running for the Town Clerk position. Deb Calamari has been generous with her time in addressing their questions, concerns, etc. and developing a transition. Unlike other elected positions, a newly elected Town Clerk does not begin their duties until January. Also, Pam Graham will be retiring from CES.

The Hybrid Town Meeting on the Budget will take place at the CES gym on 5/19/21. The Registrars may pre-screen voters for eligibility. All CDC guidelines; i.e. social distancing, masks, doors open for ventilation, etc. will be in place.

Lauren has been working with Jenny and Peter to facilitate the transition to the State's Health Insurance Plan as discussed at the last BOS meeting. In addition, Lauren has met with an on-line payment provider for tax payments and Park & Rec payments. Departments (Land Use, WPCA, etc.) may be added to the plan as appropriate.

Lauren will not be available for the 5/26/21 Regular BOS meeting.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS - None.

ADJOURNMENT

Tom Englert made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk