

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, May 12, 2021
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, Richard Strauss, Susan Wright, and Elizabeth Reinhart.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Susan Wright recommended that the Town purchase additional signage relative to drivers slowing down, particularly in the downtown area. Lauren reported that she is meeting with the various individuals; i.e. Fire Marshal and Resident State Trooper regarding several issues in the downtown area. Ms. Wright will forward to the First Selectman information relative to the requested signage.

Kris Pollack reported that traffic has been increasing, in particular, on Railroad Ave. (new restaurant in the area and boat traffic). Lauren will follow-up with the Resident State Trooper as this is also an area of concern.

Richard Strauss reported that he has submitted his letter of resignation from the BOF effective 6/1/21. He is available to serve the town as the BOS deems appropriate. The BOS thanked Richard for his many years of service to the Town in various capacities.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

As discussed at the 4/28/21 BOS meeting, 3 individuals submitted resumes relative to the vacant alternate seat on the BOF. After further clarification (from the Secretary of State's office as well as 2 legal opinions), it was determined that the vacant seat must be filled by a Republican. None of the candidates expressing interest in the seat are R's. If a Republican cannot be found, the seat remains vacant.

Lauren reported that Leslie Strauss' term on the Estuary Transit District Board has expired. Lauren will follow-up with Leslie to determine her interest in being re-appointed to the Board.

COVID VACCINE UPDATE

Lauren reported the Chester's Covid rates remain low and the vaccination rate increases regularly. The Pfizer vaccine has been approved for 12 to 15 year olds and will be administered beginning tomorrow via CHRAD, Nutmeg Pharmacy and other area locations (registration is required).

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

It is anticipated that American Rescue Plan funds will be distributed in two segments; one this year and one approximately 12 months later. Specific guidance on use of these funds is not yet available; however, information from CCM, COST and the COG is released almost on a daily basis. When additional information is available, the BOS will discuss the appropriate use of these funds. Lauren will forward information to BOS as it is received.

ON LINE PAYMENTS AND TECHNOLOGY

As previously discussed, the Town is implementing an on-line payment procedure for property taxes with Point and Pay. It is anticipated that other departments may implement on-line payments in the future (Park & Rec, Land Use).

Lauren has met with personnel from CES regarding the upcoming Town Meeting and the technology necessary for this hybrid meeting. In addition, the Community Room at the Town Hall and perhaps the Meeting House will also need to accommodate in person meetings with the hybrid function.

Legislatures continue to develop protocols for record keeping requirements relative to ZOOM meetings. Selectmen have expressed concern about the costs associated with potential mandates relative to storage of video recordings, etc.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Charlene Janecek made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 28, 2021 BOS meeting as presented. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

SELECTMEN REPORTS

Charlene reported that the downtown masonry work has been completed. It is anticipated that the variances in stone colors will eventually “blend in” with the original stones. Small items; i.e. replacement of two stones in the work “Chester” and some cracks, will be addressed. The contractor will provide an estimate for work at the entrance to the cemetery.

Lauren reported on the following:

- Reminder – Town Meeting - 5/19 at 7 p.m. in person - CES gym
 - The town’s website, town-wide email and social media, will include instructions on how to attend and vote at the meeting virtually.
- Jenny has been working with contractors on options for the cleaning of town facilities. It is anticipated that quotes will be available for BOS review at the next BOS meeting.
- Municipal Insurance
 - CIRMA is no longer offering cyber security insurance. They are assisting towns with options.
 - For CES and Town – cost estimated between \$12,000 and \$18,000 per year.
 - Additional quotes are being pursued; i.e. CT Comp.
 - Governments are targets of hackers (COG recently paid “ransom” and CIRMA did cover it).
 - Household Hazardous Waste insurance will no longer be offered by CIRMA for the COG’s HHW program. RiverCOG splits these costs between COG towns.
 - Quotes are being developed for same.
- River COG has issued an RFP relative to the Affordable Housing Plan that is mandated by the State.
- Downtown restaurants are busy and issues remain with regard to placement of outdoor tables and chairs located on the sidewalks. The ZEO is addressing these issues and restaurants are required to obtain a permit from Zoning for outdoor dining. The Fire Marshal has also been involved with potential safety concerns relative to outdoor dining.
- A tentative offer has been submitted for the purchase of 9 Parkers Point Road.

- The owner did not accept the original offer and requested that the Town increase the price and decrease the necessary approvals; i.e. BOS, BOF, P&Z, etc. Lauren re-submitted the offer with no changes.
- If the offer is accepted, appropriate processes will be put into motion.

As discussed at the 4/28/21 BOS meeting, a restaurant owner approached the First Selectwoman requesting permission to place their garbage receptacles at the Maple Street Parking lot. Prior to receiving permission from the BOS, this restaurant owner has started to place their trash cans at the Maple Street Parking lot. BOS members expressed serious concern about this gross abuse of public property. Lauren will follow-up with the restaurant owner. As previously discussed, an Ordinance relative to Garbage is being developed and will require Town Meeting approval.

Lauren will not be available to attend the 5/26/21 or 6/9/21 (Valley graduation) Regular BOS meetings. The consensus of the BOS was to cancel these meetings and schedule a Special BOS meeting on 6/2.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – none.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Charlene Janecek made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:05 p.m. for the purpose of a discussion on employee issues. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Regular Session resumed at 8:55 p.m.

No action taken.

ADJOURNMENT

Tom Englert made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk