

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, October 13, 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, Nikki Sahagen, Leslie Strauss and Bettie Perreault.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Charlene Janecek made a motion to re-appoint Rick Holloway as the Conservation Commission's representative to the Cedar Lake Watershed Committee for a 2-year term expiring July 1, 2023. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Tom Englert made a motion to appoint Paul McAndrew, D, as a full member to the Park & Rec. Commission with a term to expire 11/1/23. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Note that a seat was vacated when John Williams resigned from the Commission.

ESTUARY TRANSIT DISTRICT MERGER

NINE TOWN TRANSIT RESOLUTION

Lauren reported on the proposed expansion of the Estuary Transit District (9TT) as the result of a study commissioned by CTDOT. The report recommended that combining the Middletown Transit District (MTD) with the Estuary Transit District would improve service in the region. The restructuring is jointly supported by MTD, 9TT, CTDOT and RiverCOG. Note that no additional funds from participating towns are requested for this proposed merger. Leslie Strauss reported that the State has committed funds for the merger, including additional staff members, and 3 years of operations costs.

A copy of a Power Point for participating Boards of Selectmen and Resolution was included in the BOS packet (see Power Point attached).

Leslie Strauss, Chairman Estuary Transit District, was available to address questions posed by the BOS and audience members.

Bettie Perreault spoke in favor of the proposed merger and commended Joe Comerford, Executive Director of 9TT for his work.

Charlene Janecek made the following motion:

THE UNDERSIGNED, the duly authorized First Selectman of the town of Chester (the “Town”), hereby submits the foregoing resolution which was entered and authorized at the meeting of the Town held on October 13, 2021;

WHEREAS, a strong public transportation system is vital to the health, economy, environment and overall well-being of a community;

WHEREAS, effective public transportation requires a regional approach to meet the mobility needs of constituents;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 7-273b, the Estuary Transit District (“ETD”) was established in 1981;

WHEREAS, the Lower Connecticut River Valley Transit Study has determined that combining the ETD with the Middletown Transit District (“MTD”) will result in improved transit services to the regions respectively served by the ETD and MTD by: enhancing the fiscal sustainability of a larger district; providing efficiencies of scale that will result in reduced costs for fleet maintenance; enhancing staff recruitment and retention by providing more opportunities for advancement; providing significant service improvements including better customer service, expanded service areas, frequencies and hours; and providing for new and upgraded capital facilities that will improve both operational and financial efficiency;

WHEREAS, to improve efficiencies of operations by ETD and MTD and in anticipation of the MTD member municipalities joining ETD, ETD and MTD entered into an Employee Sharing Services Agreement whereby ETD and MTD agreed to share certain employees during the transition period as jointly determined by ETD and MTD and their respective boards;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Selectmen of the town of Chester does hereby support the combination of the Middletown Transit District and the Estuary Transit District into an expanded Estuary Transit District on condition that the necessary funding commitment is provided by the Connecticut Department of Transportation;

Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

LIBERTY STREET TRAILER

Lauren provided a history on the trailer located at 29 Liberty Street. Fifteen years ago, zoning regulations allowed a trailer to be placed on the property for a period of 6 months after a house fire. The trailer has now been on the property for over 14 years. To date, all legal avenues on behalf of the property owner have been exhausted. Prep work (vegetation removal etc.) to remove the trailer has started with appropriate parties; i.e. Public Works, Eversource, Health District, Fire Marshal, and the trailer will be removed within the next several days. For clarification purposes, Lauren reported that the town does not own the lot and is not taking the lot from the property owner. The property has not been foreclosed on. The Town does have the ability to lien the property for costs associated with the removal of the trailer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Tom Englert made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 22, 2021 BOS meeting, as presented. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

SELECTMEN REPORTS

Charlene reported that she will be meeting with Atlas on Thursday, 10/14 relative to the Environmental Inspection of the Skyview property.

Lauren reported:

- The Sunday Market was extended to 10/31, at the request of the vendors.
- The Goose Hill water main replacement repairs are to begin within the next 10 days.
- Eversource will be trimming hazardous trees throughout Chester. Lauren, the tree warden and other appropriate staff have met with Eversource to discuss their plans. Trimming will begin in January 2022 and the public will be notified as soon as possible as to the areas in which they will be working.
- Chester's Halloween celebration will take place on 10/29 and will include a graveyard haunted walk and scavenger hunt. All activities associated with the event will take place outdoors.
- As previously reported, the Town Clerk is retiring. The newly elected Town Clerk will begin duties in January. Deb will work with the new Town Clerk to train him/her.

- The Finance Director will be out for a period of time for a personal matter. Sharon will be forwarding messages to him in his absence.

- Staffing – the BOS will discuss, in Executive Session, the Animal Control officer position(s) and Land Use staff (including Inland Wetland officer).

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Nikki Sahagen requested information relative to debris in her pond that was a result of the 2018 flood. Lauren responded that FEMA will not be dredging that particular pond. However, they will be addressing other areas in Chester including the debris that washed over the dam and is blocking the water (part of the Natural Resources Conservation Service Grant). It is anticipated that work will begin next summer.

Leslie Strauss commended the Town for honoring Deb Calamari, Town Clerk.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Charlene Janecek made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:03 p.m. to discuss a personnel matter. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Regular Session resumed at ___ p.m.

No action taken.

Action _____

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk