

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, March 23, 2022
Community Room
Chester Town Hall

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectwoman Janecek called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. In attendance included: First Selectwoman Janecek, Selectman Meehan, John O’Hare, BOF member, Joe Cohen, and John Chillock.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS -

Charlene read the following letter from a resident:

“To the BOS and BOF,

I wanted to comment on the quotes for a new Town website design. I am an Art Director and Graphic Designer and have overseen website commissions.

I could not find an RFP for this project, if there was one; so I do not know what parameters the Town requested, or any details of what style you may be looking for. Looking through these quotes, it’s hard to compare them as written.

One of the quotes is from Granicus, I assume because they do a lot of government sites. From my professional experience, I would advise using a local firm/designer, it’s easier. You are going to always need timely updates, sometimes last minute, they are based in Minnesota, established in the UK.

The Town does not need a complicated, busy, flashy site, it’s primarily text-driven, as long as it’s clean and professional, with clear communication, easy to navigate and post, you’re set. Honestly a lot of what is advocated in some of these proposals are hyped up features that you do not need.

You can see the cost varies greatly, what often becomes an expensive burden is maintenance. I would really pay attention to this, again a lot of these services are really not needed.

When first designing and setting up a new site, there is a lot of back and forth, changes, adjustments, and tweaking; who is going to oversee this?

I do think the website we have is fine, if only it had continued to be updated, you would not be having the issues you have been experiencing.

I see you have an IT person looking at these proposals, I would also volunteer to look at the design-side selection and development if you need it.

Thank you,
Karen Badger”

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Two applications were received to fill the vacant seat (alt) on P&Z; one from Joe Cohen, U and one from Stephen Seitz, R. The RTC has endorsed Mr. Seitz's nomination.

Ed Meehan made a motion to appoint Stephen Seitz, R to the P&Z Commission (alt) with a term to expire 11/16/27. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Cohen stressed the importance of the BOS's consideration of individuals who are unaffiliated with a party to fill vacant Board/Commission seats.

APPROVAL OF 3/9/22 MINUTES

Ed Meehan made a motion to approve the minutes from the 3/9/22 BOS meeting as presented. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CAPITAL BUDGET

Charlene reported that the BOF and BOS have been working diligently on the Capital Budget. A joint meeting is scheduled next week for continued discussion on same.

Ed Meehan stressed the importance of moving already approved Capital projects forward to facilitate "level" funding of Capital. Fortunately, there is a surplus this year and ARPA funds may be available for some Capital project(s).

WEBSITE PROPOSALS

As previously discussed, additional information will be solicited regarding website proposals. John Chillock, volunteer, has reviewed the proposals received and agrees that additional information/clarification is necessary prior to any decision being made relative to a website contractor.

Note that the towns of Deep River, Essex, Westbrook and Old Lyme use Civic Plus for their website.

ARPA UPDATE

Charlene reported that the ARPA Committee met last night. The Committee approved forwarding to Town Meeting up to \$83,000 for Police Body Cameras (storage, infrastructure).

A sub-committee was formed to discuss the process relative to ARPA funds.

SET DATE FOR TOWN MEETING

Ed Meehan made a motion to schedule a Town Meeting on 4/7/22 @ 7 p.m. at the Meeting House (in-person only). Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Items on the Town Meeting Call include:

- Transfer of funds for the Dredging of Chester Creek
- Appropriation of funds to facilitate the WPCA project(s)
- Up to \$60,000 for technology upgrades to facilitate hybrid meetings (Town Hall and Meeting House)
- Police Body Cameras

As requested at the December Town Meeting, an Informational Meeting is scheduled, via ZOOM, on 3/31/22.

SELECTMEN REPORTS

Ed Meehan provided an update on the STEAP Grant (\$84,000; Town's portion \$10,000) the Town received in November 2020 for the installation of WIFI on the streetlights in the downtown area. A change in the Administration of Chester and a new DECD Commissioner necessitated the reauthorization of the grant paperwork. To date, the contract from DECD has not yet been received. The Grant paperwork, when received, will be forwarded to Tanko who may be able to provide some "ballpark" costs, including annual service costs, associated with the project. When the annual cost estimates are received (potentially \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year), the Town will have to determine a source for said funds.

The project, per the grant's guidelines, must be completed by November 2022. This timeline may be difficult to meet as equipment may not be available. In addition, clarification is needed on any potential on-going costs, maintenance contract with Tanko, etc.

Before finalizing any project, a thorough cost benefit/return on investment will be established.

Charlene reported that the Norma Terrace Theatre may do one "music event" this summer but no plays as they are prioritizing shows at the East Haddam theatre. In 2023, they do plan to do the 3 plays as required by their agreement with the Town.

Charlene has talked with Joe Comerford, Executive Director, Nine Town Transit, relative to their Extra Mile service/app (similar to Uber). This service could potentially provide transportation from the marinas to the Town Center. The costs associated with this program would be \$20,000 (\$10,000 from the Town and \$10,000 provided by 9TT). Charlene will speak with marinas and merchants to determine their interest in such a service and the potential of them providing funding for same.

Charlene reported that Region 4 has reached an agreement with an individual interested in purchasing 3 lots. An Informational Meeting will be scheduled to provide details on the proposal.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

John Chillock commented that the dredging project went well and the "after survey" is now being completed.

ADJOURNMENT

Ed Meehan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m. Charlene Janecek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski

Clerk