

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
July 13, 2022
Community Room
Chester Town Hall

ROLL CALL

First Selectwoman Janecek called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. In attendance included: First Selectwoman Janecek, Selectman Englert, Selectman Meehan, Terri Englert, Cindy Lignar, Mike Sanders, and Peter Zanardi.

Ed Meehan made a motion to add to the agenda a discussion on funding for the Kenyon Building. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Ed Meehan made a motion to re-appoint Tom Brelsford and Jenny Kitsen to 2 year terms (expiring on 7/1/24) on the CT Gateway Commission. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Tom Englert made a motion to re-appoint Tom Brelsford and Nancy Bern to 2 year terms (expiring on 7/1/24) on the Cedar Lake Water Shed Commission. Ed Meehan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Tom Englert made a motion to approve the minutes from the 6/15/22 BOS meeting as presented. Ed Meehan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

TOWN GOVERNANCE AND CONTINUITY

Mike Sanders and Jon Joslow have requested that the BOS consider forming a Short Term Study Committee (60 days) to explore the level of interest, if any, in the development of a Charter for the Town of Chester.

Mike reported on the difficulties in finding volunteers willing to serve on Boards and Commissions either via election or appointment. Many of the same individuals serve on several Boards/Commissions.

The challenges of implementing recommendations found in the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), because of lack of staff and/or volunteers to “spearhead” projects was discussed.

The importance of clarification vis a vis filling vacancies on Boards/Commissions and clarity on how the town “works” was stressed. Researching Town Ordinances and State Statutes can be cumbersome, confusing and difficult. A potential Charter would not necessarily change anything but it would “codify” the workings of the Town and could improve the day to day operations of the Town.

A Study Committee, if formed (appointed by the BOS), could review the many scenarios/forms of government throughout the State; i.e. BOS/Town Meeting, Town Manager, Town Administrator, Town Counsel, etc. and make recommendations to the BOS. CCM has information available outlining the process for the development of a Charter.

The BOS discussed the request and Mike was available to address questions/comments made by BOS members.

BOS members will discuss the request further at the next BOS meeting and will put forth their ideas for a “charge” for a Study Committee. The BOS thanked Mike for his dedication to Chester.

ARPA DISCUSSION

Charlene reported that the ARPA Committee voted to dissolve. They developed a “process” for ARPA funding requests (located on the Town’s website). The process calls for BOS approval and a sub-committee of BOF members to determine if the project qualified for ARPA funds. If so, the request would go to the entire BOF for consideration and ultimate approval via a Town Meeting.

Requests for BOS consideration:

- Chester Hose Company - \$136,894.00 for a hybrid radio system that would allow the Hose Company to be part of the 800 mega hertz system used by neighboring towns. Currently the Hose Company uses UHF radios.
 - BOS questions/concerns:
 - Can the UHF system be phased out?
 - Should we just convert to the 800 mega hertz system?
 - Are there any other sources of funds for the project?
 - The BOS requested additional information from the Hose Company and Chief Grzybowski will be invited to the next BOS meeting.
- Request from Merchants - \$15,000 for advertising, communications and marketing. The ARPA Committee had concerns; and the BOS agreed that this request is for normal operating expenses and would not be an appropriate use of ARPA funds.

Tom Englert made a motion to NOT forward the Merchant’s request for \$15,000 in ARPA funds to the Board of Finance for consideration. Ed Meehan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- On Line Permitting Request – As previously discussed, the BOS did not approve the request for funding for an on-line permitting system in the Land Use Dept. as the BOS did not feel that the workload in Land Use warranted the expense of the proposal. In addition, permit fees collected in the Land Use Dept. are not sufficient to “cover” the costs of the software. However, John Goskowski, ZEO consultant, presented his request to the ARPA Committee.
 - This request was NOT forwarded to the BOF for consideration.
- War Memorial - \$25,000 – while this request was considered worthwhile, the BOS determined that it did not “fit” the ARPA guidelines.
 - The BOS recommended that they make a request for funds to the BOF during the budget cycle.

Ed Meehan made a motion to NOT accept the War Memorial request as an ARPA project. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- Land Trust Request - \$25,000 – Knotweed Eradication – Individuals from the Land Trust will be invited to the next BOS meeting to provide clarification and additional information relative to the project/request.

ROAD SAFETY AUDIT

The Community Connectivity Program is a state funded grant program that provides construction funding for local initiatives that will improve safety and access for bicyclists and pedestrians in and around community centers encouraging healthy and sustainable modes of transportation.

Cindy Lignar developed the Town’s application (included in the BOS packet) and updated the BOS on the parameters of the program. The Bike-Ped Path Survey Results were also included in the BOS packet. Cindy requested the BOS’s permission to submit the application. The BOS reviewed the documentation provided and Ms. Lignar was available to respond to questions/comments posed by the Board.

Ed Meehan made a motion to support the submission of the Community Connectivity Program application. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board thanked Cindy for her work on this initiative.

KENYON BUILDING

Charlene reported that the Town received a reimbursable grant (the Town must “front” the money for the project) in the amount of \$104,475 for the Kenyon Building project. As previously discussed, the BOS determined that the proposed WIFI project, funded via a STEAP grant (also a reimbursable grant), was not an appropriate project to pursue. Prior to this determination, the BOF did allocate “up front” funds for the WIFI grant. Charlene will request that the BOF approve use of those WIFI funds for the Kenyon Building project. This item will be placed on the next Town Meeting agenda for consideration.

SET DATE FOR TOWN MEETING

The BOS scheduled a Town Meeting on August 10, 2022 @ 7 p.m. Items for discussion: ARPA requests (Town Hall Generator, Road Inventory Study, Website and the Kenyon funding).

FINE FREE LIBRARY

The Library is requesting that fines for overdue books and materials be eliminated; patrons would still receive a bill for lost or damaged items. A copy of their request was included in the BOS packet.

Tom Englert made a motion to allow the Library to go “Fine Free”. Ed Meehan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

SELECTMEN REPORTS

Ed reported that payment of \$5,000 for the purchase of the solar array was made by Mr. Bouffard. In addition, Mr. Bouffard picked up the property.

Charlene reported that the bridge on Upper Jennings Pond was vandalized (graffiti). Public Works is in the process of cleaning the bridge. In addition, some signs on Liberty Street and Maple Street have also been vandalized.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS – None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Personnel Matter

Ed Meehan made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:37 p.m. for a discussion on a Personnel matter. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Regular Session resumed at: 9:00 p.m.

No action taken.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made and duly seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski
Clerk