



**Chesterfield Select Board Minutes  
Monday, November 6, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.  
Town Office Building - 422 Main Road**

Mr. Fuller called the Select Board meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

**Select Board Members Present:** Trish Colson-Montgomery and Don Willard III

**Select Board Members Participating Remotely:** Roger Fuller

**Town Administrator Present via ZOOM:** Brenda Lessard

**Public Officials Present:** Larry Cervelli and Joe Gazillo, MVP (Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness) Executive Committee, Fred Drake, Planning Board

**Public Officials Present via ZOOM:**

**General Public Present:** Bea von Hagke, Hilltown Community Development Corp. (HCDC)

**General Public Present via ZOOM:**

**Recorder of Minutes:** Brenda Lessard

On March 29, 2023, Governor Healey signed into law a supplemental budget bill, which, among other things, extends the temporary provisions pertaining to the Open Meeting Law to March 31, 2025. Specifically, this further extension allows public bodies to continue holding meetings remotely without a quorum of the public body physically present at a meeting location, and to provide "adequate, alternative" access to remote meetings. The language does not make any substantive changes to the Open Meeting Law other than extending the expiration date of the temporary provisions regarding remote meetings from March 31, 2023 to March 31, 2025.

This meeting was conducted with ZOOM access for the public.

**Warrants:**

The Select Board reviewed and signed the W24-10, WP24-10 and WBB24-09.

**Minutes:**

Ms Colson-Montgomery made a motion, seconded by Mr. Willard and unanimously voted to accept the Minutes of 10/11/23 and 10/23/23 as amended.

**Planning Board Public Hearing:**

Fred Drake stopped in; there was a discussion about the upcoming Public Hearing on a bylaw amendment and the lack of communication regarding the Public Hearing. The Select Board opined that there should be more effort in letting the town residents know about events and upcoming meetings. Mr. Fuller will call the Planning Board Chair.

### **Addition to Agenda:**

#### **Church/COA Parking Lot:**

Daryl Weyant and Don Willard have been speaking about the parking lot and the need for it to be done. Mr. Willard noted the Town would like to see 3-5 price proposals.

### **Reports:**

#### **Edwards Museum Updates:**

There was a discussion about the payment to Royal Renovations. Mr. Fuller reported that the change order was \$3,383 less than the original change order. The change order invoice was \$15,427. Mr. Fuller requested that \$8,000 be held back for the shutters and labor plus retainage. A payment of \$7,055.65 is being made to them toward the invoice. Mr. Fuller requested that an additional \$750 be held back from the payment for the painting for \$6,460 after the retainage was held back. Ms Lessard will see if the payment can be done in two checks, one for \$5,710 and the other for the \$750 to hold back the \$750 for the painting of the shutters. The building looks good and the items remaining to be done by Royal Renovations is replacing the shutters and putting up the lattice on the porch. The Select Board would like the portable toilet removed by the end of November.

#### **Cemetery Access Road Agreement:**

Ms Lessard has drawn up an agreement regarding the Cemetery access road and the neighbor who uses the road as her driveway. The Select Board reviewed the document and thought it was okay. They requested the Highway Superintendent look it over and give his approval.

#### **MVP Updates with Joe Gaxillo and Larry Cervelli:**

Ms Colson-Montgomery reported that the MVP Executive Committee were told that the Community liaisons couldn't be town employees because the State is encouraging fresh eyes be involved in the project. Ms Colson-Montgomery noted that may be difficult for small communities. Mr. Gaxillo reported that the committee is meeting weekly. They are still working on the MVP 2.0 contract with PVPC (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission) as some of the dates needed to be changed. The final draft of the contract was given to the Select Board for signing. Ms Colson-Montgomery made a motion, seconded by Mr. Willard and unanimously voted to sign the contract with the PVPC on behalf of the MVP Executive Committee. It was noted that this is a reimbursable grant. There was a discussion about the process for paying bills and then requesting for reimbursement from the State. The town accountant has stated that they have no problem running the budget line in a negative balance until reimbursement comes in. As far as the DLTA (Division of Local Technical Assistance) grant, the PVPC will be doing a video of the conditions at the Town Office and Fire Station. A list has been sent to the PVPC on who will be interviewed. The firefighters will be Chief Hewes, Alex Kassell, Zach Hewes and Tara Sherman. Those names will be provided to Ken Comia from PVPC.

#### **Recreation Committee Updates:**

Mr. Willard reported that the Halloween events were a success. Approximately 150-200 people participated and there were 17 vehicles that did the Trunk or Treat portion in the COA (Council on Aging) parking lot. He reported there were some issues trying to get pumpkins this year but got a deal at Walmart and ended up purchasing 41 pumpkins total that were all given out. The total cost for the pumpkins was \$144. Unfortunately, the night before Halloween, someone smashed 12 of the pumpkins that were on display on the bridge in West Chesterfield.

#### **School Updates:**

Nothing new to report

**Town Administrator Report:**

**Police Department Room:**

Vee Builders gave a price of \$2410 to level the floor and do the underlayment in the Police Department room. Ms Colson-Montgomery made a motion, seconded by Mr. Willard and unanimously voted to have Vee Builders level the floor and install the underlayment. Martin's Flooring will install the new floor and Whitely Electric will do the electrical work. Ms Lessard will contact all the vendors and get the project started.

**Website Annual Support:**

Ms Lessard and Mr. Fuller spoke with Civic Plus. They agreed to keep the numbers as budgeted for this year with a 10% lift for FY25 and then a potential 3% increase in subsequent years, the new SOW (Statement of Work) was received and the second year numbers were high. Another meeting will be scheduled with Thomas Trapp from CivicPlus.

**Entre:**

More RAM is needed for the Tax Collector's computer for the new tax software that is coming soon. The Treasurer has been having trouble with her computer in the Town Office being very sluggish and slow to respond. It is making her work time doubled while she is waiting for it to respond. She had added a remote deposit machine for Adams bank that we believe is slowing her computer down. So she is having 8GB RAM added to her computer along with a SSD to replace the hard drive which will allow her computer to be quicker to respond. In addition, the Treasurer has a town computer at her house, which is not working properly. She has needed to use her own computer to remote in to the computer here. Entre has ordered her a new desktop for her home.

**Locks at COA:**

The locks at the COA were changed on Wednesday. Everyone was notified to get a key from the COA. The Select Board noted that the request to change the locks came from the COA Director after some furniture went missing and then returned. Ms Gibeau had no idea who had "borrowed" the tables. Ms Gibeau also would like a better accounting of who has keys to the building. The COA will keep a record of the keys that are assigned or loaned out.

**Municibid:**

Bidding Ended for all the items. All but one item sold.

**Mice at Library:**

On Thursday, October 26, the Librarian reported having no internet or telephone at the Library. She called WGE but they said it was not their service. She called Entre and they tested. They had to come out and found that a mouse had chewed through the internet wire. On Saturday, she had the same problem and had Entre come up and they found another chewed wire. Some mousetraps were set and one mouse has been caught so far. The Select Board noted that the Librarian should call the Town Administrator first and not just call the IT Company in on a weekend.

**5:00 P.M. Bea von Hagke, HCDC (Hilltown Community Development Corporation) Public Hearing**

Ms von Hagke had requested to hold a public hearing to discuss two items in the FY21 CDBG Grant. The first item was a budget amendment need to be done to shift housing rehab funds from 4C to 4A and the second was to shift funds from the It Takes a Village (ITAV) budget to the Hilltown Elder Network

(HEN) and the Food Pantry. Ms von Hagke explained that the HCDC needed to shift \$32,500 from the housing rehab funds to the administrative budget. There has been an increase in the administrative side of administering the grants. Eight housing rehab applicants dropped out due to the increase in verifying income eligibility. With virtual payments through Venmo and PayPal being factors, it takes a lot of administrative time trying to verify the incomes of the applicants. Ms von Hagke is advocating for the administrative costs to increase from 17% to 30%. There is also a new requirement to put each home/property through a Massachusetts Historic Commission review before they can proceed with any rehab work. Ms von Hagke is trying to get that requirement changed to only houses over 50 years of age, as some homes are not considered a historic home. The next item is shift remaining funds from the ITAV budget to be split between the HEN program and the Food Pantry. ITAV has pulled out of the program due to a dramatic drop in demand. ITAV is relinquishing their remaining funds, which total a little over \$13,000 and the HCDC is suggesting the money go to the two remaining social service programs. Ms Colson-Montgomery made a motion, seconded by Mr. Willard and unanimously voted to approve the program and budget revision as presented.

Ms von Hagke also reported that the FY24 grant process would begin on December 8.

#### **MVP (Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness) Letter of Expression of Interest**

A letter on town letterhead was presented to the Select Board to sign in support of a request to the state MVP program to survey the town ash trees and then use the ash trees for flooring for Habitat for Humanity. The Select Board reviewed the letter and Ms Colson Montgomery made a motion, seconded by Mr. Willard and unanimously voted to sign the Expression of Interest. Ms Lessard will upload the letter to attach with the online application.

#### **Letter from Sarah Prince:**

The Select Board received a letter written by Sarah Prince, acting as the Friends of the Library president to express their disappointment in the Select Board's decision to not let Gigi Kaeser use the Dunham building for an exhibit. The Board has concerns about lack of parking at the Dunham building. There are at most only four spaces available for parking. Parking on Main Road by the Dunham building would be dangerous. The building is not heated in the winter and the building is winterized. The Board suggested that Town Hall or the Community Center would be better suited for a community event as both buildings have adequate parking, better heating and air-conditioning and better bathroom facilities. A letter explaining the Board's decision will be written by the Town Administrator and discussed at the next meeting. Ms Lessard had spoken with Ms Kaeser regarding the reasons.

#### **Internet:**

It was noted that since Mr. Fuller is now remoting in to the meetings, the fiber does not support a stable internet connection at the Town Office. It was noted that Mr. Fuller has been in offices with over 100 employees on computers at the same time and do not have the issues that the Town Office has especially on Monday nights. This will be discussed further.

#### **WOLA (Wright-Ostermier Landscape Architects):**

Mr. Fuller would like to talk with WOLA to wrap up their contract with the Town. Mr. Fuller will call WOLA to discuss what they need from the Town to finish their presentation. He will report on the call at a future meeting.

**Adjourn:**

Ms Colson-Montgomery made a motion, seconded by Mr. Willard and unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 5:57 p.m.