



**Chesterfield Select Board Minutes
Monday, November 22, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.
Town Office Building - 422 Main Road**

The Select Board meeting was called to order at 4:15 p.m. by Mr. Fuller.

Select Board Members Present: Trish Colson-Montgomery and Donald Willard (arrived late 4:50 p.m.)

Select Board Members Participating Remotely: Roger Fuller

Select Board Members Absent: None

Town Administrator Present: Brenda Lessard

Public Officials Present: Matt Smith-Highway Superintendent, Ed Severance-Assessors, Mary Ann Severance-Rys-Assessors, Crystal Ames-Assessors

Public Officials Present Via ZOOM: Janice Gibeau-COA Director

General Public Present: John LaRue

General Public Present Via ZOOM: Shaw Israel Izikson-Country Journal Editor

Recorder of Minutes: Brenda Lessard

Common Acronyms:

ACO-Animal Control Officer
CDBG: Community Development Block Grant
COA: Council of Aging
DCR: Department of Conservation and Recreation
DEP: Department of Environmental Protection
DHCD: Department of Housing and Community Development
DLTA: Direct Local Technical Assistance
DOT: Department of Transportation
EMD: Emergency Management Director
FRCOG: Franklin County Council of Governments
HCDC: Hilltown Community Development Corporation
HRHS: Hampshire Regional High School
ISP: Internet Service Provider
MassDOT: Massachusetts Department of Transportation
MLP: Municipal Light Plant
PILOT: Payment in Lieu of Taxes
PVPC: Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
RFP: Request for Proposals
RFQ: Request for Quotes
WCPO: West Chesterfield Post Office
WG&E: Westfield Gas & Electric

Video Conference Hybrid Meeting:

Mr. Fuller stated that this Select Board meeting is being conducted in a hybrid model but with access consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of June 16, 2021. Governor Baker signed into law an Act Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency. This Act includes an extension, until April 1, 2022, of the remote meeting provisions of his March 12, 2020, Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law. The new law has two major parts:

First, the new law allows public bodies to continue providing live "adequate, alternative means" of public access to the deliberations of the public body, instead of holding meetings in a public place that is open and physically accessible to the public. "Adequate, alternative means" may include, without limitation, providing public access through telephone, internet, or satellite enabled audio or video conferencing or any other technology that enables the public to clearly follow the proceedings of the public body in real time.

Second, the new law authorizes all members of a public body to continue participating in meetings remotely; the Open Meeting Law's requirement that a quorum of the body and the chair be physically present at the meeting location remains suspended.

Warrants:

The Select Board reviewed and signed the W22-11 and WP22-11 warrants.

5:00 P.M. Little Comfort Road Hanging Tree Branch Complaint:

John LaRue, who lives at the corner of East Street and Little Comfort Road was in to discuss a complaint he made about a dangerous tree branch that overhangs Little Comfort Road. This large branch is 18-20" in diameter and is partially broken off. He first made a complaint on 8/23/21 to the Highway Superintendent who came out to look at it and Mr. Smith told Mr. LaRue he would see if the town had the equipment to get the branch down safely. In early September, Mr. LaRue contacted the Select Boards office and the Highway Superintendent again about the branch. The Tree Warden was asked to look at the tree. On 9/23/21, Mr. Smith informed Mr. LaRue the town did not have the equipment to take the branch down and he and the Tree Warden made a determination that the tree is not a town-owned tree. Mr. LaRue then spoke with the neighbor about a trailer that was under the tree branch and asked if the neighbor could assist in getting the branch down. Mr. LaRue would like to have the branch removed as it is a danger to anyone passing through that road which is used by hikers and hunters.

The Select Board reported that Little Comfort Road is a discontinued road. The Town Clerk provided a paper that showed the road was discontinued in 1887. The town does not maintain that road. It is unclear if Little Comfort Road reverted back to the property owners or was left unclaimed. Mr. Fuller opined that the tree is not in the town's jurisdiction, the town is not responsible for taking the tree down. The Select Board suggested that Mr. LaRue go to probate to find out. It is unclear if an easement exists through that piece of property either. The Select Board opined that whoever's property the tree is on is responsible to remove the branch.

Mr. Smith opined to the Board and Mr. LaRue that the tree in question is definitely not a town tree. Mr. Smith will meet Mr. LaRue at the property on Tuesday, November 23rd to check the road set-backs and Mr. Smith will show why he is reporting the tree to not be town-owned.

Minutes:

Ms. Colson-Montgomery made a motion, seconded by Mr. Willard and unanimously voted to accept the Minutes of November 8, 2021, as amended.

Additions to Agenda:

Building Oversight Committee:

Jan Gibeau, who is the COA Director reported to the Select Board that she would like to see a meeting of the Building Oversight Committee. She has had a request to rent out the Community Center for a “for Profit” business to hold exercise classes. It was noted during the meeting that the liability insurance does not cover a profit enterprise using the Community Center. Ms. Gibeau suggested that Don Willard be appointed as the Select Board member on the Community Center Oversight Committee. Ms. Colson-Montgomery made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fuller to appoint Mr. Willard to the Community Center Oversight Committee, replacing Mr. Recos, who was the last Select Board member on the committee. The vote was unanimous. Ms. Gibeau noted that Mary Ann Coleman may not wish to remain on the committee. Ms. Gibeau will reach out to her and report back to the Select Board and will soon schedule a meeting of the committee to discuss the request.

Appointment to Council on Aging:

Ms. Gibeau also reported that James Martin wishes to serve on the COA Committee. There are three member who no longer wish to be on the committee. These include: Bev Pomeroy, Milenna Curtis and Deb Thibault. Ms. Colson-Montgomery made a motion, seconded by Mr. Willard and unanimously voted to appoint James Martin to the COA Committee.

Walk Audit Report:

Ms. Gibeau asked if the Select Board had looked over the report from WalkBoston. The members had not completely read it yet. Ms. Gibeau voiced concern on some of the things in the report and things that were not in the report. She stated that it does not drive a bigger discussion on how to move forward. Ms. Gibeau did report that Kate Bavelock is leaving the HCDC and that a meeting should be setup to discuss the report with the HCDC. Mr. Willard opined that the study was not an accurate reflection of what he noted during the walk audit. Ms. Colson-Montgomery agreed and stated that she did not understand why swings in Russell Park were mentioned in the audit.

Request to have Wedding at Russell Park:

There was a request to hold a wedding and reception at Russell Park on July 23, 2022 at 2:00 pm. There will be approximately 75 people in attendance. There would be a ceremony and reception, which will include food. Ms. Colson-Montgomery has some concerns in regards to parking. She would like to know if a tent will be set-up. It was noted there is no consumption of alcoholic beverages in the Park. The Select Board noted that cars could park at 422 Main and guests could walk over to the park. The Select Board would like not more than four or five cars parked in the park. There was a discussion of a fee of \$200 of which \$100 would be returned if

all trash is removed and there are no damages. The couple would also need to rent a portable toilet for guests. Ms. Lessard will reach out to the requestor to discuss.

Request to Use Town Hall by Cultural Council:

Jeane Anastas sent an email request from the Cultural Council to sponsor a presentation at the Town Hall with a date uncertain. The Select Board is in agreement that they can use the Town Hall but noted the building is winterized from October until April each year and the heat is turned off. The board also suggested use of the Community Center. The Board would like a heads up on the date several weeks prior to make sure the building is cleaned up. The building is currently storing some items.

Russell Park Building:

Mr. Willard reported he had a recent conversation with Don Bisbee regarding the concrete work and hopefully the concrete work will be done by the end of November.

Chesterfield Post Office Hours and Community Bulletin Board:

Ms. Colson-Montgomery had a conversation with the clerk at the Chesterfield Post Office regarding the recent changes in lobby hours. The Select Board members have been receiving complaints that the lobby is closing at 6 p.m. instead of 8 p.m. Ms. Colson-Montgomery asked the clerk if they would reconsider to close the lobby at 7:00 p.m. as it is difficult for residents who work out of town to get to the post office to get their mail. The clerk stated that the reason for the earlier closing is due to vandalism and the Post Office will not budge on the hours. It was suggested that complaints may need to go above the local level.

Mr. Fuller also has been receiving complaints and stated that he had spoken with the owner of 6 North Road that rents space to the Post Office. Many community members are upset the community bulletin board has been taken down by the post office. Mr. Fuller asked the owner of the property if a board could be put on the building outside the post office entrance to allow residents a place to put up community information. The building's owner is open to that idea. It was suggested an aluminum framed bulletin board with locking doors could be installed in the space between the door and the window on the outside of the building. Mr. Fuller will discuss this further with the owner. Ms. Colson-Montgomery suggested not locking the board at first but to post a note that if vandalism occurs the board will be locked.

Town Administrators Report:

Meeting with ACO and Town Clerk:

Kelli Wainscott, the ACO, Ms. Lessard and Sandra Wickland, the Town Clerk had a recent meeting. Ms. Wainscott just attended some trainings through the State. There are some annual state inspections (Barn inspections and livestock inspections) Ms. Wainscott needs to do as animal inspector. There are several purchases the ACO would like to make that include: a large bird net, and a microchip scanner. The ACO may be able to get the scanner for free (she is looking into it). There was also a discussion of the possible need to raise dog licensing fees (\$10/\$20) to cover increased costs. Ms. Wainscott and Ms. Wickland also went over the list of dogs who remain unlicensed. Ms. Wainscott will start issuing fines for the late dog licensing. Most of these are residents who are chronically late or do not register. Ms. Wainscott plans to start filing monthly reports.

Tennis Court:

Ms. Lessard spoke with Jeff Zangler from VT Tennis and he stated he will be out this week to look at the tennis court and get an estimate to the town.

6 North Road Wetland Delineation:

An onsite meeting took place between Conservation and Ward Smith on Saturday, November 20th.

Green Communities Annual Report:

The Annual Report for 2021 is done and submitted to the state

Drop Cost & Make Ready Cost Reimbursement and Certification:

The money for reimbursement of drop costs (\$225,500.) has come in to the town and Janice has been notified that it needs to be put in separate line.

Ms. Lessard let the Treasurer know a bank statement needs to be sent to Bill Ennen showing it is in a non-interest bearing account.

The letter to request reimbursement of the additional make ready costs of \$226,317. needs to be signed by Ms. Colson-Montgomery.

Recycling Dividends Program Grant:

The town has been notified that they have received a \$4,900 grant from the State DEP. This grant is for use by the Board of Health and the transfer station.

Out of Office:

Ms. Lessard plans to take December 23, 24 and 27 off.

Phone System:

The estimated total cost to purchase the phones is \$2084. This price is based on the information from Richard Carnell to TPX. There will also be an additional cost to purchase two wall mount brackets for the Library and Community Center. They can be purchased through Amazon for \$35 each. The list for phones was deemed to be not quite complete as it was noted that several were not listed. Ms. Lessard will finalize the list with each department, send it back to TPX for a more precise cost. The Board would like to see the phones ordered this week if possible.

7:00 P.M. Tax Classification Hearing:

Mr. Fuller opened the Tax Classification Hearing at 7:02 p.m. Board of Assessors Chair Ed Severance was present along with members MaryAnn Severance-Rys and Crystal Ames. Mr. Severance recommended a single tax rate for the Town of Chesterfield. Ms. Colson-Montgomery made a motion to approve a single tax rate for the Town, seconded by Mr. Willard. Unanimous vote. Mr. Severance reported that this year's new growth in 2020 was 10-15% higher and in 2021 is 15-25% higher at this point of the year. Prices for seasonal homes on ponds and lakes are 40% higher. The towns usual real

estate sales are 6-8 per year but 2020 saw 19 sales and there have been 21 sales so far in 2021. It was noted that Broadband may have an effect on the increase in sales.

Mr. Fuller closed the Tax Classification Hearing at 7:08 p.m.

The Select Board had a discussion with the Assessors regarding changes to their office hours. This discussion was to ensure that the public is being served. Mr. Severence reported as of the end of October, the office will be open weekly on Monday nights.

Website:

The town website has been down (still is as of Friday, 11/19). James Saccento is working with GoDaddy to try and get it up and running but the process has been slow. The town needs to move forward with this project. The current website is old and outdated.

The town needs to move the website project forward. The town received three quotes:

Municode: \$4,800 and \$2,100 annual cost

Proud City: \$5,200 and \$1,200 annual

Civic Plus: \$10,250 and \$2.250 annual

Ms. Lessard has spoken with the three companies. The Select Board looked over the proposals. The comparisons are not apples to apples. The initial build of the website and support needs to be looked at. The Board noted that most of the surrounding towns use Civic Plus. The town does not have the resources to have someone train for many hours nor build the initial website. Upkeep of the website will be on the town and good annual support will be needed from the company the town chooses. CivicPlus will be asked to attend a Select Board meeting on December 6th to give a presentation.

Meeting Adjourned:

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.