



Chesterfield Select Board Minutes
Monday, December 19, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.
Town Office Building - 422 Main Road

The Select Board meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Mr. Fuller.

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

Select Board Members Participating Remotely: Roger Fuller

Select Board Members Absent:

Town Administrator Present:

Public Officials Present: Matt Smith, Highway Superintendent; Larry Holmberg, Emergency Management Director & Sandy Wickland, Town Clerk

Public Officials Present Via ZOOM:

General Public Present: Susan Labrie

General Public Present Via ZOOM:

Recorder of Minutes: Brenda Lessard

On July 16, 2022, Governor Baker signed into law An Act Relative to Extending Certain State of Emergency Accommodations, which, among other things, extends the expiration of the provisions pertaining to the Open Meeting Law to March 31, 2023. Specifically, this 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 Act does not make any new changes to the Open Meeting Law other than extending the expiration date of the temporary provisions regarding remote meetings from July 15, 2022, to March 31, 2023

This meeting was conducted with ZOOM access for the public.

4:30 PM: Matt Smith, Highway Superintendent, monthly report:

Mr. Smith was in to give an update to the board regarding the highway operations.

Complaint:

A complaint was received from a resident on Farmhouse Road, which is a private road that is plowed by the Town per an agreement with the Lake Damon Association, regarding the condition of the road during the recent storm. There were no other complaints.

Old Chesterfield Road:

Mr. Fuller asked about the Chapter 90 funds left from the Old Chesterfield Road project. Mr. Smith reported that he does not think there would be that much money left over to pay for the pole relocations on Old Chesterfield Road as he still has the final sealing to do on the road. He also reported that an adjustment needs to be made on the excavator rental as he was charged too much. He will report back on how much is left in the budget after the adjustment.

Soaker Road:

Mr. Fuller asked Mr. Smith if he had spoken with Phil Labbee regarding the status of Soaker Road. Mr. Smith stated he had and that it is not a town road. Mr. Smith has done some research on old maps. The 1860 map shows the road dead ends before the pond and the 1860-1874 map shows that the road goes to the pond. Mr. Smith also noted he has been on the highway department for 23 years now and he has not ever seen the town plow Soaker Road.

Windsor and Pay Rates for Highway:

Mr. Smith reported that at a MassDOT (Massachusetts Department of Transportation) district meeting he attended, a member of the Windsor Select Board had given a presentation on “Attracting and Retaining the Right DPW People”. Mr. Smith also noted that Windsor is offering \$30.00/hr. as a starting rate. Mr. Smith will provide the board with the contact info of the Windsor Select Board member if they would like to see the presentation or talk with him.

5:00 PM: Susan Labrie, re: Wage and Compensation Plan Updating and Personnel Policy:

Ms. Labrie was asked by Roger Fuller to attend the meeting to discuss the possibility of her updating the “Don Jacobs” chart of wages and compensation. The information needs to be updated every three years and the last information was done in 2020. The board opined that Ms. Labrie had worked with Don Jacobs and had learned the process for updating the chart. Ms. Colson-Montgomery noted there are three items the board would like Ms. Labrie to do.

1. Align the proposed Personnel Policy with the current Personnel Policy. After the proposed new policy was reviewed by the Select Board, it was noted that some items in the current policy may have been left out of the proposed new one. The board wants to make sure the current policy is in the new one.
2. Wage and Compensation. The board would like Ms. Labrie to contact the surrounding towns to ask about wage rates and update the “Don Jacobs Chart” with the updated wage rates. This information is needed prior to the budgeting season which will begin soon. The towns that were used by Don Jacobs were Blandford, Chester, Cummington, Huntington, Middlefield, Russell and Worthington. Ms. Colson-Montgomery opined the towns to be used should include the surrounding towns along with the next layer of surrounding towns.
3. Finance Committee Policy. The finance committee had met with the Select Board to discuss a policy they had written for their board. The Select Board reviewed the recommended policy and have changed several items and would like to put portions of the finance committee policy as an appendix to the Personnel Policy regarding the compensation piece. The Select Board would like Ms. Labrie to review the policy written by the Finance Committee and take the changes the Select Board would like to make and incorporate it into a policy to add to the proposed new Personnel Policy.

The Select Board would like this work completed by the end of January. Ms. Labrie is willing to take on this task. She will need the old and new personnel policy sent to her along with the Finance Committee policy. The Select Board would like to review the work before a final response is given to the Finance Committee regarding the wage and compensation updates.

Minutes:

Ms. Colson-Montgomery made a motion, seconded by Mr. Willard to approve the Minutes of 12/5/22 and 12/7/22 as amended. The motion was unanimously voted.

Additions to Agenda:

Jesse McMillan's Resignation:

Mr. Willard reported that Mr. McMillan's last day was Friday, December 16th, which was a snow day. The Superintendent will be at the New Hingham Regional Elementary School (NHRES) this week then Lauren Parret will be in as an interim until a new interim principal from the Westhampton school will starting. Mr. Willard reported there were ten people who showed interest in the interim position. Mr. Willard also reported that more work needs to be put into any new contract with a new principal. Mr. Fuller opined that Mr. McMillan should have been held to his 60-day notice which was in his contract. Mr. Willard reported that counsel advised the school committee that the towns could not enforce that issue.

Town Office Basement Issues:

Ms. Colson-Montgomery asked if Ms. Brigley has been notified to check the basement weekly to ensure the dehumidifier is running. Ms. Colson-Montgomery also would like to make sure the outlet that is not working is checked by an electrician. Ms. Lessard will follow up with both items.

MVP Grant Process Presentation:

Larry Cervelli would like the Select Board to meet with CarrieAnne Petrik, the MVP Regional Coordinator with the State, so she can do a presentation on the Municipal Vulnerability Program (MVP) grant process. It was requested to do it in mid to late January. The Select Board will have her attend the 1/17/22 Select Board meeting.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Grant:

Mr. Willard reported that the Hilltown Community Development Corporation (HCDC) will not be persuing a grant to make ADA changes at the town buildings.

Gary Graves, Electrical Inspector:

Mr. Graves had spoken with the town administrator regarding his full support of the online permitting process that the building inspector would like to have implemented for the town. Mr. Graves would like to see a meeting set up between the inspectors, Select Board and any other interested departments to discuss the process further.

Shredding at Town Office:

Ms. Lessard has set up Proshred to come on Friday, December 23, 2022 to pick up some boxes for shredding. The boxes will be moved to the center hallway for easier pickup.

Reports:

Holiday Parade:

Mr. Willard reported that the parade was held Sunday, December 18th. There were 15-20 vehicles in the parade and he noted there were approximately 30 groups of people that he observed watching the parade. He estimated 125-140 people. The parade took one hour and 45 minutes until the completion. It was a good holiday event.

Highland Ambulance Meeting:

Ms. Colson-Montgomery reported that she had attended the Highland Ambulance meeting on December 13th in Goshen. This meeting was in response to a new law that the state passed in 2020 and goes into effect in January 2023 which assesses ambulance services based on revenue to pay into a trust fund to reimburse towns for Medicaid and Mass Health transfers. This assessment will affect the Highland Ambulance in the amount of \$40,000. Highland will receive money back from the fund but in the process will have a net loss of \$10,000 out of their budget. If they assess the towns more, the assessment will be even larger as the state is including the towns reimbursements as revenue. Cities like Northampton and Easthampton will not have to pay these assessments. As Highland Ambulance is not a municipally owned ambulance service, Highland will have to pay this assessment. Lindsay Sabadosa was at the meeting to ask the towns for suggestions on what should be done. There were several suggestions but not all were practical. Ms. Colson-Montgomery opined at that meeting and to the Select Board that the legislature did not let the towns know this was coming, did not do an impact study and did something that is hurtful to small towns and rural communities to benefit the larger cities and town in the eastern part of the state. Ms. Sabadosa is working to see if she can get Highland Ambulance into an exempt group on its own as this new law is very unfair to the towns.

Firefighter Accident:

Ms. Lessard reported that one of the firefighters had an accident on December 11th returning from a call in her own vehicle. Ms. Lessard spoke with the insurance company and there may be up to \$5,000 to pay for damages. Bridgid, with Cabot Risk, is not sure if a claim should be made as an automobile accident or a road defect claim as the road was slick. Ms. Lessard sent both claim forms to Chief Hewes to have the firefighter fill out. The police report is completed and once Ms. Lessard has the forms, she will submit them to Cabot Risk.

Town Administrators Report:

Recreation Shed Door:

Ron Loven looked at the shed door and has adjusted the door.

Fall Tree Removal:

The tree removal work has been done and JB Lynch has okayed the payment to LashCo. He said they did a great job as always.

Dishwasher at COA:

The dishwasher was repaired by Hobart. There were several parts that needed changing and the serviceman suggested that an anti-lime scale detergent be run through the machine every two weeks until completely cleaned, then run through once a month for maintenance.

Heating Oil:

All of 462 gallons of the FY22 heating oil (at the much lower price) has been delivered by Sandri to the town. Ms. Lessard has lifted the temporary hold with Mirabito on heating oil deliveries at the Town Office and Council on Aging.

Pressure Tank at Highway:

Matt Smith fixed the pressure tank at the Highway garage and sent pictures which Ms. Lessard forwarded to the inspector from the state. I received notice from Liberty Mutual that confirmation of completion has been received in the form of pictures and the violation has been marked closed.

Meeting with Lindsay Sabadosa:

Ms. Lessard scheduled Ms. Sabadosa to come in to speak with the Select Board at the 2/13/23 meeting at 4:45 PM

Police Computers:

The Police Chief reported both his computers will need replacing. They are both from 2014. The Select Board opined that he will need to ask for a Reserve Fund Transfer from the Finance Committee if one has to be replaced in this fiscal year. If they can wait until the next fiscal year, the town administrator will add them to the list of computers to replace in FY24.

Storage area in boiler room.

After the fire alarm problem, it was reported that there was leaking in the storage area in the boiler room. Ron Loven looked at the storage area to see if he could determine what was leaking. He did not see any leak except the steam pipes are dripping. Ms. Lessard and Mr. Loven talked about putting in a vent to help with drying the area out instead of leaving the area closed up tight with little air flow.

Fire Station:

Chief Hewes reported that the internet is not working at the fire station which explains issues they have had with the phones. The issues have been reported to TPX regarding his calls not being forwarded to his cell phone. It appears the phones were not working as the internet was down. Ms. Lessard went to the fire station several times on Thursday, December 15th and booted the system and the phones. Ms. Lessard had spoken with Entre and WhipCity. WhipCity will send someone out to look. Ms. Lessard sent them pictures of the whole setup. It appears that things are plugged into a portable router which was not there the last time Ms. Lessard was upstairs at the Fire Station. Entre will also reach out to WhipCity so the town can get the phones and internet working again.

Action Items:

Liquor Licenses:

Ms. Colson-Montgomery made a motion, seconded by Mr. Willard and unanimously voted to approve the liquor license for the 4 Seasons Club and the two liquor licenses for the Chesterfield General Store.

Date for Public Forum re: 6 North Road Designs:

Emily Wright from Wright-Ostermier Landscape Architects (WOLA) requested the Select Board set a date for the next public forum which will be in January. The Select Board looked at the dates and there were issues with all except Monday, January 23, 2023 at 7:00 pm. It was discussed if this forum should be held via ZOOM. A discussion will need to be had with WOLA to ensure less sound problems than the last forum.

Larry Holmberg, Emergency Management Director (EMD):

Mr. Holmberg was in to discuss several items.

1. To get a signature on the MassDOT (Massachusetts Department of Transportation) grant paperwork to get reimbursement for the variable signs. Ms. Colson-Montgomery signed the paperwork.
2. **Hazard Mitigation Grant.** The state is now requiring the towns to follow federal guidelines instead of state guideline for the procurement process. This will require a RFQ (Request for Quotes) to go out. Mr. Holmberg got Agawam's RFQ and has started a Scope of Work for Chesterfield's grant. It will need dates added and be put on town letterhead. Mr. Holmberg will work with Ms. Lessard to get it done. Mr. Fuller wants to look at the paperwork before it goes out. Agawam submitted to Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and got three responses. It will need to get posted on the town website also.
3. Mr. Holmberg reported that the EMD truck was in the repair shop and they found eight of the twelve bolts on the manifold were broken. The repair cost \$1200 and left the EMD budget with \$60 in Chesterfield and Goshen's EMD budgets. Mr. Holmberg is also having issues with the snow plow on the truck. He is working with Matt Smith to see if they can fix the issue but that may require work in a repair shop. Mr. Holmberg will be going to the Finance Committee to ask for a Reserve Fund Transfer to cover Chesterfield's share of the unexpected bill.
4. Mr. Holmberg reported he had attended a webinar with Eversource. They are still reporting that brownouts and outages may be possible. Eversource may target industry first. Mr. Holmberg reported that if this happens he will only have approximately a ten-minute notice. These outages or brownouts may last for four to six hours and would most likely occur during the daytime hours. Mr. Holmberg stated he would put out a CODERED message immediately if he gets notification of an outage.

Sandy Wickland, Town Clerk:

It was reported that a possible Public Records Request may be coming in very soon regarding a request for a release of discussions with the Town Attorney about the proposed cannabis bylaw. This was reported after the Select Board received an email from a concerned resident. Mr. Fuller had responded to his email about his concerns.

Meeting Adjourned:

Ms. Colson-Montgomery made a motion, seconded by Mr. Willard to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m. The vote was unanimous.