



**Chesterfield Select Board Minutes
Monday, March 14, 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 Donald Willard

Select Board Members Participating Remotely: Roger Fuller

Select Board Members Absent: None

Town Administrator Present: Brenda Lessard

Public Officials Present: CJ Lammers, Planning Board; Lenore Pittsinger, Tax Collector; Meg McWherter, Treasurer; Sandy Wickland, Town Clerk; Mike Malouin, Police Chief; Peter Fappiano, Police Officer

Public Officials Present Via ZOOM: John Follet, Conservation Commission

General Public Present:

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\

HAEMS: Hilltown Ambulance Emergency Management Services

HCDC: Hilltown Community Development Corporation

MassDOT: Massachusetts Department of Transportation

MLP: Municipal Light Plant

MSDS: Materials Safety Data Sheets

PILOT: Payment in Lieu of Taxes

PVPC: Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

RFP: Request for Proposals

RFQ: Request for Quotes

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.

Minutes:

Mr. Willard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fuller, and unanimously voted to accept the Minutes of 2/28/22 as written.

Warrants:

The Select Board reviewed and signed the W22-19, WP22-19, and WBB22-19 warrants.

Reports:

Community Bulletin Board:

Mr. Willard reported he had two copies of the key made for the community bulletin board. One copy he put on a chain, attached to the bulletin board, one copy is with Greg, the owner of the General Store and the other copy will be left in the Select Board's office with the Town Administrator.

Accountant Meeting:

Mr. Fuller reported that he and the Town Administrator had met via ZOOM with Eric Kinsherf, Janice Boucher, and Lisa Dorr, who handles the Town's accounting. This meeting was set up by Eric Kinsherf to get to know the Town Administrator better and to discuss if any issues or problems are present in the current process. The meeting went very well. Mr. Fuller opined to the accountants that the Town Administrator should not be responsible for ensuring there are no errors in calculating time sheets or warrants. That responsibility should be on the department heads. The Town Administrator will put the warrant together and scan it to the accountants who will then enter and review the warrants. If there are any issues, Kinsherf will email the Town Administrator who will be the only point of contact and she will notify the correct department of the error and try to get correct invoices, back-up, etc. Kinsherf reported there are no more issues now than there were in the past.

HAEMS Budget:

Mr. Fuller reported there is nothing to report. He has not received any updated budget yet.

5:15 P.M.- Meeting with John Follet and CJ Lammers re: Open Space Plan:

Mr. Follet and Ms. Lammers had requested to meet with the Select Board to keep them informed of the Town's Open Space Report. The Town was awarded a \$9,900 grant to do an updated Open Space and Recreation Plan. There is a requirement to spend at least a portion of the grant in this fiscal year. The Conway School will be doing the plan with input from the Town. John Follet reported they are trying to gather a committee to be appointed by the Select Board. He has been reaching out to some residents. The goal would be to have five members on the Committee. The Conway School would help steer the Town after a survey is done to see what direction the residents want the Town to go. Ms. Lammers will help roll out a survey through the summer into the fall. Ms. Lammers did report that she will be paid \$500 through the Conway School to do some work on the project which she will keep separate from the work she does on the Committee. Once the contract is written with the Conway School she will step aside. Mr. Follet stated that input from the Select Board is critical and he expects the survey to be well-rounded and the Town will decide how to use what open space it has. Ms. Lammers reported there are town things the Conway School does not do. One is an ADA assessment and the other is the public hearing once the plan is completed. The Select Board noted that an ADA assessment was done in 2019. That assessment will work as it is within the required seven-year window. Mr. Follet will be the signatory on the contract. Ms. Lessard will research the list of the previous committee and let Mr. Follet know who they were.

5:40 P.M.- Meeting with Lenore Pittsinger, Meg McWherter and Sandy Wickland:

The Tax Collector and Treasurer requested a meeting with the Select Board to discuss pay raises and the Financial Clerk budget line. Ms. Pittsinger noted that it was discussed several years ago about raises and bringing employees within a median line for salaries. She noted it is difficult to hire any new assistants at the current pay rates and the Town will be stuck when the current employees retire when the Town tries to find someone to do the jobs at the current pay rates. Wages have been going up in all sectors and public sector jobs have not increased to be in line where they should be. She noted the Treasurer's assistant should be getting at least \$25.00/hr. and the current rate is \$16.73/hr. Ms. McWherter and Ms. Pittsinger had attended a Finance Committee meeting and were told to speak to the Select Board about the issue. A compensation plan had been done several years ago but has not been accepted by the Town. The plan showed that their positions are being paid in the median range but on the lower end of that median range. That rate is currently \$21.15/hr. Ms. Pittsinger and Ms. McWherter opined that the three positions, Treasurer, Tax Collector and Town Clerk, are held by people with many years of experience and they should be compensated for that experience. The Select Board suggested the Tax Collector, Treasurer and Town Clerk take the compensation plan, which was provided to them, back to the Finance Committee to ask for the Finance Committee to increase the salaries for the next fiscal year budget to be more in line of where they are asking their salary to be.

Ms. Pittsinger also asked the Select Board if the Financial Clerk budget line could be used to hire a clerk who will do job training in the Collector's and Treasurer's office. They would like to see if they can find someone who may want to take over one of their positions when they retire. The Select Board are okay with the money in that budget line being used for that purpose. That line is not currently being used. The position would be for approximately three hours a week.

Town Administrator Report:

Internet Issues at Town Office:

The Police Department has been separated from the other Town Office Departments and put on their own Wi-Fi portal. Another access point was added in the hallway. The Town Clerk is reporting much faster response time on her computer. There have been no complaints since March 2nd.

Website Domains:

James Saccento requested the Select Board make a decision on web domains the Town has been paying for. They are up for renewal. One domain is being used for the Town website. Ms. Colson-Montgomery made a motion, seconded by Mr. Willard and unanimously voted to not renew the three unused web domains.

townofchesterfield.com

townofchesterfieldma.com being used for the town website

townofchesterfieldma.net

townofchesterfieldma.org

Muni Network Walkthrough with Entre:

Ms. Lessard and Entre IT visited all the town buildings housing computers. They also saw 6 North Road where a future municipal building may stand. There was also a visit to the hut where they met with Justin West, MLP Manager. Entre took pictures and did talk a bit about things. Entre is not sure there is room for a physical server in the hut. The rack is pretty filled up. They did talk about a possible cloud based server. They will be doing a proposal and sending it to the Town. A meeting will be set up later this week to discuss the proposal. Mr. Fuller and Ms. Lessard will attend.

Lafayette Trail Marker:

Ms. Lessard reached out to Pete Banister. He has never heard of any property to be known as Edwards Inn. Ms. Colson-Montgomery did some research and determined that the Edwards Inn became Moody's Tavern and was located at the intersection of Chesterfield Road and Sylvester Road. This location is in Northampton. Ms. Lessard will reach out to the Lafayette Trail Inc. to let them know what was researched and how they want to proceed.

Fire Department Request:

Alex Kassell from the Fire Department would like to know if they can use 6 North Road for training for the Rapid Intervention Team. This would involve a multi-town training with Goshen, Williamsburg, Cummington, Plainfield and Worthington. The training would include a fog machine inside the house and have the firefighters train with air packs and exercises for doing victim location drills. They are in the beginning of the planning but would hope to do the training mid to late April. They assured me there would be no damage done. They also are requesting possibly using the property beyond the one training.

The Select Board agree to the use of the building if liability can be worked out. Ms. Lessard will reach out to MIIA to see if the Town is covered liability wise for this use.

Phones:

The new phones have been delivered and are in the Select Board's office. Waiting on Richard Carnell from Whip City for further updates regarding the porting and installation.

CARES CvRF Closeout Certification:

Ms. Lessard has spent most of the week going over the CARES bills and trying to make sense of the reporting that was done. Town numbers of money spent was much higher than what the State says we spent. A reconciliation report has been requested and once the numbers are approved and the closeout complete, the Town will have to send the unspent money back to the State.

Cultural Council Appointments:

An email was received from Carol Jolly requesting Kester Warlow-Harry and Ellie Goudie-Averill be appointed to the Cultural Council. Ms. Colson-Montgomery made a motion, seconded by Mr. Willard and unanimously voted to appoint Ms. Warlow-Harry and Ms. Goudie-Averill to the Cultural Council for the remaining term for the seats they are filling.

Town Clerk Request for Bylaw Cleanup:

Sandy has been reviewing the General Government Bylaw and making sure it is updated. There are some requests she has:

- Amend Article 4, Section 1 by adding “A Municipal Light Plant Board of five citizens each for a term of three years”, this will need to include a Finance Committee and Select Board member and an industry expert.
- Question whether the Town needs to keep the Industrial Development Authority, as provided by MGL Chapter 40D
- Delete (under elected Town Boards) “a representative to the Hampshire Council” as it no longer exists

The Select Board are in agreement with these changes and warrant articles will be written to add to the Town Meeting warrant.

Additions to Agenda:**Recreation and Wrestling:**

Mr. Willard reported that the youth wrestling flyers are out and there is some interest from the other HRHS towns.

Finance Committee Email re: Police and Library Requests:

The Select Board reviewed the two requests from the Library and the Police Department. They will discuss further when they meet with the Finance Committee in late March or early April.

Animal Inspector:

An appointment letter for an Animal Inspector was received from the MA Department of Agricultural Resources. Ms. Colson-Montgomery made a motion, seconded by Mr. Willard, and unanimously voted to nominate Kelli Wainscott as Animal Inspector for a one-year term.

HCDC Request for FY20 Extension:

Ms. Colson-Montgomery read the letter that needs to be signed to request an extension of the FY20 Grant to finish some rehab projects. The term ends on 6/30/22 and they are requesting an extension to 12/31/22. Ms. Colson-Montgomery made a motion, seconded by Mr. Willard and unanimously voted to sign the request for extension as submitted by the HCDC.

Another letter needed signing also to certify a Citizen Participation Plan. Ms. Colson-Montgomery signed that letter.

Sign at Library:

An email was received from the Librarian, Cindy Squier, recommending a community bulletin board be erected at the Library, which she will keep current. The Select Board thanked her for her generosity in being willing to keep the board current and the offer to install a board there but do not want to install a community bulletin board on the Library lawn at this time. Ms. Lessard will follow up with Ms. Squier.

General Discussion:

Additional Request from Kurt Heidinger and BioCitizen:

At the Select Board meeting, on 2/28/22, the Select Board agreed to meet with Mr. Heidinger. After that agreement an email was received from Conservation Commission Chair, John Follet, who let the Select Board know that they were not supportive of Mr. Heidinger's charrette as the Town is not a stake holder in the project. Mr. Follet also provided a letter that was sent to Mr. Heidinger. Mr. Heidinger was notified that the Select Board did not see the necessity to meet with him as Conservation did not support the charrette. Mr. Heidinger has sent another email request to meet with the Select Board. Mr. Fuller opined that the Town is not a stakeholder so the discussion is not relevant to the Town. He is not in favor of the meeting. Mr. Willard opined that since Conservation has already met with Mr. Heidinger and they do not support the charrette, he is not in favor of meeting with Mr. Heidinger. Ms. Colson-Montgomery opined that the Town is not a stakeholder in the charrette and she is not in favor of meeting with him either. Ms. Lessard will notify Mr. Heidinger of the Select Board's decision. Mr. Follet notified the Select Board that Mr. Heidinger has made a FOIA Public Records request of the Conservation Commission.

Walkability Report Meeting:

Mr. Fuller reported that he, Mr. Willard, and Ms. Lessard had attended the ZOOM meeting to discuss the report and recommendations. One recommendation is to increase seating in the park and increase accessibility to the park. MassDOT is being contacted by WalkBoston to see if they have any recommendations to decrease speeding in the Town Center or increase visibility for the crosswalks. There will be another meeting on March 31st at 2 p.m.

Action Items:

Disclosure Filed by Sarah Hamilton:

Ms. Hamilton was recommended by the State Ethics Commission to file a Disclosure with the Select Board as she has been appointed to the Finance Committee by the Moderator. She also was hired to take Minutes for committees and boards but has refused compensation for that work. The Select Board will file the Disclosure.

6 North Road:

Ms. Lessard will follow up with Larry Holmberg about the septic field and try to set up a meeting with the Select Board, Police Chief, and Fire Chief, possibly at the next Select Board meeting.

Police Chief Agreement:

Chief Malouin and Peter Fappiano attended the meeting. The Police Chief signed the Employment Agreement between himself and the Town and gave it to the Select Board for signing.

Police Department Updates:**Sergeant Position:**

Chief Malouin notified the Select Board that he will be giving Peter Fappiano the Sergeant position. He was the only officer that showed interest. He would like to have an agreement drawn with a salary for Mr. Fappiano. Sgt. Fappiano will be working 12 hours/week. He will fill in for the Chief as needed, will be in charge of evidence and doing the billing from the Department. He is also doing details. Sgt. Fappiano will be in charge of the speed sign boards, doing the cruiser maintenance and doing any Acadis work.

Police Department Budget:

Chief Malouin notified the Select Board he will be meeting with the Finance Committee and requesting raises for the officers and Sergeant. He will also be asking for extra money for training and the Bridge Academy for officers. The chief also noted that items are a lot more expensive now and he is also asking for an increase in his expense line. He also has to purchase another evidence box. The department will need two. One for immediate storage and another for long term storage.

Calls:

Chief Malouin reported that call volume has been relatively quiet. There has been a request for a “Deer Crossing” signs on Cummington Road after an accident there with a deer. The resident is also asking for the deer carcass to be moved. Chief Malouin will be contacting the Highway Department.

Radios:

Chief Malouin reported again that the radios that were just purchased last year will be obsolete. They are not upgradeable and will not work with the State’s upgraded radio system. They will not function in six to eight months when the new system goes live. The radios will have no trade-in or resale value. The old Motorola radios will still function. These will be used. Chief Malouin plans to use money they receive back from the sale of a tractor that was seized during a drug raid. Once the tractor is sold, the money goes back to the State and they will disburse the Town’s share back to the Town. This money can only be used for narcotic training and equipment. Sgt. Fappiano is check to see if some radios can be purchased with the money.

The Select Board opined they were misled about the radios that were purchased in 2020 and they were a horrible investment. More investigation by the former Police Chief should have been done to ensure that the radios would not become obsolete so quickly. The Chief will look up the paperwork to see if the Company will compensate the Town in any way for the useless radios.

Meeting Adjourned:

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.