

**TOWN OF CHESTER AND CHESTER TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 5, 2012**

Moderator William E. Dakin, Jr. called the Chester Town School District Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He welcomed everyone and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Moderator Dakin asked the voters if there was any objection on non-voters speaking, if asked to. There was no objection.

Moderator Dakin introduced the Chester Town School Directors: Alison DesLauriers, Gertrude Bennett and he explained that Irene Wood was unable to attend tonight's meeting.

Moderator Dakin then read the Chester Town School District Warning.

The Legal Voters of the TOWN OF CHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT are hereby notified and warned to meet at Chester Town Hall, Second Floor in said Town on Monday March 5, 2012, at 6:00 p.m., to act on the following Articles. Voting on Articles 1, 2 and 3 will be by Australian Ballot on March 6, 2012, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Second Floor.

Article 1: To elect Town School District Officers for the ensuing year (Australian Ballot).

Article 2: To elect Directors for Chester-Andover Elementary School for the ensuing year (Australian Ballot).

Article 3: To elect Directors for Green Mountain Union High School for the ensuing year (Australian Ballot).

Article 4: To see if the Town School District will vote to raise money to pay current expenses and any part of the Town School District's indebtedness, if so, the amount, to whom paid, and when paid. Julie Hance made a motion to raise \$227,657.00, to be paid to the Town Treasurer on September 15, 2012. Seconded by Nora-Ellen Spaulding. Alison DesLauriers explained that the Town School District information can be found on page 60 of the Annual Report. Article 4 voted in the affirmative.

Article 5: To see if the Town School District will authorize the Directors to borrow money in anticipation of taxes to pay current expenses and any part of the Town School District's indebtedness. Edward Knapp moved Article 5 as written. Seconded by Julie Hance. Article 5 voted in the affirmative.

Article 6: To authorize the Town School District to accept payment from the State Department of Taxes under Act 68. William Lindsay moved Article 6 as written. Seconded by Shawn Cunningham. Article 6 voted in the affirmative.

Article 7: To act on the reports of the Town School District Officers for the year ending December 31, 2011. Julie Hance moved Article 7 as written. Seconded by Wanda Purdy. Article 7 voted in the affirmative.

Article 8: To transact any other business deemed proper when met. Alison DesLauriers explained that Irene Wood would not be running again for CTSD Director and thanked Irene for her years of service.

Meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Moderator Dakin explained that there would be a break for the Select Board to take their seats.

Moderator Dakin called the Town Meeting to order at 6:11 p.m. He then asked the voters if there was any objection to non-voters speaking, if asked to. There was no objection.

Moderator Dakin then introduced the Select Board: John DeBenedetti, Derek Suursoo, William Lindsay Thomas Bock, Arunas "Arne" Jonynas, Town Manager David Pisha and Town Clerk, Deborah Aldrich. He then read the Warning.

The Legal Voters of the TOWN OF CHESTER are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Chester Town Hall, Second Floor in said Town of Chester on Monday, March 5, 2012, at 6:00 p.m., to act on the following Articles. Voting on Article 1 will be by Australian Ballot on March 6, 2012, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Second Floor.

Article 1: To elect Town Officials for the ensuing year as provided by the Public Laws of Vermont and citizens to serve on the Budget Committee (Australian Ballot).

Article 2: To see if the Town will vote to accept gifts and trust funds for perpetual care of cemetery lots in accordance with conditions of said gifts and trusts as follows: Ken and Shirley Barrett, \$375.00; Nancy Anderson, \$250.00; Michael and Barbara Dwinell, \$250.00; Tom Litchfield, \$250.00; Daniel and Penelope Cote, \$250.00; Alan Raymond and Kimberly Amidon Farrar, \$250.00; Daland Potter, \$125.00. Nora-Ellen Spaulding moved Article 2 as written. Seconded by Shawn Cunningham. Article 2 voted in the affirmative.

Article 3: To see if the Town will vote to expend from the Capital Budget Reserve Fund, \$517,582.52 to be allocated as follows: \$105,467.00 for the purchase of a new dump truck; \$50,000.00 for the purchase of a pickup truck for the Highway Department, and an equipment shed; \$202,000.00 for the purchase of an ambulance and related up fitting equipment; \$45,000.00 for the purchase of an equipment truck for the Fire Department; \$34,770.00 for various bridge and culvert projects throughout Chester; \$11,000.00 for the repair of the equipment shed located at Pleasantview Cemetery; \$6,000.00 for the road signs, to include a flashing speed warning sign and other traffic control devices; \$33,345.52 for various town facility upgrades; \$30,000.00 for the engineering of the sidewalk project; all as indicated on the Capital Budget Program schedule and less any grant funds that may be received. Julie Hance moved Article 3 as written. Seconded by Nancy Lindsay. Lee Gustafson asked for an explanation on the rationale of these purchases. Town Manager David Pisha explained the dump truck was on the rotation schedule, the Highway Department pickup truck was ready to be traded and the equipment shed was to protect some of the equipment that the Highway Department has. The ambulance is 15 years old and needs replacement. The fire equipment truck is in need of replacement. There are bridge and culvert repairs still needed from Tropical Storm Irene. The equipment shed at Brookside Cemetery on

Main Street needs replacing. The Trustees of Public Funds gave the Town \$11,000.00 to replace this shed. Numerous road signs need replacing and several citizens have requested the purchase of a flashing speed sign. There will be upgrades made to the heating system on the Second Floor of Town Hall. There is a sidewalk project to be done in the near future. The Town was awarded a grant in the amount of \$274,000.00 for sidewalk repair. There was some discussion about the flashing speed sign and upgrades to town facilities. Sean Whalen made a motion to amend Article 3 to exclude the flashing speed sign, \$4,000.00. Seconded by Chris Curran. After some more discussion on the amendment Moderator Dakin re-read the Article as amended. Amendment for Article 3 failed. Moderator Dakin then re-read Article 3 as written. Article 3 voted in the affirmative.

Article 4: To see if the Town will vote to transfer an amount not to exceed \$90,000.00, together with any interest accrued, from the Popple Dungeon Road Fund to the Public Works Department to be used for paving. Said transfer will only take place if a grant award is obtained for the Popple Dungeon Road. William Lindsay moved Article 4 as written. Seconded by Nora-Ellen Spaulding. Lee Gustafson asked for the rationale behind this Article. John DeBenedetti explained that years ago there was an Article to establish a Popple Dungeon Fund and to fund it with \$30,000.00 a year for three years to fix a portion of Popple Dungeon Road. That fund now has the \$90,000.00 needed to fix the road, but if the Town can receive grant money to do that, then the \$90,000.00 will be used for paving. Article 4 voted in the affirmative.

Article 5: To see if the Town will vote to increase the salary of the Selectboard members from \$600.00 per person per year, to \$1,100.00 per person per year. This Article is by request of the elected Town Auditors. Ruth Douglas moved Article 5 as written. Seconded by Nancy Lindsay. Article 5 voted in the affirmative.

Article 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise money to pay current expenses and any part of the Town's indebtedness; if so, the amount, to whom and when paid. Julie Hance made a motion to raise the sum of \$2,360,859.84, to be paid to the Town Treasurer on September 15, 2012. Seconded by Derek Suursoo. Moderator Dakin then advised that David Pisha would make a presentation on the budget. (Copy attached) Tony Weinberger asked if the Town was liable for any spills to the river during Tropical Storm Irene. David Pisha replied no. Article 6 voted in the affirmative.

Article 7: To see if the Town will allocate a one-time payment in the amount of \$5,000.00 to the Whiting Library to defray the operating deficit of 2011. This article is by Selectboard request. Bruce Parks made a motion to move Article 7 as written. Seconded by Shawn Cunningham. Bruce Parks explained that the library had unanticipated expense from payroll. Wanda Purdy asked Mr. Parks if the library could use part of a \$20,000.00 bequest that they received. Mr. Parks explained that bequest was for certain things. They had used \$5,000.00 and the rest has been put into an interest bearing account. Nora-Ellen Spaulding asked if the \$57,000.00 that is in invested funds could be used. Shawn Cunningham explained that those funds are invested in stocks. Article 7 voted in the affirmative.

Article 8: To see if the Town will appropriate the sum of \$8,649.00 to the Springfield Regional Development Corporation. This article is by Selectboard request. Mark Curran moved Article 8 as written. Seconded by Alison DesLauriers. Lee Gustafson asked for the rationale behind this Article. Bob Flint, Executive Director of Springfield Regional Development Corporation, gave an explanation about what SRDC does. John Cable requested that SRDC give an explanation to the Auditors next year to be put in the Town Report. Article 8 voted in the affirmative.

Article 9: Shall the Town of Chester appropriate the sum of \$2,250 (two thousand two hundred fifty dollars) for the support of The Current Operated by Connecticut River Transit, Inc., to provide transit services to the residents of the Town of Chester. This article is by petition. Sean Whalen moved Article 9 as written. Seconded by James Bartley. Nancy Pennell asked if The Current is federally funded and if the riders pay? Stacie Hill, from The Current, replied that The Current does receive Federal and State funding and 20% comes from Towns. Mrs. Hill also explained that there is a charge for the bus that goes from Bellows Falls to Brattleboro and the bus that goes to the Upper Valley, the other buses are donations. The Current also has a dial a ride service. Lee Gustafson asked how many people ride the bus. Mrs. Hill replied 1,388 rides on the shopper bus and 4,336 dial a ride. Article 9 voted in the affirmative.

Article 10: Shall the Town of Chester appropriate the sum of \$2,700 (two thousand seven hundred dollars) to assist with the cost of operating the Meals on Wheels Program that provides daily hot and cold congregate and home-delivered meals and other nutritional needs to the qualified residents of Chester. This article is by petition. Brian Morris moved Article 10 as written. Seconded by Maria Contro. Maria Contro, Treasurer for Meals on Wheels, explained that Meals on Wheels has been in existence for 30 years and explained what Meal on Wheels does. Article 10 voted in the affirmative.

Article 11: Shall the Town of Chester appropriate the sum of \$800 (eight hundred dollars) to Windsor County Partners, for youth mentoring services provided to children in Windsor County. This article is by petition. Maria Contro moved Article 11 as written. Seconded by Patricia Benelli. Maria Contro explained that there are seven mentees from Chester in this program. Article 11 voted in the affirmative.

Article 12: Shall the Town of Chester appropriate the sum of \$400 (four hundred dollars) to Green Mountain RSVP&Volunteer Center of Windsor County to develop opportunities for people age 55 and older to positively impact the quality of life in the community through volunteer service. This article is by petition. Maria Contro moved Article 12 as written. Seconded by Patricia Benelli. Maria Contro explained what RSVP does for the people of Chester. Article 12 voted in the affirmative.

Article 13: To see if the Town of Chester will appropriate the sum of THREE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$3,000.00) to assist in the services of the Chester-Andover Family Center for individuals and families in need. This article is by petition. Edie Brown moved Article 13 as written. Seconded by Nancy Lindsay. Edie Brown, President of the Chester-Andover Family Center, explained that the family center serves 60 families with food assistance and that they have over 40 volunteers. Ms. Brown also explained that they are looking for a new home, and if they can find one, all food for the food shelf will come from the Vermont Food Bank. Article 13 voted in the affirmative.

Article 14: To see if the town will support SENIOR SOLUTIONS the Council on Aging for Southeastern VT for \$1200.00 to serve elders. This article is by petition. Nora-Ellen Spaulding moved Article 14 as written. Seconded by David Armstrong. Nora-Ellen Spaulding, President of Senior Solutions, explained that their report is on page 71 of the Annual Report. Article 14 voted in the affirmative.

Article 15: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of THIRTEEN THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND SEVEN DOLLARS (\$13,807.00) to help support the home health, maternal and child health, and hospice care provided in patients' homes and in community settings by the Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice of VT and NH.

This article is by petition. Edward Knapp moved Article 15 as written. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. Wanda Purdy asked if there was still an office in Chester. Sheila Garaffa explained that the main office is in Bellows Falls. Bradford Gorham asked what the budget was for the Visiting Nurse Association. Leigh Dakin explained that there report could be found on page 72 of the Annual Report. Article 15 voted in the affirmative.

Article 16: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of THREE THOUSAND AND FORTY FOUR DOLLARS (\$3,044) to help support outpatient, mental health, and substance abuse services by the staff of Health Care and Rehabilitation Services, Inc. This article is by petition.

James Bartley moved Article 16 as written. Seconded by Amy Howlett. James Bartley, a worker from HCRS, explained that HCRS served 140 residents and had 20,000 service hours last year in Chester. Article 16 voted in the affirmative.

Article 17: Shall the Town of Chester appropriate the sum of TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$2,000) to Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) to assist Chester in responding to the emergency needs of the community and providing all available and applicable services. This article is by petition.

Judy Verespy moved Article 17 as written. Seconded by Gladys Collins. Gladys Collins explained what SEVCA does. Article 17 voted in the affirmative.

Article 18: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of NINE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$900) to New Beginnings, Inc. for support services to victims of domestic and sexual violence and prevention education in schools and community. This article is by petition.

Jean Kiewel moved Article 18 as written. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. Jean Kiewel explained what New Beginnings does. Article 18 voted in the affirmative.

Article 19: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of ONE THOUSAND, EIGHT HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$1,800) toward the support of the Community Cares Network of Chester & Andover, Inc., a nonprofit volunteer organization which provides services to Senior Citizens, helping them to stay in their homes safely longer. This article is by petition.

David Armstrong moved Article 19 as written. Seconded by Brian Morris. David Armstrong explained that the report for Community Cares Network could be found on page 74 of the Annual Report. Article 19 voted in the affirmative.

Article 20: To see if the Town will authorize the Selectmen to borrow money in anticipation of taxes to pay current expenses and any part of the Town's indebtedness. Nora-Ellen Spaulding moved Article 20 as written. Seconded by William Lindsay. Article 20 voted in the affirmative.

Article 21: In light of the United States Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision that equates money with speech and gives corporations rights constitutionally intended for natural persons, shall the town of Chester, VT vote on March 5, 2012 to urge the Vermont Congressional Delegation and the U.S. Congress to propose a U.S. Constitutional amendment for the States' consideration which provides that money is not speech, and that corporations are not persons under the U.S. Constitution, that the General Assembly of the State of Vermont pass a similar

resolution, and that the town send its resolution to Vermont State and Federal representatives within thirty days of passage of this measure. This article is by petition. Tony Weinberger moved Article 21 as written. Seconded by Rosie Segal. Bradford Gorham made a motion to amend Article 21 to include Unions. Seconded by Sean Whalen. After some discussion on the amendment Moderator Dakin reread Article 21 as amended. **In light of the United States Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision that equates money with speech and gives corporations rights constitutionally intended for natural persons, shall the town of Chester, VT vote on March 5, 2012 to urge the Vermont Congressional Delegation and the U.S. Congress to propose a U.S. Constitutional amendment for the States' consideration which provides that money is not speech, and that corporations and unions are not persons under the U.S. Constitution, that the General Assembly of the State of Vermont pass a similar resolution, and that the town send its resolution to Vermont State and Federal representatives within thirty days of passage of this measure.** Amendment to Article 21 failed. After some more discussion Moderator Dakin reread the Article as written. Article 21 voted in the affirmative.

Article 22: We, the Chester community, are asserting our right to grow, buy, sell and eat local foods – our local food sovereignty. We are concerned about our ability to access food that is safe, healthy, natural, humane and compatible with the environment. We are choosing a local food system that benefits our neighbors and communities, instead of foods traveled thousands of miles with a much larger carbon footprint. We as an individual community within Vermont need to exceed the current statewide local food consumption rate of only five percent. Therefore, we the citizens of Chester, declare our right to produce, process, sell and purchase local foods. In recognition of Vermont's commitment to freedom and unity, we assert this vital right as the foundation of our local food sovereignty. This article is by petition. Ruth Zezza moved Article 22 as written. Seconded by John Cable. After some discussion about whether people already have the right to do this and if the Article is necessary Lisa Kaiman explained that people do not have the right to eat whatever they want. No small producer can grow and sell because of regulations. After some more discussion to support this Article and small farms, Lynn Cannon made a motion to table Article 22. Seconded by Jeff Kibbe. After some discussion on tabling an Article the motion failed. Moderator Dakin reread Article 22. Article 22 voted in the affirmative.

Article 23: To act on the reports of the Town Officers for the year ending December 31, 2011. Bruce Parks moved Article 23 as written. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. Tony Weinberger stated that on page 26 of the Annual Report, Municipal Planning, 2011 Budget, does not need to be carried out to so many decimal points. Also, on page 43, Zoning Administrator's Report states hours of 8:00 – 5:00 and in the Town Clerk's Report hours are 8:00 – 4:00. Article 23 voted in the affirmative.

Article 24: To transact any other business deemed proper when met, not including the expenditures of Town Funds or other business acted upon in the preceding Articles. Moderator Dakin introduced Representative Leigh Dakin. Mrs. Dakin gave an update on what has been going on in Montpelier. Bruce Parks thanked Cindy Collins for her nine years of service, as a Whiting Library Trustee.

Molly Ferris made a motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

A true record.

/s/ Deborah J. Aldrich, Town Clerk

/s/ John DeBenedetti, Chairman, Board of Selectmen

/s/ William E. Dakin, Jr., Moderator

/s/ Alison DesLauriers, Chairman, Chester Town School District