

**Town of Chelsea
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2013**

Regular Meeting:

Call to order:

Chairperson Ben Smith called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

Selectboard members present included Linda Leotsakos, and Benjamin Smith. Michael Pushard was absent. Scott Tilton, Town Manager was present along with about thirty-seven (37) residents and members of the public. John E. O'Donnell of John E. O'Donnell and Associates is present to update the residents and Board of Selectmen on the town wide property revaluation progress.

Ben Smith led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent Agenda:

- A. Approve Payroll Warrant # 029 for \$16,827.23.
- B. Approve Accounts Payable Warrant # 030 for \$ 8,127.36.
- C. Approve Accounts Payable Warrant # 031 for \$ 246,248.28.
- D. Approve Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes of December 19, 2012.

- A motion was made by Linda Leotsakos that was seconded by Ben Smith to approve
- Consent Agenda items A., B., C. and D. noting that A. is Payroll Warrant #029, B. is
- Accounts Payable Warrant #030. Vote was two (2) in the affirmative. Mike Pushard is
- absent. Motion carried.

The Board of Selectmen agreed to take Scheduled Item IV. B. Old Business #1. Town Wide Property Revaluation and Written Communication VI. A. 4th Quarter Report from Fire Chief out of order to accommodate the individuals' time constraints.

Public Comment on Items not part of the Agenda: None at this time.

Scheduled items:

B. Old Business:

1. John E. O'Donnell of John E. O'Donnell and Associates, stated that the first visits on all properties (outside information gathering) and digital photographs and sketches of all properties are complete. The representatives will begin to return to do the interior of homes and buildings that were not completed on the first visits.

John took questions from residents before, during, and after his overview of the progress to date. The essence of those discussions have been captured in the following notes.

Sales information for Chelsea properties and the information gathered for the land and building schedules are compiled to set property values. The proposed property values will be reviewed by the Town's Assessors then the proposed property value notice will be sent to property owners for additional input. Input can be gathered through scheduled meetings, email correspondence (John@JEOdonnell.com), or through conventional mail. Physical descriptions can be made available when requested through any of the aforementioned methods as excel files, PDF files, or as a paper copy. "I would like the property card information for Map __ Lot ____." The goal is that this will be a collaborative process among the John E. O'Donnell representatives, the Board of Assessors, and the property owners.

B. Old Business: continued,

John E. O'Donnell representatives look at the condition of the building's structural features, for example the windows, the roof, and the construction components. The goal is to get consistent values across the town properties. Even when there is not a lot of sale data available, the experience and judgment of the representatives allows for comparative property values within the Town of Chelsea. They do not use property values from other towns and assign them to Chelsea properties. The properties will all have 100% valuation and be consistent throughout the town instead of varying valuations (for example; 100% valuation for some properties and 75% valuation for others) as in the past. This allows for fair distribution of each landowner's individual share of the tax burden.

Other matters discussed included that the John E. O'Donnell representatives always knock, wait, and knock again. If there is no answer, the representative places a card letting the resident know that a representative visited the property and will be returning at a later date. The representative then measures the exterior of the building(s), takes photos, and makes any necessary sketches.

In response to questions from members of the public, Mr. O'Donnell explained that physical characteristics or land traits, for example steepness of banks, the presence of wetland, accessibility to property, if property is on a town road, a state road, or private drive will be noted in a brief narrative on the property card, added to the other gathered property data, and considered when assessing real estate during the revaluation process.

Mr. O'Donnell stated that personal property used in the operation of a business, not inventory, is required by the State of Maine Constitution to be taxed and will be taxed equitably under the revaluation. The B.E.T.E. Program aid businesses with personal property tax exemptions and the B.E.T.R. Program aids businesses with personal property tax reimbursements. The businesses in town will be identified and be sent a letter explaining the process. The representatives plan to meet with the owners and work cooperatively to assess personal property as part of the revaluation..

Linda Leotsakos asked John O'Donnell if he would be available to meet with the residents again as the process unfolds and more questions arise. He agreed. All meetings and workshops of the Board of Assessors are public meetings and residents are welcome to attend.

Written Communication:

- A. Shawn Ramage, Chelsea Fire Chief, submitted his written report to the Board of Selectmen for review and had some issues arise since the report was written. He met with Ranger Bill Cusick about a forestry pumper truck that is available from the Federal Surplus Program. The government is putting new vehicles into service and Bill strongly recommended to Shawn to complete and send in an application for the truck. The requirement for the Chelsea Fire Department would be to switch equipment from the old Chelsea truck to this one and paint it.

The V. A. Togus Fire Department has been in contact with Shawn regarding a 1999 fire truck that they are considering donating or loaning to the Town of Chelsea. It has the same capacity as Tank 2 (pumper fire truck) It may be 'stored' in Chelsea and available as mutual aide if needed. It is in excellent shape. The 1987 unit that Chelsea has been using may be able to be sold to an interested party that spoke to Shawn. He will meet with Scott Tilton and perhaps the Town Attorney to review the procedure to stay within the guidelines of the Chelsea Procurement Ordinance.

The Fire Department has received a grant from Walmart, one from the Maine Forestry Service, and one from Dead River Company.

Scheduled items:

A. New Business:

1. Scott Tilton brought the proposed Road Supervisor Job Description and Work Plan that was discussed in prior meetings to the Board of Selectmen for further review. This would allow Scott to remain in the Town Office while having someone “in the field” overseeing contractors’ work on roads, ditches, checking roads, etc. The proposal included a Supervisor for approximately 10 hours per week at \$21.48/hour, a part-time laborer to assist the Supervisor for approximately 6.5 hours per week at \$10.30/hour with a \$3.00/hour increase when equipment operation is required. Scott also provided projected annual costs for use of personal vehicles and mower at \$7591.20 vs. Town owned equipment at a cost of \$9,148.00 per year (for 5 years). He felt it would save approximately \$2000.00 from the current mowing contract.

Scott gathered this information for discussions during the budget process. Linda Leotsakos acknowledges the Town’s growing needs, but recognizes the cuts from the State down and the residents continued patience concerning the roads, ditches, etc.

The Board took no action on the proposal, indicating that it would be discussed as part of the budget development process.

The Board of Selectmen recognizes the number of volunteers in Town that have “stepped up” to help the Town save money and is appreciative of their continued efforts.

2. Scott Tilton brought a Safety Enhancement Grant application for approval. The grant funds would be used to purchase thirty (30) Reflective Cones, four (4) Type 1 Barricades and four (4) Roll Up Signs. This equipment would be purchased in the spring of 2013 for use by early summer of 2013. It is a 50/50 matching grant. The total cost of the equipment is \$1,671.50 with the Town and the grant each paying \$835.75.

- A motion was made by Linda Leotsakos that was seconded by Ben Smith to approve the grant application and authorize the Board of Selectmen Chairperson and the Town Manager to complete and submit the application. Vote was two (2) in the affirmative. Mike Pushard is absent. Motion carried.

3. Scott Tilton brought letters to Representative Deb Sanderson and Senator Patrick Flood regarding State Revenue Sharing for the Board of Selectmen for review and approval. “...For the 2012/13 fiscal year, the State took \$44,267,343 of all State Revenue Sharing funds pledged. The loss over time to the Town of Chelsea has amounted to \$91,903. That lost revenue was worth 66 cents on the local tax rate...”

- A motion was made by Linda Leotsakos that was seconded by Ben Smith that the Board of Selectmen sign and send the letters to Representative Deb Sanderson and Senator Patrick Flood as a form of resolution. Vote was two (2) in the affirmative. Mike Pushard is absent.
- Motion carried.

B. Old Business: continued,

2. Tax Abatements and Supplementals

Lewis Strout, 25 Stonegate Crossing, Acct 1486, Map 01 Lot 217 stated that the property values should be reduced but no value amount or other supporting information was given. Two letters were sent to Mr. Strout and he was given notification that this item was on the agenda for discussion at tonight's meeting. Mr. Strout is not present at tonight's meeting. He purchased the property approximately one (1) year ago for approximately \$162,000. The real estate value for buildings and land are at \$154,372. Ben Smith recommends that the abatement application be denied as the owner has not provided supporting data and comparisons, has not demonstrated value, and has not asked for a specified abated amount.

- A motion was made by Linda Leotsakos that was seconded by Ben Smith to deny the
- abatement application due to: lack of specific abated value, the absence of information that
- would demonstrate that the property was not valued comparably to other similar properties
- in Chelsea, and because the recent sale revealed that the value was already below the
- purchase price for the property nearly one year ago. Vote was two (2) in the affirmative.
- Mike Pushard is absent. Motion carried.

A fax was received from Roberta Beaulieu, Map 11 Lot 018, rescinding her request for abatement. She had asked to rescind her request in December 2012, but the Board of Assessors asked her to put it in writing. Ben Smith received the necessary notification.

- A motion was made by Linda Leotsakos that was seconded by Ben Smith to accept the
- withdrawal of abatement application for Map 11 Lot 018. Vote was two (2) in the affirmative.
- Mike Pushard is absent. Motion carried.

Legal Issues:

- A. As of today, Town of Chelsea's C.E.O. finds the Crystal Falls Bottle Club in violation of the Chelsea Automobile Graveyard/Automobile Recycling and Junkyard Permitting Ordinance. There are four (4) unregistered vehicles on the property. Mr. Roderick stated that three (3) of the vehicles are not registered because they are for snow removal and do not leave the property. The fourth vehicle is a bus that was used as a smoking area. It is no longer being used.

There appears to be a lack of communication with the Code Enforcement Officer regarding these vehicles. It was recommended that the owners and the C.E.O. follow up and that the C.E.O. come to the Board of Assessors with a recommendation.

B. Old Business: continued,

3. The Town of Chelsea has a seal used to emboss documents. The seal shows the Town incorporated on August 17, 1850. Scott is proposing that the seal be modernized through an art contest involving Chelsea's Elementary School and residents. Scott will research to see if the Town or Board of Selectmen is authorized to change the Town Seal. This information will be brought to the Board of Selectmen at a later meeting.
4. The Town of Chelsea Tax Club Ordinance is recommended by Scott Tilton to clarify

B. Old Business: continued,

the details of the tax club. If approved, the program allows taxpayers to join the tax club program and pay taxes interest free on a monthly basis.

- A motion was made by Linda Leotsakos that was seconded by Ben Smith that the Board of
- Selectmen approve and recommend the Town of Chelsea Tax Club Ordinance to be included
- as a warrant article at the Annual Town Meeting. Vote was two (2) in the affirmative. Mike
- Pushard is absent. Motion carried.

The Board of Selectmen also reviewed the draft Town of Chelsea Property Tax Assistance Ordinance. This program aids residents 65 years and older that have a homestead in Chelsea for at least a year prior to the date of application and has been a resident of Chelsea for at least ten years immediately preceding the date of application. There was concern as to who would actually benefit from this program, as it is based on the owner applying for and receiving a refund from the Maine Circuit Breaker Program. The funds would be appropriated from the general fund or other sources at the Annual Town Meeting.

There is no Board of Selectmen action at this time.

Legal Issues: continued,

B. Road Advisory Committee Appointments are from residents that indicated to Scott Tilton that they were available and wished to serve on the committee. Peter Hanson and Ted Gardner have agreed to serve, if appointed, and Dick Condon declined stating that the Road Advisory Committee is under-utilized. Joe Mills has not contacted Scott Tilton about the committee.

- A motion was made by Linda Leotsakos that was seconded by Ben Smith that the Board of
- Selectmen appoint Ted Gardner and Peter Hanson who have indicated that they are willing to
- serve on the Road Advisory Committee. Vote was two (2) in the affirmative. Mike Pushard is
- absent. Motion carried.

Written Communication:

- B. December Reports from the Code Enforcement Officer, Town Clerk, and Treasurer/Tax Collector including Y.T.D. Expense Summary Report and June 30, 2012 Audit were submitted. The Board members are to read and review each report and bring any questions or concerns to the Board of Selectmen Meeting on January 23, 2013.
- C. Sophia Wilson, M.M.A. Property and Casualty Pool Chairperson, sent a letter dated December 26, 2012 regarding the audited financial statement for the year ending June 30, 2012 and stated that the financial condition of the Pool continues to strengthen.
- D. A letter from Spectra Energy dated December 14, 2012 was received enlisting the assistance of local public safety officials to identify certain types of sites or facilities adjacent (1000' on either side) to their natural gas transmission pipelines.
- E. A letter from Patricia Shore, C.M.P. Line Clerk, dated December 19, 2012 was received notifying the Town of Chelsea of a Utility Location Permit submitted to MDOT (Job #1000463785) to replace ten (10) poles along Route 9, River Rd.

Verbal Communication:

A. Town Manager Report.

Chelsea Cares Fund Update – In December, we issued five (5) client families a total of \$1,573.31 of assistance for heat. We also have had \$770 donated to the account to assist more families.

Roadside Grade Stakes – I have called a few Public Works Directors and asked them how they respond to property owners placing stakes and other markers along the road to prevent damage to their lawns. The Directors I spoke with do not discourage this from being done. They explained that early in the season the stakes give the plow trucks something to use and prevents lawn damage that would need to be repaired in the spring. Once the snow bank has formed and frozen, the stakes and markers generally are broken during the remaining winters plowing but accomplished what they were put there to do. I have spoken with Mr. McGee and he agreed, so I have taken the leave it be approach with Chelsea residents.

Cable TV Franchise – I am still convinced that a Cable Franchise Agreement is still required. I have contacted the Cable TV Coordinator for the Town of Brunswick and asked to meet with him. He is very knowledgeable and should be a less expensive option. Gardiner is also going to participate in the negotiation process.

Rescue Billing Report – We have sent out nine (9) rescue service bills totaling \$3400. To date we have collected \$600. I will be instructing Sue, who has experience in collections, to make follow up calls. Depending on the results I will be looking into a collection service or write offs.

FD E911 Sign Sales Report – We have collected funds for 31 signs. The 911 sign sale program is proving to be a success in that residents are helping to improve emergency response times and helping raise additional funds for the Fire Department.

State Budget Education Funds Curtailment – RSU #12 will see an educational funding curtailment from the State of Maine of \$146,728.50. In my conversation with the RSU it would seem they will handle the shortage in house in the form of cuts and freezes in the current budget. There will be no other effects upon Chelsea: including Maine Revenue Sharing and Local Roads.

Word Press Website – Our website received 24,000 views in 2012. Most of the views were to the home page.

Map 6 Lot 106 Assessment – Town records appear to indicate that this apparent tax acquired property does not belong to whom the Town has been assessing it to. I am conducting further research, which may lead to both a tax abatement and a tax supplement.

Purchase Order Update – Capital Area Technical Center is finishing the preparation of the proof. I will be reviewing it prior to the final print.

A. Town Manager Report continued,

Sick Time and Comp Time Use – The flu bug has not skipped over the Town Office. We have had several days of work missed by Town Office staff. This is not an issue for the full time staff but the part time employees who do not receive sick pay have been granted an opportunity to make up the lost hours and be paid. There is certainly plenty of work to be done. The Town Manager is in very limited situations and with prior approval allowing the use of comp time.

Postage – The Pitney Bowes postage meter rental rate is decreasing. However I asked some other towns and have found some that use Stamps.com. This could reduce our monthly postal service rate by \$42 per month. We are going to try Stamps.com on a trial basis. If it works we would replace our Pitney Bowes meter before our lease runs out in June 2013.

Before and After School Program – The survey that Andy sent out to CES parents shows an overwhelming interest in the before and after school program. Several issues still need to be worked out including: a facilities agreement and creation of a Chelsea Recreation Committee to sponsor the program.

Clynk Program – Shawn and I are looking into registering the Chelsea Fire Department with Clynk. This would provide the FD with a relatively easy and inexpensive way to raise additional funds outside the normal budget.

MMA Legislative Bulletin – I will be requesting that the M.M.A. weekly legislative bulletin that keeps the Town updated on what is happening at the State House be sent electronically. I would then be able to print and/or forward an electronic version to anyone interested thereby saving postage and trees.

- B. The next RSU#12 Board of Directors meeting is January 10, 2013 at Palermo Consol. School at 6:30 PM. An update on Cony Busing and Tuition is an agenda item.
- C. Ben Smith shared the progress of the Charter Commission. The Commission has put together a draft Charter and Preliminary Report. It was sent to the Town Attorney to review and provide feedback for our next meeting on January 15, 2013 at 6:30 PM at the Town Office. The Charter Commission is hoping to set the final schedule, public hearings, etc. at that meeting.

Linda Leotsakos reiterated that the Board members are to read and review the Audit Report and upon approval, the audit will be available on the Town of Chelsea Website.

Executive Session. None.

Next Board of Selectmen Meeting is January 23, 2013 at 6:30 PM at Chelsea Elementary School.

Adjournment:

➤ A motion was made by Linda Leotsakos that was seconded by Ben Smith to adjourn.

Ben Smith declared the meeting adjourned at 9:39 PM.

| **Approved by the Chelsea Board of Selectmen on March 6~~February 27~~, 2013.**

Benjamin Smith – Chair

Michael Pushard

Linda Leotsakos