

**Town of Chelsea
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
December 19, 2012
Chelsea Elementary School**

Regular Meeting:

Call to order:

Chairperson Ben Smith called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM.

Selectmen members present included Linda Leotsakos, Michael Pushard, and Benjamin Smith. Scott Tilton, Town Manager, was present along with about eight (8) residents and members of the public. Julia Wilcock, a New England Volunteers of America (VOA) Representative was in attendance to present information about the proposed Veteran Housing Project at the Togus V.A. Campus.

Ben Smith led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent Agenda:

- A. Approve Payroll Warrant # 027 for \$6,107.59.
- B. Approve Accounts Payable Warrant # 028 for \$23,297.48.
- C. Approve Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes of December 12, 2012.

- A motion was made by Linda Leotsakos that was seconded by Mike Pushard to approve
- Consent Agenda items A., B., and C. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

Public Comment on Items not part of the Agenda:

Barbara Skehan asked if the sand placed on the roads contained larger sand particles than normal. It appeared that the Windsor Rd. had larger sand particles on the road as compared to the last time it was sanded due to icy conditions. Scott Tilton had not heard from anyone else about larger sand particles, he explained that the current section of the sand/salt pile may have some larger sand pieces in it due to inconsistencies of the product when it was stockpiled.

Joe Mills questioned the items on the agenda and wondered if they would potentially be costing the town more money. He questioned whether Scott Tilton sent an email to Augusta's Fire Chief about the cost to have Augusta provide Chelsea with fire services without first informing Chief Ramage, the Chelsea Fire Chief. Mr. Mills went on to question the Town Managers motives.

Scheduled items:

A. New Business:

1. Julia Wilcock, V.P. Business Development, Northern New England Volunteers of America was in attendance to present information about the proposed Veteran Housing Project at the Togus VA Campus. There are two (2) different housing projects anticipated at Togus. The independent senior (55+ yrs. old) living project will consist of 40 units mostly consisting of single bedroom units. Veterans will occupy Fifty-one (51) percent of the units. The rest will be low-income housing units for independent seniors. The "Cabin in the Woods" housing project is "slated to open in 2012, the program will offer 21 privately situated cabins with a mix of one and two bedrooms for homeless veterans who, because of their diagnosis, are not currently connected to services but are willing to receive support and services." Ten (10) units will be built to start the project with a 4,000 sq. ft. community building to house agencies providing services for the veterans.
Togus will be providing all the fire, security, ambulance and public works services for the projects. The residents are "substance free". One of the additional goals is to reunite the veterans with their children. Julie Wilcock will be researching answers to some of the questions asked and forwarding the information to the Board of Selectmen. More information is also available on the VOA Website <http://www.voanne.org>.

The Board of Selectmen agreed to amend the Agenda to discuss **Agenda Item IV. Scheduled Items B. Old Business 3. Assessing Matters**, at this time to accommodate Tim and Lori Gousse who were present at the meeting.

Scheduled items:

B. Old Business:

3. Assessing Matters:

Lewis Strout, of 25 Stone Gate Crossing Road, Acct 1486, Map 01 Lot 217. Because Mr. Strout was not able to be present, and approximately 30 days has passed since Mr. Strout's abatement request was filed with the Board, Ben Smith asked the Board to extend the time for consideration of his abatement request by 60 days. The matter will be placed for consideration on a future agenda.

- A motion was made by Linda Leotsakos that was seconded by Mike Pushard to approve
- an extension for Lewis Strout's application for a tax abatement for 60 days from
- November 19, 2012. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

Tim Gousse, Acct 417, Map 01 Lot 009. Made an application for a tax abatement for the tax years 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013 requesting a \$28,000 reduction in building value. Linda Leotsakos asked Tim to clarify that he is asking for a reduction of \$28,000 for tax year 2012-2013 even though he has already been granted a reduction of \$23,000 in value for that year. Tim stated that he is only looking for an additional reduction of \$5,000 for tax year 2012-2013.

- A motion was made by Linda Leotsakos that was seconded by Mike Pushard that the
- Board of Selectmen approve for Acct 417, Map 01 Lot 009 an abatement of \$23,000 in
- building value for a total reduction in taxes of \$345.00, subject to verification of the mil
- rate at 15.0 for fiscal year 2010-2011. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

B. Old Business: continued,

3. Assessing Matters:

- A motion was made by Linda Leotsakos and seconded by Mike Pushard that the
- Board of Selectmen approve for Acct 417, Map 01 Lot 009 an abatement of \$23,000 in
- building value for a total reduction in taxes of \$374.90, subject to verification of the mil
- rate at 16.3 for fiscal year 2011-2012. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

- A motion was made by Linda Leotsakos and seconded by Mike Pushard that the
- Board of Selectmen for Acct 417, Map 01 Lot 009 for fiscal year 2012-2013 uphold the
- previous abatement of \$23,000 in building value and based on the Board of Selectmen's
- previously reassessed property value as recommended by the Assessor's Agent, deny
- the 2012-2013 abatement of an additional \$5000 reduction in building value. Vote was
- unanimous. Motion carried.

Reginald Chabot, Acct 865, Map 02 Lot 014, was previously given \$32,000 tax abatement for tax years 2010-2011, and 2011-2012. This amount was not correctly applied to the 2012-2013 tax commitment.

- A motion was made by Benjamin Smith and seconded by Linda Leotsakos that the
- Board of Selectmen for Acct 865, Map 02 Lot 014 for tax year 2012-2013 grant
- the request for a corrective abatement of \$32,000 in building value so that the
- assessment be consistent with last year's building value for a total reduction in taxes of,
- \$543.36. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

A. New Business: continued,

2. Gary Silberberg (9 Birch St.) has requested that the streetlight that was previously in front of his residence and relocated be returned to its original location. Gary Silberberg was invited to attend the meeting, but was not present. The streetlight was relocated because it was in the middle of the road and not at an area that appeared to be a traffic hazard. CMP charges around \$12.00 per month and generally requires a 15-year lease period for streetlights. A homeowner may contact CMP to have a street light installed on their own. Linda Leotsakos stated that change is difficult for people. The Board of Selectmen agreed that streetlight placement, and the changes made were the result of a survey of all streetlights in the Town. Locations selected were based on the areas that would best serve the interest of all of Chelsea's citizens. The Board was not inclined to relocate the streetlight back to Birch St. or purchase a new streetlight for Birch Street. The Board felt that a streetlight in this area would not serve all citizens of the Town and that this location was not a high traffic hazard area.

3. Possible dates for Board of Selectmen workshops to review the 2013-2014 Town Budget review were discussed. These were workshops only, not formal meetings, and although they are always open to the public, there will be no discussion between the Board and the public in attendance. The dates of January 30, February 6, February 20, and March 6, 2013 were set as workshop dates. The workshop will begin at 6:00PM at the Town Office. Every effort will be made to adjourn the workshop by 8:30PM.

A. New Business: continued,

4. There was a discussion about creating a Chelsea Town Seal. It was suggested by Selectmen that Scott Tilton contact members of the Chelsea Historical Society as well as past employees and Selectmen of the Town to see if there is any information about a seal already existing. Scott suggested some guidelines and items that might be included. Maybe it could be an art contest including the Chelsea Elementary School students and town residents.

B. Old Business:

1. Proposed changes to the Chelsea Personnel Policy have been incorporated and the policy has been brought back to the Board for final review and approval.
 - a. The Retirement Plan wording has been updated to reflect current practices including “exempt” and “non-exempt” employee eligibility.
 - b. Employee conduct wording has been updated to address computer usage and social networking.
 - c. Disclaimer language has been added to the policy and will be located at the bottom of the last page with a place for the employee to acknowledge receiving a copy of the current personnel policy as amended.

- A motion was made by Linda Leotsakos that was seconded by Mike Pushard to approve
- the amendments to the Chelsea Personnel Policy as presented effective January 1,
- 2013. Vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

2. Changes were made to the software knowledge requirement in the Assessor’s Agent RFI and job description. The Letters of Interest will be due at the Chelsea Town Office by the end of the January 11, 2013 business day.

No action was necessary. The Board of Selectmen directed Scott Tilton to post the advertisement requesting letters of interest including the changes as discussed in local newspapers and the MMA Website.

Legal Issues:

- A. Crystal Falls Bottle Club License Renewal was not addressed and will be passed over until the violations of the Chelsea Automobile Graveyard/Automobile Recycling and Junkyard Permitting Ordinance are addressed by the owners. There are presently five (5) unregistered vehicles on the property. They have until March of 2013 to obtain authorization from the Town which gets sent to the State of Maine in order to receive license.

Written Communication:

Town Manager’s Report

Safety Enhancement Grant – I will be bringing to the Selectmen on January 9 an MMA Safety Enhancement Grant application to approve. The grant request if awarded will assist us in purchasing signs, cones and barricades for use at road job sites and hazardous storm damaged area.

Written Communication: Town Manager's Report continued,

Old Thomaston Road Bridge – This week I stopped to review the remains of the old bridge. The decking and abutments seem to be structurally sound. The approaches could use better signage and the railing has failed. I have requested an estimate from McGee Construction to remove the bridge and restore the area to its natural state.

High School Transportation – While we wait to hear from the RSU group concerning future High School student bus transportation, I have again approached First Student Transportation Services and asked for an estimate for them to service Chelsea students. The bus company and I have talked about ways to improve current operations and efficiencies.

DEP Windsor Road Wetland Update – The DEP Project Manager responsible for our wetland violation case has finished his report. I spoke with him on Friday and he explained that he is officially recommending that the \$13K plus payment we were asked to make be forgiven. His supervisor needs to review it and sign off but he was 99% sure it would happen.

Energy Efficiency – In an effort to save money and improve energy efficiency I have scheduled a consultation by Sustainable Structures for January 11 at 10AM. We will be performing a walkthrough of the Town Office and the two fire stations. Chief Ramage or one of his officers will be invited to participate and assist with visits to the fire stations. I am hoping to get some ideas of some easy updates and get a formal recommendation for more substantial improvements that could be budgeted the next fiscal year.

Chelsea Food Bank – Effective January 2013 there will be new days and hours of operation at the Chelsea Food Bank. The Chelsea Food Bank was open Wednesdays and Fridays of every week from 10AM to 1PM. The new schedule calls for the Food Bank to be open on the 2nd & 4th Wed of the each month from 10:30am – 1:00pm.

Food Baskets – There has been some confusion concerning Christmas Food Basket distribution. The Gardiner Food Bank is preparing over 150 baskets to be distributed to area families. Eleven of the baskets are being distributed to Chelsea families. Both Chelsea and Gardiner are closed over Christmas and New Year's. This could create a shortage for some Chelsea families having to make a choice between food and other necessities. This is why I was proposing using \$90 in Chelsea Cares Funds to purchase three additional baskets to distribute to families not already being helped but need help.

Spring 2013 Bond Bank Schedule – The Municipal Bond Bank has informed us that the application deadline for this springs bond issue is February 6. We currently do not have any plans to issue bonds for projects in Chelsea that I am aware of.

Week of December 24th – I wanted to remind everyone that the Town Office will be closed as usual on Monday December 24. We will also be closed Tuesday and Wednesday December 25 and 26.

Unemployment Insurance – Due to our recent claims history our Unemployment Insurance Premium with MMA increased over the amount we projected in the budget. The increase amounted to just over \$200 but should currently be covered by other items that should come in under budget.

Written Communication: Town Manager's Report continued,

Casualty and Liability Insurance – I have received an inquiry from Cross Insurance about their interest in providing a quote to insure the town. We have for many years been insured through MMA. Getting a quote from another company is not a bad idea except for our recent claims history. A poor claims history I feel would prevent us from receiving any real savings when you consider the time spent preparing the information. It usually takes 3 to 5 years for claims to work their way off a town's record.

Budget Committee – The Committee will be meeting January 16 at 6PM at the Town Office. We are still in need of an alternate member.

Verbal Communication:

- A. Town Manager Report. Scott Tilton submitted a written report and touched on some items in this report.

Beginning January 2013, the Chelsea Food Bank will be open the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month. This is a decrease in hours available to residents.

Scott Tilton is concerned that there are families in Chelsea that will not receive Christmas food baskets from the Gardiner Food Bank. They are distributing eleven (11) to Chelsea residents. Each basket from Goggin's IGA costs \$29.99. He was proposing to use \$90.00 from the Chelsea Cares Fund, however, the funds are set aside for heating needs. Several residents and each Board of Selectmen member stepped up and donated the necessary funds to purchase the Christmas baskets for families that Scott identified as needing the assistance..

- B. The RSU#12 Board of Directors offered 'Howie Tuttle, now with Gardiner-based Regional School Unit 11, a contract to succeed RSU# 12 interim Superintendent Alan Hawkins.' The next regular RSU#12 Board Meeting is January 10, 2013 at Palermo Consolidated School, 501 Route 3 at 6:30 PM.
- C. Board of Selectmen/Assessors Comments and Concerns. Nothing additional.

Executive Session. None.

Next Board of Selectmen Meeting is January 9, 2013 at 6:30 PM at Chelsea Elementary School.

Adjournment:

- A motion was made by Linda Leotsakos that was seconded by Benjamin Smith to adjourn.
- adjourn.

Ben Smith declared the meeting adjourned at 8:52 PM.

Approved by the Chelsea Board of Selectmen on January 9, 2013.

Benjamin Smith – Chair

Michael Pushard

Linda Leotsakos