

Telegraph Publishing LLC

P.O. Box 221 – Chester, Vermont 05143
info@chestertelegraph.org – 802-875-2703
<http://www.chestertelegraph.org/>

Feb. 19, 2016

Select Board of Chester
Chester Town Hall
556 Elm St.
Chester, VT 05143

To the Select Board for the Town of Chester,

On behalf of *The Chester Telegraph*, it is my pleasure to submit this proposal for publishing the legal advertising and public notices of the Town of Chester as its paper of record.

The Chester Telegraph is now in its fifth year and experiencing explosive growth in readership. We believe – would like the Select Board to consider naming it Chester's “paper of record.” Here are a few points to take into account in such consideration.

- Online advertising is **far less expensive** than advertising in print publications. Last year the town spent \$11,754 on notices in paper and ink publications. We estimate those advertisements would have cost around \$4,000 in the Telegraph, savings of 66 percent for Chester taxpayers.
- An online ad can link to large files like reports, maps, plans, spreadsheets and other materials that can **add clarity and value** without adding to the cost of the notice.
- Online ads **close the time gap** for moving forward with a meeting or project by a week or more because ads can be on the site immediately, starting the clock on legal notice requirements.
- The Telegraph **goes everywhere, around the clock**. It keeps second homeowners, potential visitors and prospective businesses up-to-date on what's happening here.
- The Telegraph is distributed **free of charge**. There's no newsstand price, no paywalls no subscription fees.
- Online advertising is far more **environmentally responsible and sustainable** than print. In more than four years the Telegraph has not added a dime to the cost of recycling paper at the transfer station.

The Chester Telegraph is recognized as a professionally run newspaper within the field. It is the only paper in the area that is archived and indexed by NewsBank as part of that company's *Access World News* and *America's Newspapers* products. And the Telegraph is also recognized by readers. Our readership has grown by more than 250 percent in the past two years and is up 100 percent over this time last year.

While we understand that this would be a change away from a traditional model, as Chester taxpayers ourselves, we would like to point out that the traditional model is out of date and unnecessarily expensive. Moving to online legal notices also sends a message to the world that Chester understands the power of technology and is ready to embrace it and move into the future.

As for meeting the legal requirements within Vermont statutes, we have consulted attorneys and the office of the Secretary of State and researched the statutes ourselves. We have attached an 81-page document showing 248 citations for the term “newspaper” in Vermont law. There is no definition of newspaper. We can find no requirement in statute that a newspaper must be made of paper, printed with ink, mailed or physically delivered. The most common phrase used in ruling how public notice should be given is some form of “in a newspaper in general circulation in the county.”

COSTS

We propose that the notices be advertisements that will appear on every page of the paper. Readers can click a notice and get more information in the form of a pdf of a warning, an annual report, an agenda or a page on the town website. This helps the Town of Chester to get out the most information for the least cost.

The same charges that apply to our retail display ads (see box, right) will apply to public notices except for RFPs and Invitation to bids (see below.) The rates for standard size ads are between \$20 and \$45 a week.

Larger ads can be had for an additional charge and we **will work with the Town of Chester to save money whenever possible** including low-cost Help Wanted ads that we post to our more than 5,000 Facebook fans. We have found that the Help Wanted ads get shared over and over again, multiplying the eyes that actually see them.

THE CHESTER TELEGRAPH	
Standard size ads in pixels and their weekly rates.	
125 x 125	— \$20
125 x 150	— \$22
125 x 175	— \$24
125 x 200	— \$26
125 x 250	— \$30
300 x 125	— \$33
300 x 150	— \$35
300 x 200	— \$40
300 x 250	— \$45

Ad widths are 125 and 300 pixels. Depths can be added to in 25 pixel increments.

For Invitations to Bid and Requests for Proposals, *The Telegraph* provides an **RSS feed that will notify a subscriber** by email whenever a new invitation to bid or RFP is published. The feed is available to everyone, including contractors, engineers, architects, consultants and others who could bid on contracts, adding to competition and saving taxpayer dollars. The cost of each of these ads is a flat \$60 a week and consists of a 300 pixel by 100 pixel notice on every page **plus** a link on the Public Notice Page that goes directly to the town's detailed specifications.

Thank you for allowing us this opportunity to present *The Chester Telegraph*. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call or email me.

Regards,

Cynthia Prairie

Cynthia Prairie
Editor and publisher

cc: David Pisha
Julie Hance
Deborah Aldrich