

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
TOWN OF CHESTER
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
JUNE 11, 2016
RESULTS**

The Annual Town Meeting was opened by Town Moderator, Richard Holzman, at 1:00 p.m.

A quorum was present (43).

ARTICLE 1:

Motion to move the article by John Baldasaro, second by Don Ellershaw; unanimously voted to pass over this article as no one was interested in the positions.

ARTICLE 2:

Motion to move the article by Don Ellershaw, second by John Baldasaro; unanimously voted to authorize the Selectmen to appoint such other Town Officials as are not required to be chosen by ballot.

ARTICLE 3:

Motion to move the article by John Baldasaro, second by Don Ellershaw; unanimously voted to fix the salaries of all elected officials for the period of July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 as indicated below (a 2.5% increase):

Selectman	\$	2,087.86	Electric Commissioner	\$	650.00
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Assessor Chair	\$	1,913.16	Board of Health	\$	1,300.95
Assessor Vice Chair	\$	1,913.16	Board of Health	\$	1,300.95
Assessor	\$	522.75	Board of Health	\$	1,300.95
Tax Collector	\$	18,107.00	Town Clerk	\$	6,290.00
Town Moderator	\$	200.00	Town Treasurer	\$	10,560.00

ARTICLE 4:

Motion to move the article by John Baldasaro, second by Don Ellershaw; unanimously voted to authorize the Board of Selectmen, or other Town Departments with the knowledge of the Board of Selectmen, to apply for and accept grants from the Federal Government, Commonwealth of Massachusetts or any other source, and to expend the same for purposes received without further appropriation.

ARTICLE 5:

Motion to move the article by John Baldasaro, second by Don Ellershaw.

Questions from the floor regarding procedures of sales were answered by John Baldasaro. Comments from floor continued. Don Ellershaw made a motion to call the question, with a second from John Baldasaro; voted unanimously to call the question.

Voted unanimously to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectmen, to sell at public auction, or at private auction to Government agencies, all or any of its property acquired by virtue of sale for non-payment of taxes, which sales have been confirmed by the Land Court or the Tax Commissioner, and to give deeds therefore.

ARTICLE 6:

Motion to move article by Don Ellershaw, second by John Baldasaro; unanimously voted to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Selectmen, to borrow money from time to time in anticipation of the revenue of the financial year beginning July 1, 2016, and in accordance with the provisions of Mass. General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 4, and to issue notes as may be given for a period of less than one year in accordance with the provisions of Mass. General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 17.

ARTICLE 7:

Motion to move article by Don Ellershaw, second by John Baldasaro.

John Baldasaro explained that the school budget passed in five towns already. The Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen recommend approval of article. The district is researching regionalizing positions in administration and reducing overall expenses.

Unanimously voted to raise and appropriate the sum of \$845,365 for the Town of Chester's minimum contribution to the budget for the Gateway Regional School District for the period July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017.

ARTICLE 8:

Motion to move article by Don Ellershaw, second by John Baldasaro; unanimously voted to raise and appropriate the sum of \$309,188 for the Town of Chester's share of the transportation and debt service (non-discretionary contribution, including the school building project) for the Gateway Regional School District for the period July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017.

ARTICLE 9:

Motion to move article by John Baldasaro, second by Don Ellershaw, unanimously voted raise and appropriate the sum of \$344,240 for the Town of Chester's share of the above minimum contribution to the budget for the Gateway Regional School District for the period July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017.

ARTICLE 10:

Motion to move article by Don Ellershaw, second by John Baldasaro, unanimously voted to raise and appropriate the sum of \$210,360 for vocational tuition and transportation for Chester students for the period July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017.

ARTICLE 11:

Motion to move article by John Baldasaro, second by Don Ellershaw; unanimously voted to accept funds being provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under the provisions of Mass. General Laws Chapter 90, to pay for such costs as allowed by appropriate legislation in connection with the maintenance, repair, and construction of Town ways and bridges, in the amount of \$235,017, with such funds to carry over from year to year until expended by the Town.

ARTICLE 12:

Motion to move article by Don Ellershaw, second by John Baldasaro; unanimously voted to appropriate the income from the sale of electricity to private consumers, municipal building and jobbing for the Municipal Electric Light Department for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2016 and to authorize that the whole be expended under the direction and control of the Board of Electric Light Commissioners and Manager.

ARTICLE 13:

Motion to move article by Don Ellershaw, second by John Baldasaro.

Andy Myers, from the Finance Committee, reported that the Finance Committee Chairman, Mike Crochiere, recently moved out of Town and was unable to attend the meeting and will no longer be serving on the Committee after June 30. Other members of the Committee that worked on the budget were Diane Paquette, Mike Hickson, and Cheryl Provost. At the request of the Finance Committee, departments submitted conservative FY17 budget requests. The overall increase from FY16 is \$65,000.00. The Finance Committee and Gateway Regional School Committee are working on facing challenges of the Gateway Regional School District budget moving forward. Andy spoke of the struggles all Western Mass. school districts are having. He compared tax rates within the district towns and noted the difficulties of getting new families to move in. The Gateway Regional School District Towns signed a Community Compact Agreement in an effort to seek solutions together and to strengthen the entire district. Public meetings will be held and all were encouraged to attend. Other topics discussed were quality education, Broadband, and working with state agencies.

John Baldasaro thanked the Finance Committee for all their work.

On a motion by John Baldasaro, second by Don Ellershaw, unanimously voted to approve the entire budget presented, after voting each section separately, and answering questions as they arise.

Unanimously voted to raise and appropriate the proposed sums of money (Moderator through Selectmen Miscellaneous) to defray charges and expenses of the Town, including debt service (principal and interest) and to provide a Reserve Fund, for the period July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017.

ARTICLE 14:

Motion to move article by Don Ellershaw, second by John Baldasaro.

Question arose how the figures are established. John Baldasaro answered it is determined by the cost of street lighting. The Chester Municipal Light Dept. makes a proposal to the Town. They are not required to make such offers, but can and do. LED lights were installed and they cost less to run; therefore, the offer is reduced from previous years. Pam Zebrowski, CMELD Assistant, commented that there is a formula followed.

Unanimously voted to accept a payment in lieu of taxes, in the amount of \$7,550.00 from the Chester Municipal Electric Light Department, to cover the cost of street lighting.

ARTICLE 15:

Motion to move article by John Baldasaro, second by Don Ellershaw; unanimously voted transfer the sum of \$230,000 from Free Cash to the Stabilization Fund.

ARTICLE 16:

Motion to move article by John Baldasaro, second by Don Ellershaw, unanimously voted to transfer from available funds in the Treasury (free cash) the amount of \$7,000, or any other amount, to pay for the Pavement Management Program managed by Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

ARTICLE 17:

On a motion by John Baldasaro, second by Don Ellershaw, unanimously voted to transfer from available funds in the Treasury (free cash) the amount of \$35,000 to pay to the Chester Municipal Light Department, for the Town's ½ share in the 2013 Mower.

ARTICLE 18:

On a motion by John Baldasaro, second by Don Ellershaw, unanimously voted to transfer from available funds in the Treasury (free cash) the amount of \$52,195.97 to cover the snow and ice deficit for Fiscal year 2016. Funds are to cover excess expenses incurred from road washouts in late winter.

ARTICLE 19:

On a motion by Don Ellershaw, second by John Baldasaro, unanimously voted to transfer from available funds in the Treasury (free cash), the amount of \$27,008.35 to purchase a Kabota, KX040-4 Excavator w/attachments.

ARTICLE 20:

On a motion by Don Ellershaw, second by John Baldasaro, unanimously voted to transfer from available funds in the Treasury (free cash), the amount of \$20,000 to reduce the tax rate.

ARTICLE 21:

Motion to move the article by John Baldasaro, second by Don Ellershaw.

Don Ellershaw explained that William Street is a dead end road in Chester Village, ending in a narrow cul-de-sac. It's difficult for emergency vehicles and highway equipment to maneuver and turn around. The gift is offered by Marcella Stenico and the Board of Selectmen unanimously approve. R. Duane Pease, former Selectman and Highway Dept., spoke in favor of the article, noting that including all roads in town and on the hill, that William St. is one of the most difficult to plow. This gift will be a benefit to the Town by enlarging the cul-de-sac to allow the maintenance and emergency vehicles to maneuver more effectively.

Unanimously voted to authorize the Board of Selectmen to accept a 16,316 square foot gift of land for road way improvements to William Street, shown as parcel A on a plan entitled, "Proposed Street Acceptance Plan William Street Extension, Chester, Massachusetts", prepared by Salvini Associates and dated May 9, 2016.

ARTICLE 22:

Motion to move the article by John Baldasaro, second by Don Ellershaw.

John Baldasaro stated that articles 22-25 were submitted by petitions. The Selectmen have tried to pass these before, but they failed on the ballot questions. Approving the articles today authorizes the questions to be placed on the Annual Town Election ballot May 6, 2017, for voter approval. He added that if the Town is considering regionalizing certain positions, it won't work if the officials are elected. Other points made in favor of the articles were qualification requirements for appointed officials, and authority of Board of Selectmen over appointed officials.

Unanimously voted to change its elected Town Clerk to become an appointed Town Clerk.

ARTICLE 23:

Motion to move the article by John Baldasaro, second by Don Ellershaw, unanimously voted to change its elected Town Treasurer to become an appointed Town Treasurer.

ARTICLE 24:

Motion to move the article by John Baldasaro, second by Don Ellershaw; unanimously voted to change its elected Board of Assessors to become an appointed Board of Assessors.

ARTICLE 25:

Motion to move the article by Don Ellershaw, second by John Baldasaro; unanimously voted to change its elected Tax Collector to become an appointed Tax Collector.

Don Ellershaw noted that this will be the final Annual Town Meeting as Town Clerk for Cheryl Provost. She has served as Town Clerk for 25 years. Don noted that she is the new Town Treasurer. Don thanked her for the years of service and offered a gift as a token of appreciation, followed by applause.

John Baldasaro noted that this is the final Annual Town Meeting for Don Ellershaw. Don served four terms as Selectman and John stated that it has been a pleasure working with him. John thanked Don, followed by applause.

The Annual Town Meeting dissolved at 2:20 p.m.

Total from raise and appropriate: \$3,050,130.00

Total from Free Cash: \$315,404.32

Attest:

Cheryl A. Provost
Town Clerk