



FEBRUARY 2019

# WATT'S NEWS?



## Monday, February 18th is Presidents Day All town offices will be closed

**Town of Chester**

15 Middlefield Rd, Chester MA 01011

**Board of Assessors**

Telephone (413) 354-6318 Fax (413) 354-2268

### **NOTICE TO BUSINESSES DBA'S (doing business as) and SECOND HOME OWNERS**

To All Individuals, Partnerships, Trusts and Corporations:  
Mass General Laws Chapter 59 Section 29 requires that the Board of Assessors give notice to all persons subject to taxation in their respective town regarding personal property. Businesses must file State Tax Form 2. If you own a second home located in Chester, the furniture and fixtures are taxable, and owners must file State Tax Form 2HF annually, unless it's a rental property. Applications are available online at [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov), or at the Assessors Office Monday – Wednesday, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm. These lists must be filed on or before March 1st of each year. Failure to submit this list may remove certain rights of appeal for the taxpayer.

## HAPPY VALENTINES' DAY

### DON'T FORGET YOUR SWEETIE ON FEBRUARY 14TH



### Chester Hill's 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Maple Fest and Craft Fair

On Saturday, March 9, 2019, from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M., the Chester Hill Association will sponsor its 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Maple Fest and Craft Fair, on Skyline Trail, in old Chester Center. The first scheduled event of the day is a traditional Country Breakfast, served continuously from 9:00 A.M. to noon, in the community room of the First Congregational Church. The menu consists of pancakes (from scratch!) topped with maple syrup, fluffy scrambled eggs, honey ham, orange juice and coffee. This all-you-can-eat treat is priced at \$9.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children 10 and under. At noon, the Pioneer Valley Fiddlers will rock the church sanctuary with lively fiddle tunes. Always a popular feature of the Fest is the tractor-pulled wagon ride to and from High Meadow Sugar House, where guests may observe and members of the Jameson family can explain the process of syrup production. Across the road, in the historic Chester Center Schoolhouse, a dozen local artisans and craftspeople will be set up to display/sell their goods. A Food Cart will be open from late morning until closing for the purchase of lunch items such as hot dogs, hamburgers and the famous Chester Chili. Coffee, soft drinks and hot cocoa will also be available. In addition, a working fire truck will be parked at one end and furniture made from tree branches on display in another area of the church parking lot. Last, but not least, be sure to purchase raffle tickets – the prizes feature local products, businesses and events.-



## Chester Historical Society

THINK SPRING! The annual Penny Social will be held April 13 at the Chester Town Hall with doors opening at 2 PM and bidding beginning promptly at 3 PM. PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE IN THE TIME. This has proven to be a fun family time and has been a successful fundraiser for the Chester History Museum. Watch for more news on this event in future weeks. The Society holds monthly meetings on the first Saturday of the month at the Old Jail with business meeting from 9 to 10 and open to the public from 10 to 11. The Chester History Museum will be open Sundays July and August 1 PM to 3 PM and by request. Special events at the Museum will be announced at a later date. The Chester Historical Society as all Local Historical Societies are private organizations concerned with the preservation of local histories through records, collections and properties. Yearly memberships are \$ 25.00 with Life Membership \$ 75.00. We welcome new members. More information may be obtained by contacting any member or viewing our website. If you have not yet visited the Old Jail or the Chester History Museum, please do. You will not be disappointed. You do NOT have to be a member to visit.

## From the Desk of the Town Clerk

The Town Clerk would like to thank all those who have already returned their Annual Street Listing forms. If you are not one of them, please return your form as soon as possible. Remember to sign your form! Our office has made a concerted effort to clean up the voting list and to get an accurate population count for the town over the last several years. We have made excellent progress. But we need your help to finish this job! Returning your form also means that we don't have to spend time and money sending you a second form. It also prevents issues when you come to vote. It is the law that every household complete the Annual Street Listing. Nomination papers for elected town positions are now available. The following elected 3 year positions will be on the ballot at the Annual Town Election on Saturday, May 4: Board of Selectmen (1), School Committee (1), Town Moderator (1), Board of Health (1), Electric Light Commissioner (1), Library Trustee (2). Town Clerk is also on the ballot for a 1 year term. Anyone who needs more information about running for Town office, or what any of these positions entail should contact the Town Clerk for more information. You must pick up your nomination papers in person during regular office hours (2nd, 4th Mondays 6-8 pm, and Wednesdays 10:30 am - 3:30 pm, or by appointment. Dog owners will be getting a letter in the mail before the end of March explaining the transition and licensing procedures as we begin the transition to the 3 year dog license. 2018 licenses remain valid until March 31, 2019.



**GED/HiSet Test Prep:** Village Enterprise Center | 26 Main St, Chester

**English Language Arts/Writing GED Prep** Village Enterprise Center | 26 Main St, Chester

**Computer Classes**

**Drop in Open Computer Help:** VEC: 26 Main Street, Chester

**Phone, Laptop, and Tablet Help**, Russell Senior Center, 65 Main Street, Russell

**Support for Small Businesses**

**Biztro: Drop-in small business support** with Jeanne LeClair. [VEC, 26a Main Street, Chester](http://VEC, 26a Main Street, Chester)

**Schedule C Business Income Tax Info Session** with Dorine Lasky Hilltown CDC, 387 Main Rd, Chesterfield

**Google Calendar for Home and Business** VEC: 26a Main Street, Chester

**Jacobs Ladder Business Association (JLBA) meeting** [Blandford Animal Hospital, 46 Woronoco Rd, Blandford](http://Blandford Animal Hospital, 46 Woronoco Rd, Blandford)

**Google Calendar for Home and Business** Hilltown CDC, 387 Main Rd, Chesterfield

**Grantwriting** with Dave Christopolis, VEC: 26a Main Street, Chester

**Drop in Work Group: Help with YouTube/ Etsy/ and Word Press** VEC: 26a Main St, Chester

**Sustainability/ Health and Well Being**

**Aromatherapy basics** Middlefield Senior Center, 169 Skyline Trail, Middlefield \$25 Material Fee

**Aromatherapy basics** Village Enterprise Center | 26 Main St, Chester \$25 Material Fee

**Strategies to Build Resiliency through Self-Care** Hilltown CDC, 387 Main Rd, Chesterfield

**Hikes**

**Griffin Brook Road, Chester Blandford State Forest:** Meet at the Trailhead on Round Hill Road in the parking lot Sat. Feb. 23, 10:am – noon

Call or email for an appointment  
Tuesdays/Thursdays Feb 5 – Feb 28 10am-noon

Weekly, Wednesdays 10am- noon  
Tuesday, February 19, 10am-noon

Monday, February 4<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, 4-7:00pm  
Wednesday, February 6, 6-8pm  
Thurs February 7, 6:-8pm  
Friday, February 8, 6-8pm  
Monday, February 11, 6-8:00pm  
Wednesday, February 20, 6-8pm  
Tuesday, February 26, 6-8pm

Thursday, February 21, 6-8pm  
Friday, February 22, 10am-noon  
Monday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 6-8pm

**What kind of horses go out after dark?**

Night mares!!!

**What kind of eggs did the wicked chicken lay?**

Deviled eggs!!!

**What did one fish say to the other fish?**

Keep your mouth shut, and we won't get caught!!!

**Why couldn't the leopard escape from the zoo?**

He was always spotted!!!

**What kind of bird carries the most weight?**

A crane!!!

**A grumpy man walks into a restaurant and asks the maître d':**

**"Do you serve crabs here?"**

**Maitre d' answers - "Why certainly, sir, have a seat"!!!**

**If your motto is "If at first you don't succeed" - don't take up skydiving!!!**



**FREE TAX PREP**

Put money back in your pocket. Free tax prep by IRS-trained volunteers

At the Village Enterprise Center, 26a Main Street, Chester

Call to make your appointment: 413-296-4536 ext 100

Household income must be \$55,000 or less.

Volunteers needed: weekdays, evenings, and weekends available

**You and Your Property Taxes**

Many Chester property owners have noticed an increase in their tax bills due to an increase in the property tax rate. The Assessor's office is providing the following information as a way to help property owners understand how the tax rate is set.

The local property tax rate is based upon the interaction of the following:

- the market value of a piece of property,
- the amount of money that needs to be raised to operate our local town government,
- the amount of money that the town receives from the state or federal government to help pay for services, such as Chapter 90 funding for roads, the "Cherry Sheet", or Block Grants,
- the amount of money that may be left over from the previous year's budget (free cash)
- Massachusetts General Law, such as Chapter 59, or Proposition 2 1/2

These forces play off of each other in ways that change the tax rate year to year. Last year at the Town Meeting, the voters approved an agenda item to use \$100,000 of free cash to offset last year's tax rate. This year, FY 2019, no agenda items were presented to the voters to offset the tax rate.

It is a common misunderstanding that the Assessor is the one who sets the tax rate and that property tax valuations are set at their whim and fancy, but this isn't true. The Assessor has to follow the procedures established by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue and the Legislature.

The value of a piece of property is actually set by the buyers and sellers of that property in real estate transactions. It is the voters who decide on the budget for the town at the Annual Town Meeting each year. Voters who do not participate in Town Meetings have lost a big chance to have a say in the local property tax rate. And then there are the various guidelines and regulations set by the Department of Revenue to implement those laws passed in the state legislature. The Assessors, in short, follow the procedures established by others to set the value of a property and the tax rate.

Similarly, the Assessors don't decide who is entitled to relief on their property tax bills through exemptions; rather they follow the state law. They Assessor is always willing to meet with property owners to discuss their tax bill. Call 354-6318, or email [assessors@comcast.net](mailto:assessors@comcast.net)