



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

TOWN OF CHESTER

2024 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT

HAMPDEN, SS.

To any of the Constables in the Town of Chester in the County of Hampden:

GREETINGS:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts you are hereby directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of Chester qualified to vote in Town affairs to meet in the **Chester Town Hall, 15 Middlefield Road, Chester, MA on Monday, the 10th day of June, 2024, A.D. at 7:00PM**, then and there to act on the following articles:

ARTICLE 1:

APPOINTMENTS

To authorize the Board of Selectmen to appoint such other Town Officials as are not required to be chosen by ballot, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Majority vote required

ARTICLE 2:

COMPENSATION

To see if the Town will vote to fix the annual salaries of all elected officials for the period of July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 as indicated below, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Elected Official's Salary	FY2024	Proposed FY25
Selectboard Member	\$2,480	\$2,580
Selectboard Member	\$2,480	\$2,580
Selectboard Member	\$2,480	\$2,580
Water Commissioner	\$700	\$700
Water Commissioner	\$700	\$700
Water Commissioner	\$700	\$700
Town Moderator	\$200	\$200
Health Board Member	\$1,545	\$1,607
Health Board Member	\$1,545	\$1,607
Health Board Member	\$1,545	\$1,607

Majority vote required

ARTICLE 3:

FY2025 OPERATING BUDGET

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds, the sum \$3,658,936 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, 2024 to June 30, 2025 and further, to hear the report of the Finance Committee and act thereon, or to take any other action relative thereto. (Please see separate budget sheet)

Majority vote required

ARTICLE 4:

REVOLVING FUNDS

To see if the Town will vote to set FY2025 spending limits for each of the Town's previously established revolving funds that have been authorized under Chapter 44, Section 53E1/2 of the Massachusetts General Laws as indicated below, or to take any other action relative thereto:

<i>Board of Health</i>	<i>\$8,000.00</i>
<i>Building Inspector</i>	<i>\$30,000.00</i>
<i>Plumbing Inspector</i>	<i>\$3,000.00</i>
<i>Wiring Inspector</i>	<i>\$2,000.00</i>
<i>Tax Collector</i>	<i>\$2,000.00</i>
<i>Deputy Collector</i>	<i>\$1,000.00</i>
<i>Police Detail Fees</i>	<i>\$15,000.00</i>

Majority vote required

ARTICLE 5:

FY2023 INVOICES

To see if the Town will vote to authorize payment from Free Cash of the following invoice from FY2023, or to take any other action relative thereto.

<i>Pioneer Valley Planning Commission for Pioneer Valley Municipal IT Collaborative FY23 membership</i>	<i>\$250.00</i>
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Four fifths vote required

ARTICLE 6:

GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL BUDGET

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds, the sum of \$1,644,903 for the Gateway Regional School District for the period July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025, or to take any other action relative thereto. (Last year's number \$1,606,927).

Majority vote required

ARTICLE 7:

VOCATIONAL TUITION AND TRANSPORTATION

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds, the sum of \$209,307 to pay for vocational tuition (\$168,000) and transportation (\$41,307) for Chester students for the period July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025, or to take any other action relative thereto. (Last year's figure – \$209,307).

Majority vote required

ARTICLE 8:

ACCEPTANCE OF CHAPTER 90 FUNDS

To see if the Town will vote to accept and expend without further appropriation 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, with such funds to carry over from year to year until expended by the Town, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Majority vote required

ARTICLE 9:

CMELD OPERATIONS

To see if the Town will vote 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, 2024 to June 30, 2025, and to authorize that the whole be expended under the direction and control of the Board of Electric Light Commissioners and Manager, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Majority vote required

ARTICLE 10:

CHESTER WATER DEPARTMENT ENTERPRISE FUNDS

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money to operate the Chester Water Department Enterprise, as set forth below, or to take any other action thereon.

That the following funds be appropriated for the Chester Water Department Enterprise:

<i>Water Dept, Salaries</i>	<i>\$75,822</i>	
<i>Commissioners Stipends</i>	<i>2,100</i>	
<i>Operation Expenses</i>	<i>75,000</i>	
<i>Debt</i>	<i>29,479</i>	
<i>Budgeted Surplus</i>	<i><u>15,000</u></i>	
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$197,401</i>	<i>Last Year's Total \$180,777</i>

and that the \$197,401 be raised as follows:

<i>Enterprise Receipts</i>	<i>\$167,922</i>
<i>Tax Levy</i>	<i><u>29,479</u></i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$197,401</i>

Majority vote required

ARTICLE 11:

HILLTOWN AMBULANCE REPLACEMENT FUND

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds, \$4,002 to cover the Hilltown Ambulance Replacement Fund assessment, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Majority vote required

ARTICLE 12:

FIRE DEPARTMENT UPDATE FUND

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds, \$31,600 to cover necessary updates for Fire Department equipment and supplies, as set forth below, or take any other action relative thereto.

Equipment and Supplies:

<i>Electrical Station 1</i>	<i>\$2,000</i>
<i>Tires Tanker 1</i>	<i>\$4,000</i>
<i>Turn Out Gear (3)</i>	<i>\$12,600</i>
<i>Medical Supplies</i>	<i>\$3,000</i>
<i>Truck Maintenance</i>	<i>\$10,000</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$31,600</i>

Majority vote required

ARTICLE 13:

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE/SUTA

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds, \$16,500 to cover the shortfall in the FY2024 Unemployment/SUTA account, or take any other action relative thereto.

Majority vote required

ARTICLE 14:

MEDICARE/FICA

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds, \$4,700 to cover the shortfall in the FY2024 Medicare/FICA account, or take any other action relative thereto.

Majority vote required

ARTICLE 15:

TRANSFER OF FREE CASH TO STABILIZATION FUND

To see if the Town will vote to approve the transfer of \$100,000 from Free Cash to the Stabilization Fund, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Majority vote required

ARTICLE 16:

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT TRAINING FUND

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds, \$10,000 to establish the Highway Department Training Fund, or take any other action relative thereto.

Majority vote required

ARTICLE 17:

CORNERSTONE CHURCH

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to accept as a gift for general municipal purposes the so-called Cornerstone Church property located at 1 Middlefield Road, Chester; and further to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds, \$50,000 to renovate the property for public use, and \$20,000 to cover annual expenses of utilities, heating fuel, insurance and routine maintenance; and further to authorize the Board of Selectmen to take any other action deemed appropriate in relation to such acquisition; or take any other action relative thereto.

Two Thirds vote required

ARTICLE 18:

FIRE DEPARTMENT TRANSFER OF FUNDS

To see if the Town will vote to transfer \$9,000.00 from the New Fire Truck account to the Fire Department Expenses account, or take any other action relative thereto.

Majority vote required

You are hereby directed to serve this Warrant by posting true and attested copies thereof, in three public places within the Town of Chester, seven (7) days at least, before the day and hour of holding said meeting.

Therefore, fail not and make due return of said Warrant with your doing thereon to the Town Clerk of the Town of Chester, at or before the day and hour of holding said meeting.

Given under our hands at Chester, this 1st day of June, 2024

John Baldasaro, Chairman

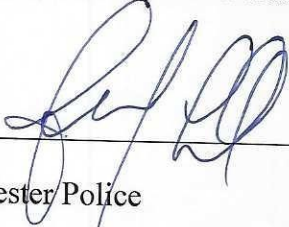


Richard "Andy" Sutton, Vice-Chairman



Craig Gauthier, Clerk

As per instruction in this Warrant, I have posted same, this 1st day of June 2024 in three public places, Chester Town Hall, Chester Post office, Chester Center.



Chester Police

Town of Chester - FY 2025 Budget

5/31/2024

Account: _____ Line Item _____ APP. BUDGET FY2025
 FY 2024 FY2025 vs FY2024 % Diff Comments

Account	Line Item	FY 2024	FY2025	vs FY2024	% Diff	Comments
Moderator	Moderator	\$200	\$200			
Finance Comm.	Finance Committee	100	150	50	50.0%	ATFC Dues
	Reserve Fund	\$10,000	\$10,000			
	Total Finance Comm.	\$10,100	\$10,150			
Selectmen	Selectboard Salaries	\$7,441	\$7,739	\$298	4.0%	4% COLA
	Town Administrator	\$63,860	\$66,414	\$2,554	4.0%	
	Assistant Administrator	\$14,461	\$15,039	\$578	4.0%	
	Selectmen's Expenses	\$2,000	\$2,080	\$80	4.0%	
	Town Counsel Service	\$7,000	\$20,000	\$13,000	185.7%	Additional Legal Services
	General Office Expense	\$3,150	\$3,000	-\$150	-4.8%	
	PVPC Annual Assm't	\$224	\$230	\$6	2.7%	
	Town Report	\$800	\$800			
	Inspectors certification costs	\$500	\$500			
	Total Selectmen	\$99,436	\$115,802	\$16,366	16.5%	
Accounting	Accounting Service	\$39,000	\$34,200	-\$4,800	-12.3%	CMELD Alloc. \$550/Month
	Audit expense	\$20,000	\$18,000	-\$2,000	-10.0%	Contract Amt.
	Accounting Software	\$6,500	\$6,500			
	Total Accounting	\$65,500	\$58,700	-\$6,800	-10.4%	
Assessors	Board of Assessors	\$1,545	\$1,800	\$255	16.5%	
	Assessor's Clerk Salary	\$18,540	\$16,640	-\$1,900	-10.2%	
	Assessor's Clerk Assistant	\$7,210	\$2,400	-\$4,810	-66.7%	\$200/Month Back-Up
	Assessors maps & GIS	\$4,200	\$4,450	\$250	6.0%	
	Consultant/Services	\$43,000	\$15,000	-\$28,000	-65.1%	Last Year Reval Year/New Service
	Assessors expenses	\$2,150	\$2,500	\$350	16.3%	
	Assessors schooling	\$700	\$800	\$100	14.3%	

Town of Chester - FY 2025 Budget

5/31/2024

Account:	Line Item	APP.		BUDGET		FY 2025		% Diff	Comments
		FY 2024	FY2025	FY2025	vs FY2024				
	Assessors software	\$4,050	\$4,230	\$180	4.4%				
	Total Assessors	\$81,395	\$47,820	-\$33,575	-41.2%				
	Treasurer								
	Treasurer Service	\$46,125	\$41,325	-\$4,800	-10.4%	13% CMELD			
	Assistant Treasurer Salary	\$103	\$500	\$397	385.4%				
	Payroll Service	\$3,500	\$3,500						
	Treasurers expenses	\$1,500	\$1,500						
	Bank charges	\$100	\$100						
	Land Court fees	\$5,000	\$15,000	\$10,000	200.0%	More Properties in Tax Title			
	Total Treasurer	\$56,328	\$61,925	\$5,597	9.9%				
	Collector								
	Collectors Salary	\$23,131	\$24,056	\$925	4.0%	4% COLA			
	Software Support	\$3,245	\$3,358	\$113	3.5%				
	Collectors Expenses	\$5,000	\$5,000						
	Tax Taking	\$2,000	\$2,000						
	Total Collector	\$33,376	\$34,414	\$1,038	3.1%				
	Town Clerk								
	Town Clerk Salary	\$15,141	\$15,747	\$606	4.0%	4% COLA			
	Town Clerk Expenses	\$3,375	\$3,543	\$168	5.0%				
	Elections	\$4,500	\$5,000	\$500	11.1%				
	Total Town Clerk	\$23,016	\$24,290	\$1,274	5.5%				
	Conserv. Com.	\$300	\$300						
	Conservation Commission	\$300	\$300						
	Planning Board	\$200	\$200						
	Planning Board Expense	\$200	\$200						
	Zoning Board	\$300	\$300						
	Zoning Board of Appeals	\$300	\$300						
	TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT	\$370,151	\$354,101	-\$16,050	-4.3%				
	PUBLIC WORKS								

Town of Chester - FY 2025 Budget

5/31/2024

Account:	Line Item	APP. BUDGET FY2025			vs FY2024	% Diff	Comments
		FY 2024	FY2025	FY2025			
Highway Dept.	Highway Dept. Salaries	\$190,800	\$210,000	\$19,200	10.1%	More Hours 4th Man	
	Highway Admin. Assistant	\$4,120	\$4,285	\$165	4.0%	4% COLA	
	Contract Services	\$25,000	\$25,000				
	Snow Removal Sal.	\$24,000	\$24,000				
	Snow Removal Exp.	\$50,000	\$50,000				
	Hwy. Garage Heat & Lg.	\$13,500	\$13,500				
	Hwy Uniforms	\$4,500	\$4,500				
	Hwy Supplies/Repairs	\$50,000	\$50,000				
	Hwy Stone,Gravel,Asp	\$88,000	\$88,000				
	Hwy Gas/Oil/Diesel	\$26,450	\$26,450				
	Tree Removal	\$22,000	\$22,000				
	Civil Defense/E.M.A.	\$1,000	\$1,000				
	Total Highway Dept.	\$499,370	\$518,735	\$19,365	3.9%		
Cemeteries	Commissioners Sal.	\$856	\$900	\$44	5.1%		
	Labor Expenses	\$8,833	\$8,833				
	Cemetery Expenses	\$1,000	\$1,000				
	Total Cemeteries	\$10,689	\$10,733	\$44	0.4%		
TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS		\$510,059	\$529,468	\$19,409	3.8%		
HEALTH/WELFARE/CULTURE/REC.							
Board of Health	Board of Health Salaries	\$4,636	\$4,821	\$185	4.0%	4% COLA	
	Transfer Station Salaries	\$13,197	\$13,725	\$528	4.0%	4% COLA	
	Board of Health Exp.	\$1,900	\$1,900				
	Transfer Station Exp.	\$52,000	\$57,000	\$5,000	9.6%	Increased Hauling Fees	
	Total Board of Health	\$71,733	\$77,446	\$5,713	8.0%		
Historical Comm.	Total Historical Comm.	\$2,500	\$2,500				

Town of Chester - FY 2025 Budget

5/31/2024

Account:	Line Item	APP.		BUDGET		FY2025		% Diff	Comments
		FY 2024	FY2025	FY2025	vs FY2024				
Council on Aging	COA Dir. Salary	\$11,573	\$12,036	\$463		4.0%	4% COLA		
	COA Expenses	\$12,500	\$13,125	\$625		5.0%	5% Supplies		
	Total Council of Aging	\$24,073	\$25,161	\$1,088		4.5%			
Veterans	Veterans Agent Assm't	\$6,018	\$6,118	\$100		1.7%			
	Veteran Benefits/Serv.	\$22,000	\$22,000						
	Total Veterans	\$28,018	\$28,118	\$100		0.4%			
Memorial Day	Memorial Day	\$500	\$500						
Rec. Comm.	Recreation Dept.	\$2,500	\$2,500						
	Parks Maintenance	\$8,000	\$8,000						
	Total Rec. Committee	\$10,500	\$10,500						
Library	Library Salaries	\$34,226	\$35,595	\$1,369		4.0%	4% COLA		
	Library Expenses	\$16,797	\$17,217	\$420		2.5%			
	MassCat Annual Fee	\$1,200	\$1,200						
	Total Library	\$52,223	\$54,012	\$1,789		3.4%			
Insp. Of Animals	Animal Insp. Salary	\$995	\$1,035	\$40		4.0%	4% COLA		
	Animal Expenses	500	500						
	Total Insp. Of Animals	\$1,495	\$1,535	\$40		2.7%			
TOTAL HEALTH/WELFARE/CULTURE/REC.		\$191,042	\$199,772	\$8,730		4.6%			
PUBLIC SAFETY									
Fire Dept.	Fire Chief Salary	\$7,800	\$8,112	\$312		4.0%	4% COLA		
	Fire Dept. Aide	\$1,748	\$1,800	\$52		3.0%			
	Fire Dept. Expenses	\$42,378	\$17,864	-\$24,514		-57.8%	Added Expense Line Items		

Town of Chester - FY 2025 Budget

5/31/2024

Account:	Line Item	APP.		BUDGET		FY2025		% Diff	Comments
		FY 2024	FY2025	FY2025	vs FY2024				
	Training	\$0	\$6,000	\$6,000	100.0%				
	CFD Software	\$3,122	\$5,000	\$1,878	60.2%				
	Building Maintenance	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000	100.0%				
	Medical Supplies	\$0	\$1,000	\$1,000	100.0%				
	Testing	\$0	\$3,223	\$3,223	100.0%				
	Truck Maintenance	\$0	\$4,000	\$4,000	100.0%				
	Total Fire Dept.	\$55,048	\$48,999	-\$6,049	-11.0%	Turn Out Gear \$12,600 to Capital Req.			
	Police Dept.	\$36,050	\$37,492	\$1,442	4.0%	4% COLA			
	Police Department Salaries	\$22,428	\$26,214	\$3,786	16.9%	More Patrol Hours			
	Sergeant Position	\$7,020	\$8,510	\$1,490	21.2%	More Administrative Time			
	Officer Training	\$4,184	\$4,184						
	Police Expenses	\$22,872	\$22,872						
	Total Police Dept.	\$92,553	\$99,272	\$6,719	7.3%				
	Ambulance	\$45,056	\$66,696	\$21,640	48.0%	Bringing Service up to Standard			
	Bldg. Insp.	\$13,802	\$14,354	\$552	4.0%	4% COLA			
	Building Insp. Salary	\$13,802	\$14,354	\$552	4.0%				
	Building Insp. Exp.	\$750	\$750						
	Total Bldg. Insp.	\$14,552	\$15,104	\$552	3.8%				
	Animal Control	\$2,704	\$2,812	\$108	4.0%	4% COLA			
	Animal Control Off. Sal.	\$2,704	\$2,812	\$108	4.0%				
	Animal Ctrl. Expenses	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$500	33.3%				
	Total Animal Control	\$4,204	\$4,812	\$608	14.5%				
	TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY	\$211,413	\$234,884	\$23,471	11.1%				
	Debt & Int.	\$29,479	\$29,479						
	Water Trmt. Plant	\$29,479	\$29,479						
	Highway Trucks Note - Int.	\$1,050	\$0	-\$1,050	-100%	Retire Note \$100,000 FY2025			
	Fire Truck Note - Int.	\$0	\$20,093	\$20,093	100%	New Fire Truck Note			
	Short term debt	\$1,000	\$1,000						
	Total Debt & Interest	\$31,529	\$50,572	\$19,043	60.4%				

Town of Chester - FY 2025 Budget

5/31/2024

Account:	Line Item	APP. FY 2024	BUDGET FY2025	FY2025 vs FY2024	% Diff	Comments
	Unclassified Expenses					
Selectmen/	Town Hall Custodian	\$6,927	\$7,204	\$277	4.0%	4% COLA
Town Hall	Town Hall Expenses	\$23,000	\$23,000			
	Town Hall Rep/Maint.	\$10,000	\$7,500	-\$2,500	-25.0%	Less Maint.
	Old School Bldg Maint.	\$20,000	\$5,000	-\$15,000	-75.0%	Cancel Fire Insurance
	Town Hall IT Services	\$20,400	\$20,400			
	Comcast	\$7,500	\$7,500			
	Verizon	\$1,440	\$1,440			
	Website	\$4,375	\$4,375			
	PermiteYES (Bldg Insp/BOH)	\$4,760	\$4,760			
	Landfill Monitoring	\$4,000	\$4,000			
	Total Selectmen/Town Hall	\$102,402	\$85,179	-\$17,223	-16.8%	
Insurance/	Prop/Cas/Auto/Liab. Ins.	\$36,724	\$56,000	\$19,276	52.5%	Increased Building Values
Retirement	Police/Fire/Accd. & Health	\$10,711	\$11,478	\$767	7.2%	
	Workmen's Comp.	\$9,743	\$9,889	\$146	1.5%	
	Group Health Ins.	\$93,174	\$100,628	\$7,454	8.0%	Increase in Insurance Rate
	Medicare/FICA Empl.	\$9,200	\$14,000	\$4,800	52.2%	Employee Increase
	Unemployment Comp.	\$9,000	\$30,000	\$21,000	233.3%	Replenish MA Fund due to COVID
	County Retirement	\$93,998	\$127,755	\$33,757	35.9%	Substantial Increase
	Bonds	\$1,000	\$1,000			
	Total Ins./Retirement	\$263,550	\$350,750	\$87,200	33.1%	
	TOTAL DEBT/INT/UNCLASSIFIED	\$397,481	\$486,501	\$155,124	39.0%	
	TOWN MEETING RAISE & APPROPRIATE	\$1,680,146	\$1,804,726	\$124,580	7.4%	
SCHOOL BUDGET						
Gateway	Statutory Method ATM	\$1,606,927	\$1,644,903	\$37,976	2.36%	

Town of Chester - FY 2025 Budget

5/31/2024

Account:	Line Item	APP.	BUDGET	FY2025	% Diff	Comments
		FY 2024	FY2025	vs FY2024		
Vocational	Voc. Student Cost	\$168,000	\$168,000			
	Transportation	<u>\$41,307</u>	<u>\$41,307</u>			
	Total Vocational	\$209,307	\$209,307			
TOTAL BUDGET		\$3,496,380	\$3,658,936	\$162,556	4.6%	

FY2024

Vocational Student Cost = 8 Students @ \$20,500 per Student, plus \$4,000 Spec. Ed. = \$168,000

FY2025

Vocational School Level Fund