



CHESTER BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
and ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS  
15 MIDDLEFIELD ROAD  
CHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01011

(413) 354-7760

TownofChester.net

**Monday, September 9, 2024**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Open meeting – This meeting was held in the Chester Town Hall Auditorium with a virtual option.

Selectboard members present were John Baldasaro, Andy Sutton and Craig Gauthier. Also present was Town Administrator Don Humason, Town Moderator Adam Bryant, Water Commissioner Frank Pero, CMELD Manager Diane Hall, Town Clerk Terry Donovan, Tax Collector Maryanne Pease and Police Chief Jen Dubiel.

*John Baldasaro opened the meeting at 6:00pm. Warrants, minutes and all correspondence were signed.*

- **Water Commission Update**

Jim Zimmerman and Bob Daley were absent due to another Water Commission meeting in Blandford. Frank Pero said that the turbidity is two tenths away from where it needs to be for the DEP tests to be done and that there may be residuals from the pipelines that they are waiting to clear up. Frank said he has been working with the diver who has examined the dam and waterlines from the reservoirs and isn't fully updated on what is going on at the plant. Andy Sutton asked if there are tests being done on the water at all currently? Frank said he believes the people employed at the plant are doing tests daily but he is primarily out in the field so he cannot confirm. Frank said that due to oversights in cleaning the reservoir is a major part of the problem. The reservoir is full of mud, and they are having issues with the water line that pumps water out of the reservoir because it may be under a lot of that mud. Frank said that he believes now that the lines have been resolved and the filters replaced that the reservoir need to be addressed.

Craig Gauthier asked about daily updates that were discussed at the last meeting. Craig said there were good updates being provided from the Water Commission, but they have stopped in the last week. Frank said he was under the impression that Jim Zimmerman and Bob Daley were providing those updates, and he will confer with them about that.



John mentioned there was an email sent by Bob Daley as a request to be put into the meeting minutes. John said things are entered into the meeting minutes when they are presented in the meeting publicly. Frank asked if the email was available, and he could read it out loud. John said the email mentioned the discussion about not charging water bills during the time of the boil water order raised in the last meeting. Bob Daley felt that was decision was made in haste. Both John and Frank agreed that there shouldn't be water bills charged during a boil water order and it will be discussed further.

Maryanne Pease asked about a water rate increase that she heard was going to happen. Frank said he was not aware of that, and he would investigate it and get back to the selectmen. Frank said the water commission has not met together as a group in the last couple of weeks. John said it is critical to get the boil water order rescinded and the Water Commission should be working together daily on that.

John said that Bob Daley stated he wrote to DEP requesting approval to clean the reservoir through a volunteer effort and we are waiting for a response from DEP. This request has been denied before due to an endangered species inhabiting the area but that is no longer an issue. Frank asked if, once we have approval to clean the reservoir, could townspeople who are licensed operators use town equipment to help with the clean up? John was unsure about DEP being okay with that because it may need to be approved machinery. Don Humason said he can review the town's insurance policy to see if that would be doable. Frank said he feels there would be a lot of people willing to volunteer to help in the cleaning effort. John said Chip Dazelle, and the Highway Department are ready to help at any time.

- **CMELD/Special Town Meeting Update**

The special town meeting will be held on October 7th at 7pm at Chester Elementary School which holds 350 people standing in the auditorium. Diane Hall said if there is a PA system, people can be in the hallway while the meeting is going on as well. Don said the two questions posed will be the CMELD/Eversource question and a question about outstanding bills. Terry Donovan said they will be checking voters in at the door of the special meeting and then when the question is called, voters will proceed to receive their ballot and place their vote. Beth Lansing asked if people could leave after they vote? Terry said that people can leave once they place their vote. After the question is called and the vote starts, Adam Bryant, the Town Moderator, will decide when the voting will end. The vote can only be placed in person.

Diane got a draft of the CMELD audit from Eversource. It's a lengthy document and Diane said they have a meeting on Wednesday the 11th with the Light Commission to go over the audit. She said she needs approval from the Commission before they're able to present the details to the public.

Diane also raised an issue about Town Moderator, Adam Bryant, calling MMWEC (Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company) to get information about their energy programs. Diane said they buy energy from this company and was told by one of their employees that Adam called requesting the information as the Town Moderator. Diane felt that it was out of line for him to do that and said she feels Adam will not be impartial as he also posts a lot of things on Facebook, and he should be excused





from the meetings. John agreed that the moderator should be impartial during the meetings but what they do as a townspeople in their free time is his right. John said that during the meetings Adam has been respectful and impartial. Adam said that he has been incredibly neutral, and he is only posting things on a public forum to alleviate misinformation. Adam said that he called MMWEC to ask about the next 0 program because other communities were benefitting from it and wanted to present those details to CMELD only as an interest to citizens. Adam said he wants to get all the information available so the best decision can be made by the townspeople. John said that he agrees he hasn't represented himself as the Town Moderator

A heated discussion ensued between Diane and Adam about Facebook posts he made. John said he agrees that Adam has a right as a townspeople to put information online and does not feel he is doing so under the representation of the Town Moderator. Melissa McCallum said she feels that it does give the townspeople the idea that he is biased when he is up in front of a meeting as well. John agreed that we see everyone's opinion on social media, and he doesn't have an issue with what he's been posting, Andy Sutton agreed that during meetings Adam stays impartial and respectful.

Clint Dressler asked if we would see the CMELD audit prior to the meeting? Diane said we should have access to it within the next 10 days.

- **Decorum at Meetings**

Craig Gauthier raised the point of recent behavior problems in town meetings with arguments ensuing and people talking over each other. John said that because of the major issues going on in town, he has opened the floor to public opinion a lot more than typical meetings and there will be more order in future meetings. John said that behavior in the last town meeting was unacceptable. Going forward, the selectboard will present their topics and when the meeting is turned over for public opinion, townspeople will have three minutes of speaking time per person.

- **Town Administrator Report**

- Story Walk in Hampden Park will happen over the next couple of months. There will be boards throughout Hampden Park and the idea is to walk from board to board to follow the story. This should start at the end of September and will run through to the end of Fall.
- Superintendent Smidy is attending the next BOS meeting on September 23<sup>rd</sup> for a Back-to-School update.
- The Hazard Mitigation Plan is nearly finished. This is the plan for what the town would do in a state of emergency like floods, earthquakes and things of that nature. The plan needs to be approved by the federal government to receive federal grants. Don said there is a draft on the town's website and there is an opportunity for the public to review and give suggestions. The deadline for suggestions is September 13<sup>th</sup>. Clint asked if the Maple Street bridge reconstruction would be part of the mitigation plan? He said that the damage was caused by Hurricane Irene. Don said that the wall was private property which is why we're unable to take care of it as a



town. Clint said that the town has worked on it a couple of times but John confirmed that DEP was not okay with that and the town risks being heavily fined if they were to do that again. John said Army Core of Engineers may be the only route that would be able to repair that wall that because of the river and waterways.

*John called a motion to end the meeting, Andy seconded, and all voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:59pm.*



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Respectfully Submitted

Kim Fox, Administrative Assistant

9/23/24

Date Signed

John Baldasaro, Chairman

9/23/24

Date Signed

Andy Sutton, Vice Chairman

9/23/24

Date Signed

Craig Gauthier, Clerk

9/23/24

Date Signed





CHARLES "CHIP" DAZELLE, HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT  
CHESTER HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT  
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## ***9-9-24 Selectboard Report from the Highway Department***

- 1] Helping water department still ongoing picking up water from Big Y
- 2] Still waiting for line co to do parking lot and cross walks
- 3] Paving skyline has been rescheduled to sept 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>
- 4] Working on Skyline ditches to get ready for pavement around 3<sup>rd</sup> week of September found 5 more buried catch basins, will have grader reshape the ditches and clean before paving
- 5] Installed culverts and reshaping the road on 64 Smith to protect the new leach field done
- 6] working Fisk rd and Kinnie brook several are collapsed or not working, Fisk keeps washing out
- 7] Meeting with Tighe & Bond me and Andy about a possible award to Chester for \$185,000 for Abbott and Ingell **The Town of Chester; Abbott Brook Culvert Replacements: \$185,000**  
<https://www.mass.gov/news/healey-driscoll-administration-awards-37-million-to-support-ecological-restoration-projects>
- 8] Installed guardrail on Prospect steep hill

-Charles "Chip" Dazelle,  
Chester Highway Superintendent  
Cell 413-393-8946