



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

(413) 354-7760

TownofChester.net

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**Monday, September 23rd, 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 Clerk Terry Donovan, Town Moderator Adam Bryant, Water Commissioners Bob Daley and Jim Zimmerman, Municipal Light Commissioners Deryck Savoy and Terry Murphy, 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**

Water Commissioner Bob Daley provided the status of the boil water order. He said earlier today he had a conversation with DEP, and they were able to proceed with the first of two tests needed to rescind the order which was performed on 9/23. Test results will take 24 hours and then the second test will be able to be done the following day. If both tests meet the DEP requirements needed, the order could potentially be lifted this Thursday, 9/26. Bob was hopeful that the tests would come back clear. John asked if bacterial testing has been done throughout these last few weeks and Jim Zimmerman said yes.



Craig brought up a behavioral issue that occurred between him and Bob at the water treatment plant the previous Thursday. Bob said he did not think the town meeting was the appropriate time to bring this up. Craig said he is asking for Bob's resignation after the boil water order is lifted.

John brought up compensating water bills for the townspeople during the boil water order, which was mentioned at a previous meeting. John stated that he believes townspeople should not be paying the full price for their water bills. There was back and forth discussion between John and Bob in which Bob stated the water was usable although it was not drinkable. John said this was a community emergency and mentioned how the highway department and volunteers banded together while this was going on. Bob said the reservoir needs to be cleaned as there is a lot of sediment in it and it will cost a lot of money to excavate which will be tough for the water department budget. John said he is not asking for it to come out of the water department budget but thinking there should be a fee waiver or something like that on upcoming water bills. Bob said he believes the money would be better spent on cleaning the reservoir rather than lowering the water bill. Jim Zimmerman suggested working on getting a pipe installed in the gate house to alleviate future sediment from burying the pump. John said with the right machinery and trucks to take the sediment out of there, it may be able to be cleaned out in one or two days. Andy Sutton agreed there should be some relief for the water customers. Bob agreed to looking into options and have a plan by the time the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter water bills are sent.

Sister Judith suggested waiving the flat fee that all water customers pay, and Rosanne McClafin suggested changing the per gallon rate. Bob Tingley asked about working towards a shared well for the town. John said that this issue has put Chester on DEP's radar, and it may be an opportunity to be able to work grants for a shared well system.

Don Humason confirmed that when the boil water order is lifted, messages will be posted at the town hall and other town buildings as well as posted on the town website.

- **Gateway Update**

Gateway Superintendent Kristen Smidy presented the following updates:

- This year, the school is pushing students to have more engagement in the community. The goal is to get kids real-world experiences.





- Early childhood enrollment has grown to 28 students. Gateway received education grants that allowed them to expand Pre-K from 4 days a week to 5.
- Woodshop has a new teacher, and the program has expanded to include middle school students.
- 45 students are coming from Germany to play with the band to serve as a multicultural experience and will be staying through the remainder of the semester.
- A state funded grant which paid for after school classes and buses was rescinded this year because of “low participation.” Participation rates are based on surrounding cities that are more populated and Gateway was unable to meet the required 400 hours to receive the grant. She said Gateway had plenty of participation, but because of the number of students being compared to more populated cities and the number of Gateway students also playing sports, they are unable to meet 400 hours. Kristen asked for support in voicing these concerns to legislation.
- Kristen mentioned a nationwide increase in students calling in threats to schools and wanted to raise awareness while saying that they haven’t had any direct issues at Gateway. She said school safety is always one of their biggest priorities.

- **CMELD Audit**

Deryck Savoy said the audit is almost done. He said Diane has really been trying to get it finished with the auditor. There were a lot of adjustments that CMELD had to make because of the audit and that it should be final this Friday the 27<sup>th</sup> or Monday the 30<sup>th</sup>. Deryck said CMELD will review first and provide the executive summary to the selectboard to pass on to the town.

John asked if it the audit results look like the 2022 DPU. Deryck said the rate most likely will decrease since there were some changes in benefits and pensions budgeted for CMELD. John asked how the audit would be reviewed, if a meeting would be held or would just be reviewed electronically? Deryck said it will depend how easy the audit is to review. John said as quickly as the information is provided publicly by CMELD, it will be presented to the town.

John confirmed the special town meeting will be held October 7<sup>th</sup>, at the Chester Elementary School.

- **Town Administrator Report**

- The BOS meeting will be held as scheduled at 6pm on October 7<sup>th</sup> at the Chester Elementary school prior to the start of the Special Town meeting at 7pm. Don said there will be two



questions posed, one about the CMELD proposal and one for town bills that need to be paid from the previous FY budget. Deryck Savoy suggested reserving some parking spots at the school for elderly and/or handicapped people since there are not a lot of parking spaces available, and the assumption is there will be a lot of people in attendance. People may need to park alongside available grass and curbs.

- MEMA has our Hazard Mitigation Plan. After the first review, it will then be reviewed with FEMA for approval. Once approved, the plan will send to the selectboard to posted to the public on the website and a hard copy will be available for display at the Town Hall.
- Valley Opportunity Council is offering fuel heating assistance. Don said they are working with Council on Aging and there are postings available at the transfer station on how to contact them for assistance paying for fuel.
- This year's STAM Meeting will be held in Southwick on October 24<sup>th</sup> from 9am-3pm with both Don Humason and Kim Fox in attendance.
- There are inconsistencies over what the town owes for the Prospect Street Project. PVPC has said that the town owes over \$227,000, but we are waiting for an official invoice.
- Public Comment
  - Andy Meyers said that the Blandford administrator submitted their final report for the shared water grant, and it was accepted.
  - Liz Massa shared that the Rec committee will be presenting some Halloween events on Saturday, October 26th. Activities will include a trunk or treat at Main Street & Maple, a rag shag parade, sinister sawmill, and the railway station will have food and music.
  - Bob Daley asked if there's a plan in place to winterize the abandoned school. John said they don't have one yet but will be discussed soon.

***John called a motion to end the meeting, Andy seconded, and all voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:55pm.***



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Respectfully Submitted

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kim Fox, Administrative Assistant

10/7/24  
Date Signed

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Baldasaro, Chairman

10/7/24  
Date Signed

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Andy Sutton, Vice Chairman

10/7/24  
Date Signed

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Craig Gauthier, Clerk

10/7/24  
Date Signed





CHARLES "CHIP" DAZELLE, HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT  
CHESTER HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT  
2 TOWN ROAD  
CHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01011  
(413) 354-2276      [Highwaysuper@townofchester.net](mailto:Highwaysuper@townofchester.net)

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***9-23-24 Selectboard Report  
from the Highway Department***

- 1] Helping water department still ongoing picking up water from Big Y
- 2] Parking lot and cross walks done and behind town hall
- 3] Paving skyline has been completed just have a partial strip to finish had truck issues
- 4] Some ditches will need to be blacktopped over now that road is done
- 5] Installed culverts and reshaping the road on Fisk Road and removed dead trees
- 6] Installed guardrail on Prospect steep hill
- 7] Mowing still
- 8] Going to start patching Blandford Road and schedule line painting soon

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



**Valley Opportunity Council**  
**300 High St. Holyoke, MA 01040**  
**413-552-1548**

**Do you need assistance with your heating bill?**  
**Do you live in one of these Towns?**  
**If you answer yes, you can call 413-552-1548 to schedule an appointment.**

- Agawam
- Blandford
- Bondsville
- Brimfield
- Chester
- Chicopee
- East Longmeadow
- Feeding Hills
- Granville
- Hampden
- Holland
- Holyoke
- Indian Orchard
- Longmeadow
- Ludlow
- Monson
- Montgomery
- Palmer
- Russell
- Southwick
- Springfield
- Tolland
- Wales
- West Springfield
- Westfield
- Wilbraham

Fiscal Year 2025  
 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)  
 Income Eligibility and Benefit Levels

Number of People in a Household	100% of Federal Poverty Level	125% of Federal Poverty Level	150% of Federal Poverty Level	175% of Federal Poverty Level	200% of Federal Poverty Level	60% of Estimated State Median Income
1	\$ 15,060	\$ 18,825	\$ 22,590	\$ 26,355	\$ 30,120	\$ 49,196
2	\$ 20,440	\$ 25,550	\$ 30,660	\$ 35,770	\$ 40,880	\$ 64,333
3	\$ 25,820	\$ 32,275	\$ 38,730	\$ 45,185	\$ 51,640	\$ 79,470
4	\$ 31,200	\$ 39,000	\$ 46,800	\$ 54,600	\$ 62,400	\$ 94,608
5	\$ 36,580	\$ 45,725	\$ 54,870	\$ 64,015	\$ 73,160	\$ 109,745
6	\$ 41,960	\$ 52,450	\$ 62,940	\$ 73,430	\$ 83,920	\$ 124,882
7	\$ 47,340	\$ 59,175	\$ 71,010	\$ 82,845	\$ 94,680	\$ 127,720
8	\$ 52,720	\$ 65,900	\$ 79,080	\$ 92,260	\$ 105,440	\$ 130,559
9	\$ 58,100	\$ 72,625	\$ 87,150	\$ 101,675	\$ 116,200	\$ 133,397
10	\$ 63,480	\$ 79,350	\$ 95,220	\$ 111,090	\$ 126,960	\$ 136,235
11	\$ 68,860	\$ 86,075	\$ 103,290	\$ 120,505	\$ 137,720	\$ 139,073
12	\$ 74,240	\$ 92,800	\$ 111,360	\$ 129,920	\$ 141,912	\$ 141,912
13	\$ 79,620	\$ 99,525	\$ 119,430	\$ 139,335	\$ 144,750	\$ 144,750
14	\$ 85,000	\$ 106,250	\$ 127,500	\$ 147,588	\$ 147,588	\$ 147,588
15	\$ 90,380	\$ 112,975	\$ 135,570	\$ 150,427	\$ 150,427	\$ 150,427
16	\$ 95,760	\$ 119,700	\$ 143,640	\$ 153,265	\$ 153,265	\$ 153,265
17	\$ 101,140	\$ 126,425	\$ 151,710	\$ 156,103	\$ 156,103	\$ 156,103



**Need help with your fuel bills?**  
 See if you qualify for fuel assistance or home heating repairs.  
 You can apply by scanning the QR code for your area



Springfield Residents  
<https://toapply.org/intspfld>



All other Residents of Hampden County  
<https://toapply.org/MassLIHEAP>

or call at  
**413-272-2209**  
 for Springfield residents or  
**413-552-1548**  
 for all other residents of Hampden County  
 to schedule an appointment by phone.




Milly and  
 Myrna  
 9/25/24

**If you live in Hampshire County**  
**you must apply at**  
**Community Action Pioneer Valley**  
**393 Main St. Greenfield MA 01301**  
**413-774-2310**



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**CHESTER BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING**

**Monday, September 23, 2024, 6:00PM, in the Town Hall Auditorium**

*This meeting will be held as a hybrid meeting, but it is at the Select Board's discretion to allow participation for those attending remotely.*

*-Meeting minutes and warrants may be signed.*

**Report from Town Departments/Town Business:**

-Gateway Back to School Update  
-Water Department Update, Q&A

Superintendent Kristen Smidy  
Water Commissioners

**Old Business:**

-Review of CMELD Audit

Requested by Andy Myers

**New Business:**

**Town Administrator Don Humason report:**

-STM Warrant done and posted  
-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update  
-Valley Opportunity Council





**Anything that should come before the Selectboard that was unanticipated within the 48 hours of posting:**

**Public Comments or Questions:**

**Next Meeting:** Monday, October 7, 2024, 6PM  
Followed by Special Town Meeting at 7PM.  
Chester Elementary School Gymnasium  
Please carpool, if possible, due to limited parking spaces

**Meeting Adjournment**

*This meeting is being held in person at the location provided on this notice. Members of the public are welcome to attend this in-person meeting.*

*Please note that while an option for remote attendance and or participation is being provided as a courtesy to the public the meeting/hearing will not be suspended or terminated if technological problems interrupt the virtual broadcast, unless otherwise required by law.*

*Members of the public with particular interest in any specific item on this agenda should make plans for in-person vs. virtual attendance accordingly.*



Town of Chester, Massachusetts is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Chester Selectboard meeting

Time: Sep 23, 2024 06:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84395503191?pwd=iQPkVVg5xGqo799R3PkGkqb249gWuR.1>

Meeting ID: 843 9550 3191    Passcode: 930717

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,84395503191#,,,,\*930717# US (Chicago)

+16465588656,,84395503191#,,,,\*930717# US (New York)

Dial by your location

• +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

• +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)