



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

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**Monday, March 24, 2025**

**MEETING MINUTES**

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

Selectboard members present were John Baldasaro and Craig Gauthier. Also present was Town Administrator Don Humason, Finance Committee Chair Brian Fogue, Fire Chief Nate Bolduc, Water Commissioner Bob Daley, and members of the public.

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

**Town Business**

- Public Hearing – Proposed FY25 Community Development Block Grant PVPC application

Joe Hagopian from PVPC provided updates on the next phases of water and drainage issues on Prospect Street. The main improvements will be culvert replacements. It is hard to predict an end date for this project as it will be in phases year over year. Joe said the cost of materials has gone up, but the hope is there will only be 1-3 more phases after this next one. He said they are dividing the work into phases because of the funding needed for this large of a project. Joe confirmed these next phases should be more straight forward than the last phase, which was the most complicated and expensive.

Bob Daley asked about replacing the water pipes in that area that are in critical need of replacement. Joe said they do have plans for that.



Chip Dazelle said he will have an on-site meeting with Joe and the engineers beforehand so he can make sure all the pieces are in place prior to work beginning.

***John Baldasaro made a motion to close the public hearing for the PVPC grant. Andy Sutton seconded and all voted in favor.***

***John made a motion to authorize PVPC to submit the proposed FY25 Chester Community Development Fund grant application to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Living Communities in an amount not to exceed \$850,000 as detailed in the public hearing and to include infrastructure improvements on Prospect Street. Andy seconded and all voted in favor.***

***John made a motion to authorize the Chair of the Board of Selectmen to sign all required forms, documents and authorizations pertaining to the proposed FY25 Chester Community Development Fund grant application. Andy seconded and all voted in favor.***

- 126/133 Middlefield Road Properties

Charlie Kinecki said the last time this property came up in a meeting, the historical society showed interest in the old railway Roundhouse across the river from the property. He expressed concern about a 10,000-gallon oil tank on the property. He reached out to DEP, and they are willing to work with the town to address that issue. He said he is willing to reach out to the town attorney to find out how to move forward with the owners to request access to the property. Andy Sutton said he had talked to the town attorney about this, and he provided three options: can go on the property to inspect since it is in tax title, call the owner and ask, or get an administrative warrant. Andy said the attorney recommended the administrative warrant.

Sara the town treasurer was present via Zoom and confirmed both properties are in tax title. Charlie said he believes the first step is sending a notice to the owner requesting access to the property for inspection and if there is no response or a refusal, then go through an administrative warrant. Charlie also brought up a concern about the security of the building for vandalism or anything in there. He wants to schedule an inspection with DEP for May. He said he also sent info to the state attorney general to see if they'd be interested in taking over the property to turn it into housing because they have had interest in doing with old mills in the past.

Sara confirmed there have been no taxes paid on either property since it went into tax title. One parcel has \$4,948 owed on principal and the other parcel \$24,618 on principal only.

The BOS and BOH agreed that there needs to be a forward movement on the property.



*John made a motion for Charlie Kinecki to take the lead on 126 & 133 Middlefield Rd. Andy seconded and all were in favor.*

- Funding for Abbott Brook Culvert

Tighe & Bond have done a lot of grant writing for the town in the past. Andy Sutton is currently working with them on a grant to fund this project. The Department of Environmental Conservation will only cover about \$400,000. Tighe and Bond would like to put a grant application through Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) which has a maximum grant award of one million dollars. Because of the length of time to apply, Tighe & Bond is asking the town to contribute \$5,000 to apply. The application for the grant is due in early April and a vote at a town meeting would be needed to take the town's contribution from free cash.

Chip also mentioned the Highway department has a Fair Share account with money available that could be used instead of free cash. John said that might be the easiest way and would make sense to use money from that account.

- Highway Truck Debt Paydown

Sara Hunter said there is a debt due to come up next week. She thought there was a request to have a vote to pay off the \$100,000 to pay off the loan but it was not put into the town vote because of a timing issue.

Will not be able to extend the life of the vehicles. The intention is to put it on the next town meeting. \$12,500 is the minimum amount to be paid this year. There is not a lot of free cash available to the town this year. There will need to be an article on the next town meeting.

- Planning board over 55 Housing Bylaw

Liz Massa on behalf of the Planning Board submitted a bylaw amendment to the Over 55 Housing Bylaw to have multiple buildings allowed instead of one. She said the state would help with funding. She is hoping to get the BOS on board with this, have a public hearing with residents and present it at the town meeting.

There was confusion over who makes the decision on providing a special permit, whether it's planning board or BOS. Liz said she will confirm with the town council.

John was concerned about it being age restrictive and would want clear language included in the bylaw. He recommended finding out the specific language needed for the bylaw from the town council. Andy Sutton asked if there could be verbiage on the occupants section about having a live-in-care provider for the tenant. He was concerned about them being younger



than 55. She said the Planning Board wants it to be inclusive for people who have spouses under 55 as well.

The Planning Board is looking for development to have access to town water. Andy suggested they include that it could be possible to have access to town water but not make it a definite wording in case the development would be built outside of town water access points. "Adequate water supply" was the wording that John suggested. Liz said the Planning Board will meet and make the adjustments and send the revised copy to the BOS.

Liz also mentioned the Marijuana Bylaw and there is no vote from the June 2022 meeting where it came up. She said they will need to find where that vote occurred for that bylaw to be in effect.

#### Town Admin

- Choose Health Insurance Provider

Sonya was unavailable for the meeting and Don said he does not have the information about options she was going to provide. John said Don will need to get the options, send them individually for them to respond so a decision can be made and HGCIT can be notified by 4/1.

- Sheriff Cocchi's Correction Officer Academy Volunteers

Will be coming to town Friday, 3/28, for clean up around the town parks and old school. Liz asked if they could do fence painting at the transfer station. Don said the town would need to supply the paint and tools so they wouldn't be able to do it on Friday but can ask for them to do it the next time they come to town. Rich Holzman also asked for work to be done around the cemetery sometime this summer.

Liz mentioned the textiles drop off bin will be arriving at the fire department on Thursday 3/27.

- Hybrid Public Meetings

The legislation passed an extension on having hybrid meetings for another 2 years.

- 5/3/25 will be the MMA conference at Delaney House. He said he can register any of the selectmen that want to go and it's \$25 each.
- Comcast is looking for a date to meet with Don and John to finalize the town's contract. John said he will reach out to him tomorrow to schedule that.



## Public Comment

Andy Sutton expressed frustration with Andy Weiss from PVPC regarding the RFP for the old school. He said it was almost done at the end of last year but has not received any updates on it since.

Craig provided an update on the Emery Street ballpark. He is almost done with all the repairs to the shed. The fridge is up and running, he replaced the door frame and the door. There is still some cleanup of glass needed on the inside. The water faucet has been turned back on, the power is back on, and the meter was replaced. \$500 for restitution has been received by one of the families so far.

Brian Forgue announced the school committee passed the budget for Chester. Final vocational numbers should be coming in April. Brian asked Don about the group insurance budget only being about 35% expended. Don said he isn't sure why there is so little expenditure from that account. Brian said there was only about 74% expended last year so it may be over budgeted. Brian asked about the Highway truck loan payment of \$12,500. Andy Meyers said that if it is on the annual town meeting, it will be fine.

***John Baldasaro made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Andy Sutton seconded and all were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:11pm.***



Respectfully Submitted,

**Kim Fox, Administrative Assistant**

4/7/25

**Date Signed**

**John Baldasaro, Chairman**

4/7/25

**Date Signed**

**Andy Sutton, Vice Chairman**

4/7/25

**Date Signed**

**Craig Gauthier, Clerk**

4/7/25

**Date Signed**