



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

(413) 354-7760

TownofChester.net

Monday, March 31, 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, Andy Sutton, and Craig Gauthier. Also present were Town Administrator Don Humason, Finance Committee Chair Brian Fogue, Fire Chief Nate Bolduc, and Cemetery Commissioner Jessica Slatcher. On Zoom were Conservation Commissioner Lora Wade and Administrative Assistant Kim Fox.

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

Special Town Business

John explained that the Town currently has Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust (HCGIT) as our health insurance provider for town employees who are eligible for health insurance benefits.

Sonya Kinch, Benefits Consultant, joined the meeting via Zoom and talked about research she did into finding other providers. But even with HCGIT's recently announced increase in their FY26 rates, they still came in much cheaper than other providers. They lack good customer service, but their rates are good.

Sonya said open enrollment starts in April and ends May 9th.



Brian asked about the Group Health Insurance account budget and asked if it could possibly be reduced for the next fiscal year but Sonya advised against it saying the Town has employees who are eligible but are not yet enrolled. She thinks once they enroll the budgeted funds will likely be needed.

Don asked about how many hours an employee can work and still remain unbenefited. Sonya said it was 30 hours/week.

Our Employee handbook needs to be updated. It was last done in July of 2020. We have to make sure it is up to date.

The Selectboard agreed Chester will stay with HCGIT for FY26 and hopes that with Sonya and Don working to oversee the benefits things will run more smoothly for our employees.

Town Administrator Report

-Craig and Don reported that the Hampden County Sheriff's Department's class of graduating Corrections Officers came to Chester and Blandford last Friday. In Chester, we had them clean up the playground behind the Old Elementary School and Hampden Park.

Craig was with them the whole time helping out. Dave Pierce and Chip Dazelle brought tools for the volunteers to use. Dave also cleaned up some of the wood. Highway will pick up the two brush/refuse piles later in the week.

Don called Sheriff Cocchi on his cellphone from the playground during the cleanup to thank him on behalf of the Town. The Sheriff was able to talk on speaker to the assembled work crew to thank them and congratulate them on their graduation. He also pledged to send more teams to Chester this summer.

The parks look great and people are already enjoying them.

Public Comments

-Brian Forgue updated the Selectboard about the Finance Committee's work preparing a proposed FY26 Town budget. They are planning to present their budget to the Selectboard in May.

John Baldasaro made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Andy Sutton seconded and all were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:27pm.



Respectfully Submitted,

Donald F. Humason, Jr.

Donald F. Humason, Jr., Town Administrator

5/5/25

Date Signed

John Baldasaro

John Baldasaro, Chairman

5/5/25

Date Signed

Andy Sutton

Andy Sutton, Vice Chairman

Date Signed

Craig Gauthier

Craig Gauthier, Clerk

5/5/25

Date Signed