



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

(413) 354-7760

TownofChester.net

Monday, May 19, 2025

MEETING MINUTES

Open meeting – This meeting was held in the Chester Town Hall Auditorium. Due to technical issues, this meeting was not available on Zoom. This was a one-off issue and there will continue to be a virtual option for meetings.

Selectboard members present were John Baldasaro, Andy Sutton and Craig Gauthier. Also present was Town Administrator Don Humason, Conservation Commission Chair Lora Wade, Finance Committee Chair Brian Fogue, and members of the public.

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

Town Business

- Discussion to Consolidate Cemetery Accounts

Cemetery Commissioner Jessica Slatcher was unable to attend this meeting, so Brian Fogue, Finance Chairman, spoke on her behalf regarding this matter. Brian is looking to consolidate the multiple cemetery accounts into one for easier accounting and understanding what funds are available to spend for maintenance and day-to-day operations. There is also discussion about raising the burial fee. The cost of burial is closer to \$1,000, which is higher than what is being charged currently. Jessica is also looking into expanding the space at the cemeteries because there isn't a lot of room left.

- Public Participation Policy

Liz Massa said that the Blandford selectboard recently adopted a public comment policy for their town meetings and she believes Chester should have that as well. The policy would help solidify Open Meeting laws, enhance a productive meeting environment and could alleviate heated discussions while still allowing members of the public to voice their opinions and/or concerns.



Andy and John both agreed that it would be good to have an official policy. John Baldasaro asked Don Humason to reach out to Blandford for a copy of their policy to review.

- **Conservation Commission Report**

Lora wanted to gauge the board's expectations of the Conservation Commission. She said she now holds public office hours once a month but space for meetings is still an issue. There have been issues with not being able to get into the room and having to switch locations at the last minute. She said she wanted to have a key to the COA room so that she didn't need to rely on someone to open the door. She said she's starting to accumulate paperwork that she'd like to keep in one place. Keirsen said there is an empty file cabinet in the COA that Conservation can use. John brought up installing a keypad for the door that people can use to access the room. It's a little more secure. Keirsen said she could get one and pay from the COA funds. Steve Salvini from Salvini and Associates was present and said he feels there should be someone else sitting in ConCom meeting to make sure they are conducted properly. He said that Mark Stinson from DEP could be a good person to sit in and help provide training on the proper procedure. Both Lora and John agreed that it could be beneficial. Lora said she's worked with Mark and received helpful guidance from him in the past. She said she is also the Conservation Commission Agent in Becket and has gained a lot of experience because of that as well. Lora said she thinks it would be beneficial to have a ConCom agent from outside of town that could also help with consultation in the future.

Town Administrator Report:

- Annual Report Warrant articles due this week

Any town department that has articles needing to be put on the ATM need to be sent to Don this week. The annual report will be printed and ready for the town meeting on 6/9.

- The Finance team will be meeting on 5/20 to discuss end-of-year transfers
- Transition to PrimePay

In process with Sonya Kinch and should be fully transferred over by the start of the new fiscal year.

Public Comments

John asked about the fire department's tax break program. Nate Bolduc said he heard from the town council that it needs to be voted on in ATM. Don said he'll make sure there is an article for it.



John said Chester on Track was a success this year. He said he heard from vendors that being at the Emery Field this year made it a little difficult for them. They liked it better when all the vendors were downtown by the train station so they would like that to happen next year.

Veronica Marr had questions about the public participation policy. She said waiting to have public participation until the end of the meeting may not work. There may be issues brought up that need Selectboard vote, and residents may have important information about the topic prior to the vote. She said not being able to voice themselves until the end might cause residents to not want to participate at all. Liz said the open meeting law states that the public doesn't participate until the selectboard opens the floor to public comment and they only have an allotted amount of time to say their piece. Steve Salvini said that some town planning board meetings ask for public comment before the meeting starts and that it works well. John said finding a balance is really what they're looking for. He said historically the BOS meetings have been conducted without a public participation policy and there have been times it has caused disruption. Veronica said that she feels it could be beneficial to have detailed topics on the meeting agendas. She said sometimes they're vague and people aren't sure what's going on. There was discussion about the difference between a public meeting and a public hearing. A public meeting does not need to allow public comments. A public hearing does require an opportunity for public comment.

Brian said the Gateway High School graduation is 5/30 at 6pm.

Bob Daley asked about the DEP wood waste monitoring issues. Don said that he reached out to DEP, and they said the best that they agreed to was monitoring every other year instead of every year.

Liz asked the selectboard about installing a keypad lock for the transfer station since they have had issues with the gate being open lately. The selectboard agreed to that. Rich mentioned that there is a lot of overgrowth at the transfer station and wanted to request some help from the highway department for maintenance. Rich said that they really need the chain link fence repaired. John said they would need to hire someone to repair the fence.

Lora said that her and Chip Dazelle have been working together on the wash out section of Taft Road and she is working with Angela at PVPC to try and fix some of the culvert issues.

John made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Andy Sutton seconded and all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 6:49pm.




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Respectfully Submitted,



Kim Fox, Administrative Assistant

6/2/25
Date Signed


John Baldasaro, Chairman

Date Signed



Andy Sutton, Vice Chairman

Date Signed



Craig Gauthier, Clerk

6/2/2025
Date Signed



CHARLES "CHIP" DAZELLE, HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT
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***5-19-25 Selectboard Report
from the Highway Department***

- 1] Red 550 is done at Richie's
- 2] Dead trees by ballfield and school done
- 3] Line painting of crosswalks and stop lines done for Chester on Track, also road lines
- 4] Had our first funeral on Sunday May 11th Mother's Day, Chris and Mark did it
- 5] Grading of dirt roads still ongoing, with all the rain been slow
- 6] Holes on Maple and Emery fixed for water dept
- 7] Heard a lot of good stuff the crew did from towns people while I was on vacation

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