



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

(413) 354-7760

TownofChester.net

Monday, October 6th, 2025

MEETING MINUTES

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

Selectboard members present were John Baldasaro and Craig Gauthier. Also present was Town Administrator Andrew Alward, Administrative Assistant Kim Fox, Finance Committee Chair Brian Forgue, Planning Board Chair and members of the public.

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

Report from Town Departments:

- One Day Liquor License – Sinister Saw Halloween Event

Melissa McAuliffe submitted a one-day liquor license application for the Halloween event to be held on October 25, at Emery Park. All the required insurance paperwork was provided by Melissa and was verified.

John Baldasaro made a motion to approve the one-day liquor license as presented. Craig Gauthier seconded and all were in favor.

Report from T



- Payroll Update

Andrew Alward said that they are continuing to move forward with the new payroll company and process. Sonya Kinch is working on getting login credentials for all employees to the timeclock system and how approving timecards works.

- Old Elementary School RFP Review

Andrew said that the RFP Committee met last week with Eric Weiss from PVPC. Eric is finalizing it and recommended that Town Counsel, Tom Mullen, review it before giving the presentation to the Board. The expectation is that it will be ready for the next BOS meeting.

- Federal Grant Policy & Procedure Approval

The Board had previously reviewed the Federal Grant Policy and Procedure.

John made a motion to approve the Federal Grant Policy & Procedure as written. Craig seconded and all were in favor.

- Employee Handbook Update

Andrew said that there are sections of the handbook that need additional updates, and the review will need to be revisited at a future meeting.

- Email and Internet Policy and Email Usage Policy – Review and Approval

John and Craig said the Email and Internet Policy looked standard after their review.

John made a motion to approve the Email and Internet Policy as written. Craig seconded and all were in favor.

John and Craig reviewed the Email Usage Policy. Andrew said that he worked with Novus to refine the language within the email policy and is also hoping to reduce the number of active email accounts to lower cost.

John made a motion to approve the Email Policy as written. Craig seconded and all were in favor.

- Grant Award - Community One Stop for Growth

The Town has been awarded grant funding in the amount of \$331,000 for the reconstruction of Johnson Hill Road and \$980,000 for Blandford Road Improvements.

- Assessors' Software Quotes – Vision vs. Catalyst/Patriot



Andy Meyers has been looking into new software options in the Assessors' department. The current Tyler system is outdated and not user friendly. Andy presented the following quotes for updated assessing software:

Catalyst/Patriot: \$8,500 for the first year, plus \$10,000 for the system implementation.

Vision: \$45,000

Andy requested this be included in a Special Town Meeting to vote on appropriating funds from Free Cash for these services. The Board agreed to include the item in an upcoming STM.

John asked about the status of old excise bills still being on the books. Andy explained that the list of uncollectable bills would need to be provided to the Assessors from the Tax Collector before they are able to start clearing those out.

Town Administrator Report

- Facilities Update – Town Hall Elevator Phone / Comcast Contract Discussion

Andrew said that Comcast is requesting the Town's contract be renewed with them before adding a phone line for the elevator.

John made a motion to approve the Comcast contract as presented. Craig seconded and all were in favor.

- Transfer Station Gate Repair

Blueline Fence Company repaired the Transfer Station Gate last week. Liz Massa said the work was done very well and was completed quickly.

- MCPPO (Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official) Training

Andrew said he has submitted his registration for virtual MCPPO training, which will run from late October through December.

- 2025 Opioid Report Submission and Future Settlement Participation

The annual Opioid Settlement Report has been submitted to the state. Andrew said that due to limited eligible uses for the funds and small amount received, it may not be worthwhile for the Town to continue participating in future settlement distributions. John agreed.

- MIIA Property Insurance Update



The playground equipment at the former elementary school is included in the Town's insurance coverage, with no cost increase. Andrew said he's still confirming that the other parks are covered under the policy as well.

The Police Department received a grant for new laptops.

- Open Meeting Law Compliance Reminder

Andrew reminded all boards and committees that Open Meeting Law Compliance is mandatory. Agendas must be posted at least 48 hours in advance, minutes must be recorded and posted, and no discussions or votes should occur outside of posted meetings. Only scheduling details and meeting logistics should be discussed via email.

- Annual employee Reviews

Andrew said he plans to begin annual employee performance reviews in December to assess job satisfaction and professional development goals.

Public Comments and Questions:

Veronica Marr asked for clarification on Open Meeting Law. Andrew said the full Open Meeting Law is available online but general guidelines are that agendas must be posted at least 48 hours in advance, minutes must be recorded and posted, and no discussions or votes should occur outside of posted meetings.

Liz Massa asked which bylaws need Town Meeting approval. Andrew said right now the COA and Right to Farm bylaw. Liz asked if the Planning Board could have copies to review. Melissa McAuliffe asked if the Planning Board can unapprove the Right to Farm bylaw? John said not without a town vote. He said they can review to make sure there are no parts of the bylaw that have changed since it was originally approved.

Brian Fogue said the Finance and Capital Asset Planning Committee met last week and will meet again on October 16th.

Veronica asked if a traffic study has been conducted on Route 20. John said the state recently completed one as part of the ADA improvement project at the Middlefield Rd intersection this past summer.



The Chester Select Board voted to go into Executive Session G.L.c.30A s21(b)(1) to discuss the reputation, character, physical condition, or mental health, rather than professional competence of an individual or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against a public officer, employee, staff member or individual. The meeting will end at the conclusion of the Executive Session and not be reconvened in open session. Donald Humason Jr.

The public portion of this Selectboard meeting adjourned at 6:30PM

conclusion of the Executive Session

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Conclusion of the Board

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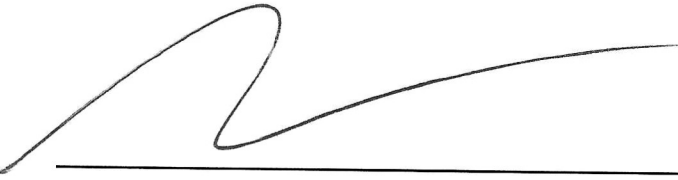
Conclusion of the Board

Respectfully Submitted,




Kim Fox, Administrative Assistant

10/20/25
Date Signed



John Baldasaro, Chairman

10/20/25
Date Signed



Craig Gauthier, Clerk

10/20/25
Date Signed

