



TOWN OF CHESTER  
15 MIDDLEFIELD ROAD  
CHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01011

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Monday, October 20, 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 Liz Massa and members of the public.

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

Open meeting – This

**Report from Town Departments**

- Tax Abatement Update

Terry Donovan reported that she has written off uncollectable motor vehicle excise taxes from 2006-2019 totaling approximately \$16,000. The list has been turned over to the Assessors office for the next step of abatement processing to remove those outstanding balances from the Town's books. Terry said that outstanding excise bill from 2020-2023 are currently with the Deputy Collector. She said that she had remailed outstanding bills from 2024 and successfully collected over \$4,600. John Baldasaro said that's great news.

*signed.*

Open meeting – This  
• Payroll Update

Sonya Kinch was not available for this meeting, but Andrew Alward reported that the new payroll system has had some initial issues, but corrective action is underway. Employees will receive paychecks on Tuesday and an additional check on Friday to adjust the pay period from Thursday-Wednesday to Sunday-Saturday.

John asked whether employee data transfer issues from the prior payroll company were resolved. Andrew confirmed that all data was successfully transferred after needing to do a few manual

*signed.*

Open meeting – This  
• Payroll Update



adjustments. John emphasized maintaining communication between Sonya, the accountant and treasurer and department heads. Diane Hall added that while the system is in place, there is still training needed in the process. She had concerns about potential payroll errors for linemen and lack of clarity about their portion to pay Prime Pay for their services. Andrew said there will only be one bill for services from Prime Pay that the Town will pay for all departments. John asked to have Sonya schedule a meeting with all department heads and board chairs to review and confirm payroll procedures.

- Old Elementary School RFP Review

Eric Weiss from PVPC said multiple drafts of the RFP have been reviewed by legal counsel who raised the following questions:

- Whether or not a property valuation has been conducted.
- Whether or not Town meeting authorized the sale of the property.

Eric also said the town could possibly seek an abatement from DOR once the property is sold. John said a committee had been formed to develop the RFP and that the final proposals would be returned to the Town for a vote of approval. He said that the school property and adjacent playground are on separate parcels, which opened up a discussion about whether to combine them or keeping them separate. Eric said he would review the deed and confirmed that the shared septic system between the school and the Town Hall will remain as shared.

John asked that the two-week bidding period be updated to a few months. Both Veronica Marr and Ann Daley agreed that additional time is important. Eric said he would update that. The RFP will be published on COMMBUYS once it is finalized.

- CMELD Warrant Issue

Diane said that she has had challenges recently with getting bills submitted, signed and paid before due dates. A bill went unpaid due to a missed processing step with the Treasurer which resulted in late payment. John acknowledged communication breakdowns and noted that the Treasurer and Accounting departments may be overextended. He recommended reviewing their contracts and possibly exploring new services if necessary. Diane also said she needs a wire transfer to a Black Rock account which is used for payments to Energy New England. She stated that delays in fund transfers have resulted in low account balances and vendor concerns. John reminded her that CMELD is a Town Department and must follow Town financial procedures.



## Report from Town Administrator

- Facilities Update – Town Hall Elevator Phone

Comcast has installed the necessary phone line. The elevator company will be on-site the following day to complete activation.

- Review and Approval of Policies

Travel Policy:

***John made a motion to approve the Travel Policy as written. Craig seconded. All in favor.***

Fiscal Management Policies:

***John made a motion to approve as written. Craig seconded. All in favor.***

Cash Handling Policy:

***John made a motion to approve as written. Craig seconded. All in favor.***

DLS Financial Policy Manual:

Andrew reported that the manual was received from DLS in 2020, but there is no record of formal adoption by the Board. John agreed to review and revisit approval at a future meeting.

- Prospect Street Bids

Bids were received for the Prospect Street project. Andrew stated that Highway Superintendent, Chip Dazelle, is currently on vacation and requested that the Board wait for his review before awarding a contract.

- Fire Department

Andrew reported that Fire Station #2 on Bromley Road lacks internet access. Jill Strong suggested connecting it to use the timeclock feature. Fire Chief Nate Bolduc said it would also be needed for installation of a smart thermostat for remote temperature monitoring.

Nate also mentioned that the fire tower certification has lapsed since 2018, with an estimated \$1,000 cost for compliance.

Prospect Street B  
\$1,000 cost for compl  
Bids were re



**Public Comment**

Liz Massa expressed concern that the Transfer Station’s compactor is failing. Rental cost is \$400/month (including installation), or \$24,984 to purchase outright, with a possible \$4,000 savings if the electrical converter can be reused. John and Brian Forgue discussed budget impacts, with Brian suggesting a rental covered by the transfer station budget or free cash until the next fiscal year. Nick Chiusano noted that maintenance costs would be included in the rental, which could save money long-term.

Melissa McAuliffe inquired about paying invoices for the upcoming Halloween event. Kim Fox explained the bill approval timeline. Melissa asked about reimbursement if the committee fronts costs. John confirmed that can be done. Melissa announced that Blandford donated \$500 in prizes and plans to donate another \$500 next year. She also requested use of the auditorium for a “Sweetheart Dance” on February 13; Andrew will add it to the schedule.

Bob Daley reported that DEP has approved switching the Town’s water source to Horn Pond. He thanked Craig for assisting with pipeline work and Andrew for his efforts in securing grants.

***John Baldasaro made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:55pm. Craig Gauthier seconded and all were in favor.***

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and all were*

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

(413) 354-7760

TownofChester.net

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**Respectfully Submitted,**

*John Baldasaro made  
and all were*

**Kim Fox, Administrative Assistant**

11/17/25  
**Date Signed**

**John Baldasaro, Chairman**

11/17/25  
**Date Signed**

**Craig Gauthier, Clerk**

11/17/25  
**Date Signed**

*John Baldasaro, C*

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