



John Baldasaro, CT
TOWN OF CHESTER
15 MIDDLEFIELD ROAD
CHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01011

Monday, November 3, 2025

MEETING MINUTES

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

John Baldasaro, CT
Selectboard members present were John Baldasaro and Craig Gauthier. Also present were 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.

Report from Town Departments

- Old Elementary School RFP

Andrew Alward said that the RFP and additional information that came up in the last BOS meeting was forwarded to Town Counsel for review. There were only a couple of items outstanding so those should be completed within the week.

- Scheduling a Special Town Meeting

John Baldasaro said that a Special Town Meeting is necessary for the Town to vote on the RFP and to address a few proposed bylaw changes. Veronica Marr asked how long she would have to submit a citizen's petition to be on the STM. John said he was not sure and he would need to check the requirements. Andrew was asked to confirm the deadline with Town Counsel, Tom Mullen.

Andy Meyers asked that the STM be scheduled as soon as possible because there are several financial articles must be approved before the Assessors can set the tax rate. Free cash is still waiting certification and should be done this week.



John Baldasaro made a motion to schedule the Special Town Meeting for Monday, November 24, 2025. Craig Gauthier seconded and all were in favor.

- New Compactor Rental Agreement Review

Liz Massa reviewed options for leasing versus purchasing a new trash compactor. She said that the Transfer Station decided to proceed with a lease agreement because it is more cost effective. The compactor should be delivered about 6 weeks after the agreement is signed, and the installation will happen on the same day as delivery.

John Baldasaro made a motion to approve the rental agreement for the new trash compactor. Craig Gauthier seconded and all were in favor.

- Appointment – Parks and Rec Committee

John said they have received a request for the appointment of Barbara Huntoon to the Parks and Rec Committee. He said the board's policy is to not vote on appointments the same night they are presented. John did commend the Recreation Committee on successful Halloween event, which had a strong community turnout.

- Chester Tree Lighting Event

The annual Tree Lighting will take place on Friday, November 28, 2025 at 6:30PM. The tree is located at Veterans' Park next to the library. Refreshments, crafts and entertainment will be held Town Hall.

Diane Hall reported that Cooper and Dan inspected the tree and requested that the Recreation Committee test the holiday lights beforehand to see if more are needed.

- ABCC Liquor License Renewal – Chester Village Market

All of the proper renewal paperwork has been received for the Chester Market's alcohol license.

John Baldasaro made a motion to approve the annual ABCC Liquor License for Chester Village Market. Craig Gauthier seconded and all were in favor.

Report from the Town Administrator

- Fiscal Management Policies

Andrew said the drafted Fiscal Management Policies were sent to the Finance Committee members for review. There was some feedback received and Brian Forgue said that the policy does reference adherence to Town Meeting votes, which makes the guidelines flexible. Andrew confirmed that the policies are intended as goals and not mandates. John asked that the item remain on the agenda for the following meeting to allow more time to review.



- Sick Time Policy

Andrew presented a formal Sick Time Policy consistent with Massachusetts state law. John said that the policy seems to be in line with state requirements.

John Baldasaro made a motion to approve Sick Time Policy. Craig Gauthier seconded and all were in favor.

- Prospect Street Bids Review

Joe Hagopian of PVPC was present and discussed the next phase of the Prospect Street improvement project, which focuses on drainage work. He said that any left over funds from this phase would be used for Phase 3. Chip Dazelle said the bids came in favorably, with minimal changes, including removal of unnecessary catch basins and addition of guardrails. Joe confirmed that H.M. Nunes & Sons Construction submitted the lowest bid at \$387,000.

John raised concern that the Phase 1 engineering firm was requesting \$24,000 for corrections related to design flaws. He said that multiple issues were caused by the firm's design errors, the Town should not pay additional costs. Joe agreed that the request was excessive.

John made a motion to award the Prospect Street Phase 2 contract to H.M. Nunes & Sons in the amount of \$387,000. Craig seconded. All in favor.

Bob Daley asked how the bid compared to the grant funding. Joe said the total grant award was \$624,250. Any funds remaining will move to Phase 3, which will involve pipe replacement work.

- Fire Tower / Antenna Permitting

Andrew stated that the Town will now pay an annual permit fee of \$200 for the fire tower. The permitting agency is not charging the town for past years the permit had lapsed.

- Payroll Update

Andrew said that the second full payroll cycle under the new system has been completed. Adjustments are ongoing, but the process was smoother than the previous cycles. The hope is it will continue to get smoother.

- Attire in the Workplace

Andrew reported receiving complaints regarding employee attire. The employee handbook does not currently include a dress code. The Board said they wanted to continue without a strict policy but agreed that work attire should be appropriate for the workplace.



- Rental of Town Hall for Private Events

A resident requested to rent the Town Hall auditorium for a private event. John said in the past residents were permitted to use the space at no charge, as long as the date was available. For non-residents, the rental fee will be \$50.

- Use of Teams Instead of Zoom for Virtual Meetings

Andrew suggested switching from Zoom to Microsoft Teams for town meetings, as the Town already subscribes to Office 365 through Novus. This change would eliminate the annual Zoom subscription cost. The Board agreed to cancel Zoom and continue with Microsoft Teams.

Public Comments

Craig said that he is working with DEP on the Wood Waste Landfill to develop a maintenance checklist to ensure compliance going forward.

Ron Ouimette reported significant erosion to his property on Maynard Hill Rd following the July storm and requested assistance with cleanup costs. Chip confirmed he is working with Francesca at MassDOT to secure state funding for repairs. John advised Ron to continue coordination with the Conservation Commission and Highway Department. Ron also noted that two catch basins remain clogged with silt. Chip said that Lora Wade is aware and is addressing the issue.

Elizabeth LaChappelle (31 Holcomb Rd) reported that an RV has moved onto the adjacent property without a permit. She said that the occupants are discharging sewage, operating a generator continuously, and burning trash. The property is owned by a lien company that the occupants are renting from. Liz Massa, speaking as a resident, said that the Town's Trailer and Camping Bylaw is contradictory and difficult to enforce. She recommended the Planning Board consider amendments. Liz said that in her capacity as BOH member, the matter was referred to the Building Inspector, the Town's enforcement officer. Jason Forgue confirmed via phone that he has issued a notice to vacate to the property owner, giving seven calendar days for a response. If the landowner confirms no authorization for occupancy, police can intervene under trespass laws. Nick Chiusano added that Charlie Kinecki will conduct a site visit. Elizabeth asked about generator noise rules. Nick confirmed that the Town's Noise Ordinance restricts excessive noise after 11:00 p.m., enforceable by police. There was general agreement that stronger enforcement measures and bylaw amendments are needed to address ongoing camping issues in town.

Veronica mentioned the upcoming Safe Drinking Water Listening Session hosted by PVPC on November 12th, noting concern that proposed state legislation could grant access to private wells during emergencies. Liz confirmed that this proposal originates at the state level. Bob added that pending Private Well Law legislation is currently under state review. John stated he would not support such legislation if enacted at the local level.

laws, Nick Chiusano



Brian announced that the Finance and Capital Planning Committee will meet on Thursday, November 6th at 5:30 p.m. Jonathan Williams asked about free cash certification. Brian said it has not yet been finalized but was submitted to the state approximately one week ago.

John Baldasaro made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:20pm. Craig Gauthier seconded and all were in favor.

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CHESTER BOARD OF SELECTMEN
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TownofChester.net

Respectfully Submitted,

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

Craig Gauthier