



TOWN OF CHESTER
15 MIDDLEFIELD ROAD
CHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01011

Monday, November 17, 2025

CHESTER SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

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

Selectboard members present were John Baldasaro, Craig Gauthier and Brian Forgue. Also present were Town Administrator Andrew Alward, Administrative Assistant Kim Fox, Planning Board Chair Liz Massa, Town Clerk Terry Donovan, Fire Chief Nate Bolduc and members of the public.

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

Report from Town Departments

John Baldasaro congratulated Brian Forgue on winning the Select Board seat that was voted on at the town election Saturday, November 8th. John also thanked Chris Martenson for running.

- Maynard Hill Road Issue

Ron Ouimette thanked the Board and staff for their efforts regarding the Maynard Hill Road property concerns. He said that Chip Dazelle and Lora Wade have been working with him and a meeting has been scheduled with a DEP representative and the Conservation Commission. His primary concern is sediment entering Littleville Lake. He felt his property should have been included when the Town declared an emergency, but said the matter is at least moving forward. John Baldasaro thanked him for the update.

~~John B.~~ Old Elementary School RFD Review and Committee Update

Andrew reported that, per Eric Weiss, the RFP is complete and ready. The final step is the Town vote at the Special Town Meeting scheduled for next Monday, the 24th.



- Winter Parking Ban

Winter parking restrictions are in effect from **November 15 through April 15**.

- During this period, a Town official may declare a Winter Parking Ban on all way within the town for snow ice removal.
- The Declaration of a Snow Emergency and subsequent Parking Ban will be effective at the onset of any inclement weather and will remain in effect or 12 hours following the storm
- The Police Department may have any vehicle parked in violation of the Winter Parking Ban removed/towed at the owner's expense

The following roads will be closed to the public from November 15th to April 15th with regard to winter road maintenance. There will be no salting, sanding or snow plowing on these roads:

- Kinnebrook Road from the last year-round resident to the Worthington line
- Smith Road from the last year-round resident to the Worthington line
- The middle section of Round Hill Road
- Melvin Road

Jonathan Williams asked if Goss Hill Road would be closed. John said that Chester does not close the town's portion of Goss Hill Road. Jonathan said that there is a road closure sign near his house and typically it doesn't get plowed John said that Huntington assists with plowing that area of Chester and asked Andrew to follow up and ensure that section is plowed.

John Baldasaro made a motion to accept the winter parking ban & road closures as presented. Brian Forgue seconded and all were in favor.

- Appointment - Parks and Recreation Committee

Barbara Huntoon was presented to the board at the last selectmen meting to be appointed to the Parks & Rec Committee.

John Baldasaro made a motion to appoint Barbara Huntoon to the Parks & Rec Committee. Craig Gauthier seconded and all were in favor.

- Senior Work-Off Program

Terry Donovan said her, Maryann Pease and Andy Meyers are requesting some changes to the Senior Work-Off Program. They would like to reduce the maximum benefit to \$600 for tax-related reasons along with reducing participation to eight applicants due to available workload. Additionally, applicants serving on a board or committee cannot earn work-off hours for that same board/committee.



John Baldasaro made a motion to approve the changes to the Senior Work-Off Program beginning January 1st, 2026. Craig Gauthier seconded and all were in favor.

- Sustainable Purchasing Policy Review

Liz Massa reviewed updated related to recycling grant requirements. The Board of Health applies annually for a recycling grant, which requires the Town to maintain a formal recycling policy, which will now be retitled the Sustainable Purchasing Policy. Compliance ensures the Town remains eligible for recycling-related grants. John noted they will review the proposed changes further before final approval. Brian asked if there will be any major operational changes needed. Liz said no, the Town is already largely in alignment with what will be included in the Sustainable Purchasing Policy.

John Baldasaro made a motion to approve the Chester 2025 SMRP Grant Award

John acknowledged the Board of Health's receipt of a \$10,000 SMRP grant for the purchase of a cardboard compactor. Liz said this has been a long-term goal and they have applied for this grant for seven years. The next steps include coordinating installation, electricity, and operational logistics. Ron Ouimette asked about having battery disposal; Liz confirmed the Transfer Station already has an electronics recycling system in place.

- Fence Issue on Middlefield Road

Residents of 101 Middlefield Road, Harry and Janis Sanner came to the board to request an evaluation of a privacy fence placed by their neighbor at 85 Middlefield Road. Brian confirmed that the Select Board serve as the town fence viewers. Craig said he had visited the property and the fence appears to be very tall, unstable and not made with proper fence materials. He presented photos to the Board, who agreed that the installation intent is to function as a fence. However, due to its construction and height, it is an illegal fence under applicable standards.

John Baldasaro made a motion to determine this structure with the intent of a fence, is not considered a legal fence. Brian seconded and all were in favor.

Report from the Town Administrator

- Fiscal Management Policies

Andrew confirmed all requested changes discussed at the last board meeting were made. Brian stated that the Finance Committee supports the revisions.

John Baldasaro made a motion to approve the Fiscal Management Policy. Craig seconded and all were in favor.



- Town Hall Rental Policy

Developed due to a recent rental inquiry from a Chester resident. John said the policy appears appropriate.

John Baldasaro made a motion to approve the Town Hall Rental Policy. Craig seconded and all were in favor.

- Employee Reimbursement Policy

Created to clarify reimbursement procedures for employees and board members. Was a policy that had been in place previously, but hadn't been updated in a long time.

John Baldasaro made a motion to approve the Employee Reimbursement Policy. Brian seconded and all were in favor.

- Municipal Employee Reimbursement of Taxes Policy

Establishes that employees may be reimbursed for taxes paid on work-related purchases made with personal funds.

John Baldasaro made a motion to approve the Municipal Employee Reimbursement of Taxes Policy. Craig seconded and all were in favor.

- Start of Budget Memo

Andrew outlined the budget planning process and expressed a desire to move toward a zero-based budgeting approach. Brian asked that the Finance Committee have an opportunity to review the memo before the Board votes. John said the proposed dates for the budget process appear reasonable; Brian noted that budgeting typically begins in February.

- Accounting Department Position Posting

Kinsherp CPA, the Town Accountant firm, will not be renewing their contract next fiscal year. Andrew has prepared job postings for MMA and the Town website. John said that the current accounting service has not provided the necessary attention or hours, resulting in repeated issues across departments. The Board will review the posting and revisit it at the next meeting.

Brian asked about specifying in-office, remote, or hybrid for the position. Andrew said he prefers keeping it flexible to maximize applicants and anticipates the role will likely be hybrid.

Andy Meyers suggested a shared services arrangement with another town and supported a 16-hour per week schedule. There was discussion that 24 hours per week may be better.

- Special Town Meeting

Scheduled for next Monday, November 24th at 6:30 p.m.



Public Comment

Brian thanked residents for coming out to vote for him at the recent election. He also reported that the School Committee discussed the health-insurance increases. Despite rising costs, Gateway decided to stay with HGCIT, the same carrier used by the Town. The Town has until December to cancel. John expressed concerns about their customer service.

Nate reported that the fire station door has been installed successfully and is a major improvement.

Veronica asked about the STM warrant and what articles will be included. Andrew said it is posted on the Town website and includes articles such as unpaid prior-year bills, bylaw updates/re-approvals, and others.

Chris Martenson expressed concern that the Treasurer may have invested funds in an S&P 500 account and asked for clarification. Mary Ann said state guidelines dictate allowable investments. Andrew said he will follow up with the Treasurer. Chris also had questions about the assessing process and noted that falling market values should reduce property taxes. He also raised concerns about proposed 7% excise tax legislation. Andy Meyers reported that the Assessors' tax classification hearing will be held at the next Select Board meeting on December 1st.

Bill LaChappelle reported that the camper has been removed from the adjacent Holcomb Road lot but is concerned it will return in the spring. Liz confirmed that zoning bylaws prohibit camping in residential areas. John stated that proper enforcement occurred, and the property owner has been informed. Broader discussion followed regarding the number of properties that need clean-up.

John Baldasaro made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:06pm. Craig Gauthier seconded and all were in favor.



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

(413) 354-7760

TownofChester.net


Respectfully Submitted,

Kim Fox, Administrative Assistant

Date Signed

John Baldasaro, Chairman

Date Signed



Craig Gauthier, Clerk

12/1/25

Date Signed

