

Special Town Meeting Warrant – Monday, March 16th, 6:30pm

Town of Chester

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Hampden, SS:

To any of the Constables in the Town of Chester in the County of Hampden,

Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts you are hereby directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of Chester qualified to vote in Elections and town affairs to meet in the Chester Town Hall Auditorium, 15 Middlefield Road, in said Town on Monday, March ~~16th~~ 2026, at 6:30 in the evening, then and there to act on the following articles:

Article 1: PURCHASE OF A USED PICK-UP TRUCK FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

To see if the Town will vote to transfer from free cash, the sum of \$14,000 for the purpose of purchasing and equipping a vehicle for use by the Fire Chief, including any incidental and related costs, or take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by Fire Chief

2/3 vote required

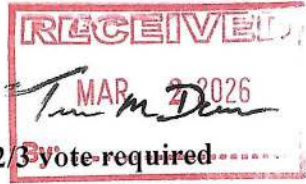
Explanation:

This article authorizes the purchase of a command vehicle for use by the Fire Chief. The vehicle will be used for emergency response, incident command, inspections, mutual aid coordination, and other official Fire Department duties.

If approved, the funding will come from Free Cash. The vehicle may be equipped with appropriate public safety equipment including emergency lighting, radios, and related outfitting necessary for emergency response operations.

Article 2: Amendment to Glamping By-Law

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town of Chester Zoning Bylaw by amending the provisions regulating "Glamping" (luxury camping accommodations), including but not limited to definitions, use regulations, dimensional requirements, permitting procedures, and operational standards, as set forth in the proposed amendment on file with the Town Clerk, or take any other action relative thereto.



Submitted by the Planning Board

Explanation:

This article seeks to amend the Town’s existing Glamping Bylaw to clarify and/or modify the regulations governing short-term luxury camping accommodations within the Town.

The proposed amendment may address items such as:

- Updated definitions
- Zoning district applicability
- Special permit or site plan review requirements
- Health and safety standards
- Density or dimensional controls
- Operational guidelines

The purpose of the amendment is to ensure that Glamping uses are clearly regulated in a manner consistent with the Town’s planning goals, neighborhood character, environmental protections, and economic development objectives.

The full text of the proposed amendment is available for review at the Town Clerk’s office.

Article 4: Adoption of Dog Licensing Fee By-Law

To see if the Town will vote to adopt a General By-Law establishing fees for the licensing of dogs within the Town, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 140, Section 139 and other applicable laws, said by-law to set the amounts to be charged for annual dog licenses and any related administrative fees, as set forth in the proposed by-law on file with the Town Clerk, or take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by Town Clerk & Town Administrator

Majority vote required

Explanation:

Massachusetts law requires all dogs to be licensed annually through the Town Clerk. While the authority to license dogs is established under state law, Town Meeting must adopt or amend a local by-law to establish or change the licensing fees charged and the distribution thereof.

The full text of the proposed by-law is on file with the Town Clerk and available for public review prior to Town Meeting.

Article 5: Gateway Graduation Class Bleachers

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to loan a sum not to exceed \$2,000 to the Senior Class of Gateway Regional School District for the purpose of securing, renting, or constructing bleachers for graduation ceremonies, said loan to be repaid to the Town within 8 years under such terms and conditions as the Select Board may determine;

And further, to authorize the Select Board to execute any and all agreements necessary to effectuate said loan;

**Submitted By Jason Forgue
required**

Majority vote



Explanation:

This article authorizes the Town to provide a temporary loan to the senior class of Gateway Regional School to assist with the cost of securing bleachers for graduation ceremonies. The intent is to provide short-term financial support so that adequate seating can be available for families and guests.

The loan would be subject to a written repayment agreement approved by the Select Board. The Town would expect full repayment within the timeframe specified in the vote. No funds would be expended permanently unless Town Meeting separately authorized such an appropriation. Because this article authorizes a municipal loan but does not involve borrowing by the Town, debt exclusion, or taxation, it requires a **majority vote** at Town Meeting.

Article 6: Prior Fiscal Year Bills

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum of money to pay bills of a prior fiscal year in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 64, or take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by Town Administrator				4/5 vote required
Department	Vendor	Fiscal Year	Amount	Invoice Number
Treasurer	UFASI	FY25	\$650.00	9819
Treasurer	UFASI	FY24	\$650.00	9345

Explanation:

From time to time, invoices are submitted after the close of a fiscal year or are discovered after the books have been closed. Massachusetts law prohibits paying prior fiscal year bills without a specific appropriation by Town Meeting.

This article allows the Town to appropriate funds to legally pay outstanding obligations incurred in a previous fiscal year. The bills must be certified as valid by the department head and approved by the Select Board before payment.

This action does not re-open the prior year's budget but authorizes payment of legitimate unpaid obligations.

Article 7: Establish Insurance Stabilization Fund

To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40 Section 5B and any other enabling authority, to establish a special stabilization fund to be known as the "Insurance Stabilization Fund," for the purpose of reserving funds to mitigate the impact of extraordinary, unanticipated, or volatile increases in the Town's property, liability, workers' compensation, health, cyber, and other municipal insurance costs;

And further, to authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Select Board, to deposit into said fund any sums appropriated by Town Meeting, including free cash, transfers from available funds, certified retained earnings, insurance reimbursements, or any other funds authorized by law;



And further, to provide that appropriations from the Insurance Stabilization Fund may be made by a majority vote of Town Meeting for the purposes stated herein;

Submitted by Town Administrator

Majority vote required

Explanation:

This article establishes a dedicated stabilization fund to help the Town manage fluctuations in municipal insurance costs. Insurance premiums — including property, liability, workers' compensation, health, and cyber coverage — can vary significantly from year to year due to market conditions, claims experience, or catastrophic events.

By creating an Insurance Stabilization Fund under Massachusetts law, the Town may set aside money in stronger financial years and use those funds in years when insurance costs spike unexpectedly. This helps:

- Reduce sudden impacts on the tax rate
- Avoid emergency budget cuts in operating departments
- Support long-term financial planning
- Maintain more predictable budgeting practices

Funds may only be spent for the purposes defined in the article and require a Town Meeting vote for appropriation.

Town of Chester Special Town Meeting

March 16th, 2026

RECEIVED
MAR 2 2026
By: *Tom McDem*
6:30PM

You are hereby directed to serve this Warrant by posting true and attested copies thereof, in three public places within the Town of Chester, fourteen (14) days at least, before the day and hour of holding said meeting.


Therefore, Fail Not and make due return of said Warrant with your doing thereon to the Town Clerk of the Town of Chester, at or before the day and hour of holding said meeting.



John Baldasaro, Chair

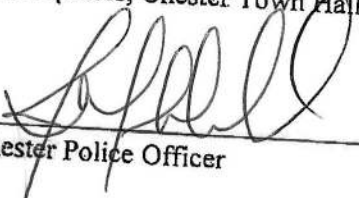


Craig Cauthier



Brian Forgue

As per instructions in this Warrant, I have this 2nd day of March, 2026, posted same in three public places, Chester Town Hall, Chester Post Office, Chester Center.



Chester Police Officer