

Chester Finance Committee Meeting

3/12/2026 COA Room

In Attendance: Sr. Judith Dalesandro, Florence Bolduc, Mary Ann Pease, Bob Daley, Joe Ryan and Jon Williams and Nick Chisuno

Guests: Brian Fogue and Andrew Alward

Meeting called to order by Flo at 5:30.

Prior meeting minutes reviewed Sr. Judith made motion to accept, Joe 2<sup>nd</sup> unanimous. Flo signed will now go to Town Clerk.

Water Department: Even though the Water Department is an enterprise fund Bob and Jim Zimmerman gave a presentation of the current status of the department. Bob gave an update on the plant and operations.

For the last 5 quarters the Water Department has received clean reports with no violations found. They are asking for support at the annual town meeting from Fin Com. *MAJORITY SUPPORTED WATER DEPT BUDGET.*

A short budget comparison from FY 26 to FY 27 was presented for the major categories. The budget presents an 11.2% increase over last year with a rate increase for users.

Questions were asked about operator status, hours worked, availability of savings for Senior citizens. Future rate increases, perhaps being a bit lower once the department gets on firm ground.

DEP oversees what happens at the Water Treatment plant and the town is at the mercy of them to keep in compliance.

Jon questioned the water supply for the Fire Department and why a portion of the water rates were not distributed to the entire town population.

Bob took a vote of the board for support the Water Department budget at the ATM.

Board of Health: Liz presented the BOH annual budget. The volume of paper work and mandated rulings from the state make it almost impossible for the BOH not to be a full-time Department. Liz stated not all members of the Board attend meetings or participate in the work that needs to be done. Bob asked if the 3<sup>rd</sup> member in question can be asked to resign. A recall petition is the only way to remove a member if they won't resign. But they are using tax payer \$\$ to get paid for doing nothing.

The line items for the BOH were reviewed and it was decided to lower the board members' stipend and put a new line item in for State required stipend. The transfer station attendants' salaries were adjusted to also reflect the paperwork component of lead attendant.

Liz stated that the BOH had worked within \$2,000 of their Revolving Fund for the year.

Planning Board budget was presented by Liz. The expense line was increased to \$1,000 to reflect the increase in cost for posting notices and postage.

Brian Forgue gave an update on the FY 27 School budget. The final vote will be on 3/16/26. He stated Chester's share for the upcoming year will be approximately \$68,000 less than last year.

Brian sent a handout to everyone with the upcoming financial information.

Some teaching and administrative positions will be eliminated.

There is a total of 790 students amongst all the towns. And the possible budget increase for this year is 2.44%. They are still looking for grants and State Aid numbers to come in.

Meeting adjourned 7:45. Next Meeting schedule for 3/19/26.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ann Pease

*Flora A. Bede*

4-2-2026