



TOWN OF CHESTER
15 MIDDLEFIELD ROAD
CHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01011

Monday, March 2nd, 2026

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES**

Open meeting – This meeting was held in the Town Hall Auditorium with a virtual option. Selectboard members present were Craig Gauthier and Brian Forgue. Town Administrator Andrew Alward and Administrative Assistant Kim Fox were present as well.

Brian Forgue opened the meeting at 6:00pm. Warrants, minutes and correspondence were signed.

Report from Town Departments

- Trailer Bylaw Amendment

Liz Massa on behalf of the Planning Board explained that residents have requested clarification of the Town's trailer bylaw. Issues have arisen regarding trailers being stored on vacant lots, despite the bylaw stating that trailers are only permitted on a resident's principal lot. Some residents have interpreted the wording to mean a vacant lot they own qualifies as their principal property. Liz clarified that a property is not considered a principal residence unless there is a livable structure on it. She also noted that occupying trailers without self-contained bathroom facilities is a violation of health code regulations.

A resident asked why a trailer could not be parked in the front yard. Liz said the Town also receives complaints regarding the appearance of trailers. A proposed amendment would require trailers to be located beside or behind the home on the property. She added that fire access should also be addressed in the bylaw to ensure trailers do not obstruct emergency response efforts. Craig Gauthier noted that some lots have significant frontage and suggested adding specific setback requirements from the road for safety reasons. The Board recommended further revisions before presenting the amendment to voters at Town Meeting.



- Open Space Plan Committee Creation and Appointments

The Town currently does not have an active Open Space Plan, which outlines recreational uses of Town-owned land. Not having an Open Space Plan can limit eligibility for certain grants. Bob Daley said he believed the Conservation Commission, Water Department, and Planning Board should be represented. Brian Forgue said he would contact a member of the Conservation Commission to participate. There was also discussion about including Liz Massa in her capacity as Parks and Trails Director. Veronica Marr volunteered to serve, and additional public members were discussed.

Brian Forgue made a motion to make the Open Space Plan Committee. Craig Gauthier seconded. The motion passed.

- Board of Registrar Appointments

Terry Donovan on behalf of the Town Clerk's office stated that appointments to the Board of Registrars are typically made this time of year in advance of Town elections. She asked whether the Selectboard wished to review the appointments before acting at a future meeting and provided the Board with the appointment paperwork. Carol Hepworth was added to the list of nominees within 48 hours of the meeting.

Brian Forgue made a motion to waive the two-week waiting period for the appointments. Craig Gauthier seconded. The motion passed.

Brian Forgue made a motion to appoint Keirsen Broman, Holly Garvey and Carol Hepworth to the Board of Registrars. Craig Gauthier seconded and the motion passed.

Report from Town Administrator

- Update on Town activities

Andrew Alward announced that Chester on Track will be happening on Saturday, May 16th. The President of the Chester Foundation asked if the Selectboard and the Town Administrator would lead the parade. Both Brian Forgue and Craig Gauthier agreed to participate.

- Payroll

Town employees began using the Harper's payroll timeclock system that day. No major issues were reported, aside from one employee sign-in issue that was resolved quickly.



- Town Budget

There was discussion regarding department budgets. Only a few remaining items were needed before the full budget could be reviewed. It was noted that health insurance costs had been overbudgeted in recent years, but the Town now has a clearer understanding of actual expenses.

- Town Accountant

The new Town Accountant, Margaret McClellan, began work the previous week. She was waiting for her laptop setup but was otherwise getting up to speed.

Public Comment

Brian said Gateway Regional School District was close to finalizing its budget for presentation to the Hilltown communities. Several options would be brought before the School Committee for further discussion, including a possible compromise involving level funding. He said one proposal would increase town assessments to avoid reductions in staffing or hours. There was discussion that Chester's student enrollment has declined, making it difficult to justify higher assessments. It was noted that Chester had the largest increase in students the previous year but is projected to have the largest decrease in the coming year. Brian also noted the many programs Gateway offers and improvements made over the years. He said rising health insurance costs and reduced state funding created a difficult budget year. He announced a School Committee meeting would be held Wednesday, March 11, at Gateway.

Bob Daley announced that the Water Department Public Rate Hearing would be held Wednesday, March 11, at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall.

Craig asked Liz whether the Highway Department could dispose of trash at the Transfer Station rather than paying for a dumpster at the garage. Liz said the Transfer Station is highly regulated regarding acceptable materials and cannot accept hazardous waste, which had been an issue in the past with Highway and CMELD materials. She said Highway staff would need to coordinate with the attendant to ensure prohibited materials are not disposed of there. Craig noted that differing work schedules between the Highway Department and Transfer Station could present challenges.

Craig also asked Bob whether there had been any updates regarding test drilling near Reservoir Road. Bob said there was no new information at this time.

Brian Fogue made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Craig Gauthier seconded and the motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 6:52pm



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

(413) 354-7760

TownofChester.net

Kim Fox, Administrative Assistant

4/28/26

Date Signed

Selectboard:

Craig Gauthier

5/4/26

Date Signed

Brian Fougue

5/4/26

Date Signed

5/4/26

Date Signed