



TOWN OF CHESTER
15 MIDDLEFIELD ROAD
CHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01011

Tuesday, April 21st, 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 John Baldasaro, Craig Gauthier and Brian Forgue. Town Administrator Andrew Alward and Administrative Assistant Kim Fox were present as well.

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

Report from Town Departments

- Town Budget Discussion

Craig Gauthier wanted to discuss the Selectboard salary part of the town budget. He said the Finance Committee wanted to raise the stipend \$500 per board member and he would like to see an increase of \$1,500 per member. John Baldasaro agreed that the stipend has not been adjusted in many years and stated that increasing it may help attract qualified candidates to serve. He added that the proposed increase could still be voted down at Town Meeting.

Brian Forgue stated that while he supported increasing the stipend, he felt the proposed amount was not reasonable when compared to the increases being provided to other Town employees. He said that while Selectboard service is important and requires significant time, Town employees also dedicate substantial time and effort, and such a large increase in one area did not seem justified without a clear reason. Brian added that he wanted to hear the Finance Committee's full presentation before making a final decision.

John Baldasaro noted that market-based wage adjustments have been made for other positions in the past and felt it was appropriate to consider a similar adjustment for future Selectboard members.



Andy Meyers stated that the Finance Committee was still working through budget negotiations and would present the finalized budget to the Selectboard prior to Town Meeting. He felt the discussion should be tabled until then.

- Gateway Graduation Invitation

The Selectboard received an invitation to the Gateway graduation ceremony. Brian said that he would likely attend.

- Railroad Bridge

Liz Massa, on behalf of Board of Health, reported difficulties arranging for a cement truck to pass under the railroad bridge in order to pour concrete at the transfer station for installation of the cardboard compactor. She also raised concerns regarding delivery of the new rubbish compactor. Discussion followed regarding logging trucks and other concrete companies that have previously passed under the bridge.

Liz expressed concern about advising a company that access was possible if they were ultimately unable to clear the bridge. John stated that if a company did not have a truck capable of fitting under the bridge, there was nothing the Town could do, as the bridge could not be moved or raised. John suggested providing examples of logging and hauling trucks that have successfully used the route.

- Memorial Day Exercise & PA System

Diane Moss had requested this item be placed on the agenda but was not present at the meeting.

John stated that the public address system used last year did not function well enough for attendees to hear clearly. Florence Bolduc noted that the Council on Aging coordinated Memorial Day activities last year and may be doing so again this year. Florence also said that Jessica Sakaske had inquired about helping to plan activities.

Report from Town Administrator:

- Town Tag Sale During Chester on Track

Andrew proposed holding a Town Hall tag sale in conjunction with the Library's book sale during Chester on Track. Several items in Town Hall that are no longer needed would be made available for purchase.

John confirmed that a similar event was held last year and the permit fee was waived. Andrew stated that this year's event would follow the same concept.



- Town Commitments Policy

Brian Forgue made a motion to approve the Town Commitments Policy as written. John Baldasaro seconded. Motion passed.

- Budget Forecasting Policy

The Board discussed the feasibility of the proposed policy.

Brian said that he would be comfortable approving Part A of the policy but would like revisions made before approving the full document. John said that he felt the policy was too restrictive and that making long-term projections can be difficult in municipal budgeting. Andy Meyers added that some projections are already reviewed during the Assessor's tax classification hearing in October or November, which factors into the next year's tax rate determination.

The Board also discussed the unpredictability of the school budget. The policy was tabled for future review.

- Review and Approval of the Independent Audit Policy

John questioned whether the policy should require the Town to conduct an audit every year. Andrew agreed to revise the language to state that audits would be conducted "at the discretion of the Board."

Brian Forgue made a motion to approve the policy with the revised language. John Baldasaro seconded. Motion passed.

- Update on Town activities

The railroad tracks will be sprayed for pesticides during the first week of May.

Brian announced that a Meet the Candidates session would be held on Wednesday, April 29 at 6:00 PM prior to the upcoming Town Election on May 2nd.

Public Comment

Andy Meyers thanked John for his long dedication and service to the Town. Craig presented John with a plaque.

Maryann Pease reported that, through fundraising and donations, the Hilltown Ambulance would be receiving an additional building through FEMA. The building will provide more space for laundry facilities and allow medic staff to move out of the garage currently shared with vehicles.

John Baldasaro made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Brian Forgue seconded. Meeting adjourned at 6:52 pm



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 Forgue

5/4/26

Date Signed

5/4/26

Date Signed