

Chester Finance Committee Meeting

4/16/2026 at the Fire Department

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

Absent: Jon Williams

Guests: Brian Fogue, Andrew Alward and Chris Martensen

Meeting called to order by Flo at 5:30.

4/9/26 meeting minutes were reviewed, corrections made to reflect Highway truck to be replaced is a F250 and "in the near future". (Bob Daley asked for clarification on this) Sr. Judith made a motion to accept minutes as amended, Flo 2nd. All in favor. Flo signed and gave them to Town Clerk who was present at meeting.

Tax Collector: Mary Ann recused herself prior to Tax Collector's presentation. TC is looking for a 3% Cola and 2 % successful review increase. Line items on budget were reviewed. Increase in software is out of our hands as it is a contracted program that is used. Postage and supplies are going up. Tax Title amount was increased due to extensive work and number of people who are being placed in TT. She stated she sends multiple notices to residence prior to placing in TT. She and the police chief just served 3 people with TT notices. Flo asked about placing a list on the town web site of delinquent taxpayers as has been done in the past,

Town Clerk budget was presented by Terry:

She explained the increase on the Election line item, fluctuation of the number of elections each year. Also, the need on occasion for special elections.

Printing cost of ballots (which some are done in house) have gone up as well as postage cost. Need to pay poll workers' minimum wage.

Bob asked Bryan about any updates on the Gateway school budget. Bryan stated they are looking for an increase in Rural Aid. As of this date no upcoming school board meeting is scheduled. Further discussion was interrupted by Police Chief to present her budget.

Police Chief Jen presented the department budget. This budget is divided in half with Blandford. However, Chester is the lead town, and all financials are handled through Chester.

Joe Ryan asked about volume of calls, Jen did not have hard numbers but stated in 2025 they answered a minimum of 3,000. calls. MV, Accidents, Fire, Domestic. The call volume is greater in Chester than in Blandford because of the town's dynamics.

Jen explained that with Police reform more mandates came from the state. Small rural police departments are held to the same standards as bigger city departments. As a result, more time and funds are being expended to meet these mandates.

There are 6 part time officers. These officers work an average of 4-6 hours per week for both towns.

Bob asked about the vehicles used, they have 2018, 2020, 2024 and a UTV. They have an account which a portion of road fees go in so they can rotate out the vehicles without going to the towns for funding.

The question of body cameras came up. Chester will be implementing them in the near future, and it is a cloud-based program.

Bob asked about Police grants, Jen stated she has received all she has applied for. Cost of ammunition has gone up in price and also as a result of the state shooting requirements.

Jen understands the restraints the town is under budget wise and said she would be agreeable to the 3 % Cola and 2 % review for herself and her officers.

Kersten Broman presented the COA Budget.

Many questions were asked about the number of days the COA is open and the hours. Bob asked how many lunches were eaten in (3-4) and how many were picked up. (15-25) lunches are 5 days a week.

The salary increase of 12% was questioned, Kersten stated she is there approximately 4 days a week, on weekends for events, she delivers meals to the homebound. Sr. Judith questioned how often she is at the center.

Activities were discussed and attendance. Cookouts, potluck luncheons, craft days and brown bag once a month.

She gets funding from the state annually in the amount of \$7,000. This helps support activities in the COA and pays for the 2nd staff person.

Foot clinic and hair day co pays have gone up. The cost of these services at a person's home has also gone up.

Bob asked how the FRTA van was going. Many people in town are using this service, and they have purchased a new van. There is no cost to the COA on this, passengers pay a fee.

As a result of the presentation, Fin Com will be looking into the accounts used to support the COA.

We are presently waiting for this information to be presented at the next meeting to review the salary line. No vote was taken.

We are still waiting for the Vocational student information. Bob would like to review the alternative assessment method and how this would help Chester in the future.

Next meeting will be a review of the entire budget and see what needs to be done to present the budget to the BOS.

Andrew will provide an updated printed copy of the entire budget.

Mary Ann will get updated expense reports from accountant for COA.

Next meeting 4/23/26 at 5:30 at the Fire Station.

Meeting adjourned 7:30

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ann Pease

Fluence A. Baldes 4/23/2026