



**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
TOWN OF CHESTER**

2026 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT

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 Town affairs to meet in the **Chester Town Hall, 15 Middlefield Road, Chester, Massachusetts on Monday, the 8th day of June, 2026, A.D. at 7:00PM**, then and there to act on the following articles:

ARTICLE 1. MONETARY INCREASES.

To see if the Town will vote to authorize that any motion or amendment to increase any monetary articles or line items as recommended by the Finance Committee & Select Board, presented at this Town Meeting, shall be Out of Order unless such motion or amendment states the source of funding as being from available Free Cash, or a line item, article, or other funding source that will be reduced by the same amount; or to take any other action relation thereto.

Submitted by: Town Administrator

Majority vote required

Explanation:

This article means that at Town Meeting, people cannot propose spending more money than what the Finance Committee and Select Board recommended unless they also explain where the extra money will come from. If someone wants to increase a budget item or spending amount, they must either use available "Free Cash" or reduce funding somewhere else by the same amount. If they do not identify a funding source, the proposal cannot be considered or voted on.

ARTICLE 2: EDUCATION STABILIZATION FUND TRANSFER

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate by transfer from Free Cash to the Educational Stabilization Account the sum of \$37,000, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by: Finance Committee

Majority vote required

Explanation:

This article asks the Town to vote on moving \$37,000 from the Town's available "Free Cash" into the Educational Stabilization Account, which is a reserve fund set aside for future education-related expenses.

ARTICLE 3: TOWN VEHICLE STABILIZATION FUND

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate by transfer from Free Cash to the Town Vehicle Stabilization Fund the sum of \$25,000, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by: Finance Committee

Majority vote required

Explanation:

This article asks the Town to approve transferring \$25,000 from available “Free Cash” into the Vehicle Stabilization Account, which is a savings fund used for future vehicle purchases or major vehicle repairs.

ARTICLE 4: TOWN BUILDING MAINTENANCE STABILIZATION FUND

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate by transfer from Free Cash to the Town Building Maintenance Stabilization Fund the sum of \$22,000, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by: Finance Committee

Majority vote required

Explanation:

This article asks the Town to approve transferring \$22,000 from available “Free Cash” into the Town Building Maintenance Stabilization Fund , which is a reserve fund for future building repairs, maintenance, or improvements.

ARTICLE 5: TOWN INSURANCE STABILIZATION FUND

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate by transfer from Free Cash to the Insurance Stabilization Account the sum of \$10,000, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by: Finance Committee

Majority vote required

Explanation:

This article asks the Town to transfer \$10,000 from available “Free Cash” into the Insurance Stabilization Account, which is a savings fund for future insurance costs.

ARTICLE 6: APPROPRIATE TO OPEB TRUST FUND

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate by transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$5,000 to the Town’s Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust Fund, as established under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 32B, Section 20, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by: Finance Committee

Majority vote required

Explanation:

This article asks the Town to transfer \$5,000 from available “Free Cash” into the OPEB Trust Fund, which helps pay for future retiree benefits such as health insurance for Town employees.

ARTICLE 7: COMPENSATION

To see if the Town will vote to fix the annual salaries of all elected officials for the period of July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 as indicated below, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Elected Official’s Salary	FY202	Proposed FY27



Selectboard Member	\$2,657	\$2,790
Selectboard Member	\$2,657	\$2,790
Selectboard Member	\$2,657	\$2,790
Water Commissioner	\$700	\$1,500
Water Commissioner	\$700	\$1,500
Water Commissioner	\$700	\$1,500
Town Moderator	\$200	\$200
Health Board Member	\$1,655	\$2,000
Health Board Member	\$1,655	\$2,000
Health Board Member	\$1,655	\$2,000

Submitted by: Select Board

Majority vote required

Explanation:

This article asks the Town to approve the salaries for all elected officials for the fiscal year running from July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027.

ARTICLE 8: FISCAL YEAR 2027 OPERATING BUDGET

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds, the sum \$4,048,184 to defray charges and expenses of the Town, including debt service (principal and interest) and to provide a Reserve Fund, for the period July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 and further, to hear the report of the Finance Committee and act thereon, or to take any other action relative thereto. (Please see separate budget packet)

Submitted by: Finance Committee

Majority vote required

Explanation:

This article asks the Town to approve spending \$4,048,184 to pay for Town operations and expenses for the fiscal year from July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. This includes everyday Town costs, debt payments, interest, and money set aside in a Reserve Fund for unexpected expenses. The Finance Committee will also present its budget report for voters to review and act on.

ARTICLE 9: REVOLVING FUND CAPS

To see if the Town will vote to set FY2027 caps for each of the Town's previously established revolving funds that have been authorized under Chapter 44, Section 53E1/2 of the Massachusetts General Laws as indicated below, or to take any other action relative thereto:

Board of Health	\$8,000.00
Building Inspector	\$30,000.00
Plumbing Inspector	\$3,000.00
Wiring Inspector	\$2,000.00
Tax Collector	\$2,000.00
Deputy Collector	\$1,000.00
Police Detail Fees	\$15,000.00
Transfer Station	\$57,000.00
Cemetery	\$30,000.00
Fire Department	\$5,000.00

Submitted by: **Majority vote required**

Explanation:
 This article asks the Town to set spending limits (caps) for several "revolving funds" for fiscal year 2027. These funds are accounts that collect fees from certain Town services and can only be spent on related expenses. The limits listed show the maximum amount each department is allowed to spend from its funds during the year, such as for the Board of Health, Building Inspector, Police details, Transfer Station, Cemetery, and Fire Department. In simple terms, the Town is deciding how much money each of these departments can use from their own fee-based accounts next year.

ARTICLE 10: GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL BUDGET

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds, the sum of \$1,637,010 for the Gateway Regional School District for the period July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by: School Committee **Majority vote required**

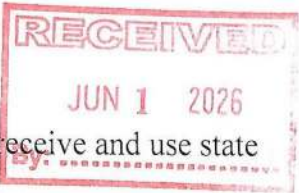
Explanation:
 This article asks the Town to approve \$1,637,010 to pay its required share of funding for the Gateway Regional School District for the 2026–2027 school year.

ARTICLE 11: ACCEPTANCE OF CHAPTER 90 FUNDS

To see if the Town will vote to accept and expend without further appropriation funds being provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under the provisions of Mass. General Laws Chapter 90, to pay for such costs as allowed by appropriate legislation in connection with the maintenance, repair, and construction of Town ways and bridges, with such funds to carry over from year to year until expended by the Town, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by: **Majority vote required**

Explanation:
 This article asks the Town to accept state funding from Massachusetts to help pay for maintaining, repairing, and building Town roads and bridges. The money can be used over



multiple years until it is fully spent. In simple terms, it allows the Town to receive and use state transportation funds for local road and bridge work.

ARTICLE 12: CMELD OPERATIONS

Tom M. Deen

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of Money to operate the Chester Municipal Light Department as set forth below, or to take any other action thereon relative thereto.

Unaudited YTD	2025	2026	2027
Revenue	1,610,455	1,614,860	1,634,823
Energy Purchases/Expenses	955,040	964,401	974,045
Employee / Mutual Aid Combined	357,839	337,562	340,896
Retirement Expenses	121,421	122,635	123,862
Transportation/Fuel	25,743	26,000	26,260
Depreciation	81,678	82,495	85,000
Office/Insur/ All Other	17,804	17,982	18,161
Total Expenses	1,559,525	1,551,075	1,568,224

Submitted by: CMELD Commissioners

Majority vote required

Explanation:

This article asks the Town to allow the Municipal Electric Light Department to use all the money it earns from selling electricity during the 2026–2027 fiscal year. That money would be spent under the control of the Board of Electric Light Commissioners and the department manager. In simple terms, it lets the electric utility keep and spend its own income to run and maintain the electric system.

ARTICLE 13: CHESTER WATER DEPARTMENT ENTERPRISE FUNDS

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of Money to operate the Chester Water Department Enterprise as set forth below, or to take any other action thereon relative thereto.

Salaries	\$100,000	
Commissioners Stipends	\$4,500	
Operating Expenses	\$80,000	
Budget Surplus	\$15,000	
Total	\$199,500	Last Years Total's \$179,757

And that the \$199,500 will be raised as follows

Enterprise Receipts \$199,500

\$29,479 will be raised from the tax levy to pay the debt service on the loan for the upgrades done to the Water Treatment plant previously.

Submitted by: Chester Water Department

Majority vote required

Explanation:

This article allows the Water Department to pay for its expenses using the money it collects from water bills and other fees, rather than general Town taxes. The funds would stay within the Water Enterprise Fund and be used to operate and maintain the water system, including repairs, staffing, equipment, and improvements, making the department financially self-supported. Tax revenue will be applied to pay the debt service on prior borrowing that paid for system upgrades.

ARTICLE 14: TRANSFER FROM CWD RETAINED EARNINGS TO CWD STABILIZATION FUND

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate by transfer the sum of \$13,213 from the Chester Water Department Retained Earnings account to the Chester Water Department Stabilization Fund, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by: Chester Water Department

Majority vote required

Explanation:

This article asks the Town to move \$13,213 from the Water Department's savings (retained earnings) into the Water Department's Stabilization Fund. In simple terms, it is setting aside saved water system money into a reserve fund for future repairs, emergencies, or major water system needs.

Article 15: REPAIRS FOR CHIMNEY TO THE OLD JAIL HOUSE

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate by transfer from the Building Stabilization account, the sum of \$3,500 for the purpose of repairing the Chimney at the Old Jail House, including any incidental and related costs, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by: Chester Historical Commission

Two thirds vote required

Explanation:

This article asks the Town to use \$3,500 from the Building Stabilization Fund to repair the chimney at the Old Jail House. In simple terms, it is using saved building repair money to fix a specific part of a historic Town building.

Article 16: PURCHASE OF NEW IT EQUIPMENT

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate by transfer from the General Stabilization Fund, the sum of \$10,000 for the purpose of purchasing and equipping new laptops, website updates and other IT upgrades including any incidental and related costs or take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by: Town Administrator

Two thirds vote required

Explanation:

This article asks the Town to use \$10,000 from General Stabilization Fund to buy new laptops and make updates to the Town's website and other technology systems. In simple terms, it is funding upgrades to computers and IT equipment for Town use.

ARTICLE 17: DEMAND BILLS ADJUSTMENT TO FEES

To see if the Town will vote to amend the fee schedule for demand bills issued by the Town by increasing the demand bill rate from five dollars (\$5.00) to fifteen dollars (\$15.00) per bill, in order to better cover administrative costs associated with the preparation, issuance, and collection of such bills; or to take any other action relative thereto.

Submitted by: Tax Collector & Town Administrator

Majority vote required

Explanation:


This article asks the Town to raise the fee for demand bills from \$5 to \$15. Demand bills are charges sent when payment is late or additional billing is required. The increase is intended to help the Town recover the costs of processing and collecting these bills.

Town of Chester 2026 Annual Town Meeting **June 8, 2026** **7:00PM**


You are hereby directed to serve this Warrant by posting true and attested copies thereof, in three public places within the Town of Chester, seven (7) days at least, before the day and hour of holding said meeting.

Therefore, fail not and make do 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.

Given under our hands at Chester, this 1st day of June, 2026



Brian Forgue, Chairman



Jill Strong, Vice-Chairman



Craig Gauthier, Clerk



As per instruction in this Warrant, I have posted same, this 1nd day of June 2026 in three public places: Chester Town Hall, Chester Post office, Chester Center.

Chester Police