



**TOWN OF CHESTER
15 MIDDLEFIELD ROAD
CHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01011**

(413) 354-7760

TownofChester.net

Select Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, July 13th, 2026

Open Meeting: This meeting was held in the Council on Aging Room in Town Hall

Select Board members present were Brian Forgue, and Jill Strong. Also present were Town Administrator Andrew Alward, Administrative Assistant Kim Fox, and members of the public.

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

New Business:

- Prospect Street Drainage Improvements Amendment 19

Andrew Alward said that Joe Hagopian from PVPC and Highway Superintendent Chip Dazelle discussed this amendment together and Chip had expressed approval to the amendment presented.

Brian Forgue made a motion to approve Amendment 19 on the contract for the Prospect Street Project managed through PVPC. Jill Strong seconded the motion. Motion passed 2-0.

- Town Security

Fire Chief Nate Bolduc wanted to request security cameras around all of the Fire Stations due to a recent break-in at Station 2 on Bromley Road. A couple of weeks ago it was discovered that the door was pushed in and there was a lot of expensive equipment stolen a couple of weeks ago. Jill expressed support for having security cameras around town buildings for security.

Keirsen Broman mentioned getting security cameras through Comcast since the town uses them for internet and they may be able to bundle that way. Jill said she had looked into it once before



for the Highway Garage and Comcast had said they discontinued that service for commercial customers and were only offering it to residential customers, so the town couldn't qualify.

Nate presented the Board with a quote from Skyline Alarms for cameras and alarms at the fire station as a starting point. He said he will be working on getting quotes from ITS and Hacksworth as well. He said that they would be able to monitor the cameras by phone.

Nate also presented a quote from Limited Budget to rehab Station 3, which does not have water or electricity. Nate said there is a fire truck stored there.

Bob asked about having our IT company provide security cameras. Andrew said he had talked to Nouvs about that previously and they would obtain those cameras through another company, so it wouldn't really be useful, and the town could do that on its own.

Nate provided paperwork with pricing for all of the stolen equipment from the fire station to go along with the insurance claim. Andrew mentioned he had sent that to the adjuster earlier today and they agreed with the quoted amounts.

Nate said that when he meets with ITS and Hacksworth, he will ask them to include other town buildings in their quote for security cameras, including the Highway Garage and Town Hall.

There was discussion about waiting to proceed with installation until after a Special Town Meeting vote once free cash is certified.

- Time Off Pay Out Request

Terry Donovan said that since another town employee was able to cash out vacation time, she wanted to request that also. She has eight days that she would lose according to the town Time and Attendance policy, which says that if vacation time is not used by end of fiscal year, one week can be requested to be rolled over or they lose it. Police Chief Jen Dubiel said she has eleven days of vacation and with her being the only full-time officer for Chester and Blandford, she was unable to take off that much time during the year.

Nick Chisuno brought up the issue of budgeting for vacation time payouts because Finance Committee does not include additional vacation time in salary budgeting and why the policy has historically been to lose the time if it's not used. There was a general understanding that with small towns, it is hard to take time away when there is no other person to fill their position. Chief Dubiel said that she has lost vacation time every year.



There was agreement that since it was done for one employee this year, the right thing to do would be to do allow other employees with unused vacation time to cash it out this year as well. Brian made a point to say this would be considered special circumstances and would not be something that would happen again. The Time and Attendance policy would be followed as is written which states that vacation cannot be rolled over or cashed out.

Brian Forgue made a motion to grant a one-time payout for any town employees with vacation time remaining. Jill Strong seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed 2-0.

- Appoint Keirsen Broman as FRTA Representative

Keirsen said she has been the rep in the past and expressed interest in continuing it. She said they have had eleven seniors currently using the transportation and a few others have been asking about it.

Brian Forgue made a motion to appoint Keirsen Broman as the FRTA Representative. Jill Strong seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed 2-0.

- Approve State Election and Special Town Election Warrants

There will be three positions on the ballot for a Special Election on Saturday, September 19th. There is one position open on the Select Board, School Committee and Water Commission. Brian and Jill signed off on the State and Special Town Election warrant as presented.

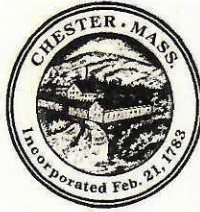
- Water Department Update on Intern, Horn Pond and CCR

Bob Daley discussed the Water Department's newest intern Sean Forgue and confirmed he has been training alongside the operators and had a tour of Horn Pond.

Old Business:

- Senior Work Off Program Repeal

There was discussion about necessary changes to the Senior Work Off program due to state regulations required. Since the participating seniors are getting what is considered income, because their real estate taxes are being reduced, they need to be considered a town employee. That would also mean that participants would also need to pay state and federal taxes on that income and contribute to the state's mandatory retirement plan. There was discussion about other towns that have discontinued the program because of these difficulties as well.



Keirsen said that she had asked a good amount of seniors in town if they would be interested and there were a lot who said they would not be under the new regulations but there were also a few still interested.

Maryann Pease and Keirsen said they would call around to local COAs to see how they make the program work, if they do at all.

Brian and Jill said they would table this topic to a future meeting after speaking with other towns.

Town Administrator Report – Andrew Alward

- SBA Towers Contract Amendment Review Update

Andrew received another contract amendment from SBA that didn't have much change from the first revision. Andrew said he forwarded the language amendment to Town Council for review and will update the Board once he replies. Andrew confirmed that he sent the recent amendment to the Planning Board as well.

- Updates to Town website

Andrew said that he had added a password protected Employee Resources page to the town website for employees only. There are forms available there for warrant processing, employee reimbursements and other forms used for town purposes.

He said he also had a fillable form created for board/committee appointment requests. Residents can fill out the appointment form on the website, and it will be automatically sent to the Town Clerk and Town Administrator. This allows residents an easier way to apply for positions on town boards and committees that the Select Board appoint.

- Speed Feedback Sign Grant

The Speed Feedback sign has been received and will be installed on Skyline Trail some point soon.



Public Comment:

Bob Daley said another resident may be interested in joining the Open Space Plan Committee. The Board discussed whether she should be formally appointed or participate as a public advisor. Members agreed either option would be acceptable, and she may be considered for appointment at a future meeting.

Liz said the Planning Board has been revising the trailer bylaw after receiving complaints that the current language is too vague. The Planning Board worked with the Fire Chief and Building Inspector on the proposed revisions.

Jill asked about the fence bylaw. Liz said it is still in progress and that the Planning Board is currently working on about eight bylaws.

Liz said that if the Board agreed with the revised trailer bylaw language, the Planning Board's next step would be to hold a public hearing. Residents would have an opportunity to review the language and suggest changes before the bylaw goes to Town Meeting for a vote.

Rich Holzman said the entire Planning Board agrees the trailer bylaw should be updated to improve quality of life in Chester. Liz said the revisions would also make the bylaw clearer for the enforcement officer, as the current language is difficult to enforce. She added that residents may apply for special permits. Jill asked about the special permit fee, and Liz said there is no fee. Brian and Jill agreed with the proposed language. The Planning Board will proceed with scheduling a public hearing.

On behalf of the Board of Health, Liz said a large branch fell at the Transfer Station after a recent storm, and the Board of Health asked the Highway Department to help remove it. Liz said she had not yet received a response from the Highway Department and wanted to confirm that a third-party company did not need to be hired. She was concerned the branch could affect the Transfer Station's surprise inspection and said it is blocking the cardboard trailer, so residents cannot currently use it. The Board confirmed that the Highway Department should be able to assist, as it does with other trees on town property.

Liz also said the town may have an electrical issue related to the cardboard compactor grant. Power is available near the rubbish compactor, but it would need to be run underground across the property to reach the proposed cardboard compactor location, which could be costly. Because



of this, the cardboard compactor may not be feasible. Liz said the same electrical issue could affect any future equipment requiring power at the Transfer Station. She planned to ask the town's recycling representative whether the grant funds could be used for recycling hauls instead of the compactor. She also expressed concern that when Dave Wickles' contract expires next fiscal year and USA Recycling takes over, increased prices could significantly affect the Transfer Station budget. Nick said Huntington's transfer station fees have also increased. There was concern that town-wide curbside pickup may not be feasible.

Jill asked about concerns regarding Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), noting that Blandford was recently required to allow one. Liz said Chester does not currently have a bylaw addressing BESS, and the state can override local statutes in these cases, as it did in Blandford. The Board discussed that towns with municipal electric systems may be targeted because companies may pay to upgrade electrical infrastructure in exchange for installing battery storage facilities. Liz said the town would likely have no authority over state-owned property, such as Route 20, but may have more options if town-owned property were involved.

Liz said the Board of Health received a grant for lithium battery recycling, which was a positive development.

Rosemary Dalesandro asked whether the town could consider a bylaw for electric bikes. She said she had nearly hit someone riding one twice recently and was concerned that the rider was not wearing a helmet. Brian agreed that traffic safety rules for electric bikes should be considered. He also said she could notify the police if she believed the rider was disobeying traffic laws.

Brian Forgue made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jill Strong seconded. The motion passed 2-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:54pm.



Submitted by



Kim Fox, Administrative Assistant

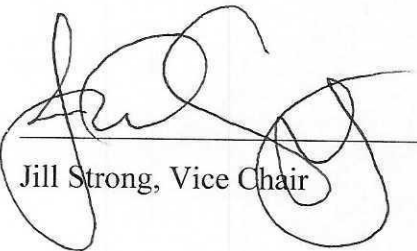
8/13/26
Date

Approved by Select Board:



Brian Forgue, Chair

8/10/26
Date



Jill Strong, Vice Chair

8/10/26
Date