

TOWN BOARD MEETING

September 10, 2025

6:45pm

Supervisor Holdridge opened the meeting at 6:45pm.

Attendance Rollcall:

Supervisor Holdridge	Present <u> x </u>	Absent <u> </u>
Council Member Ardisana	Present <u> x </u>	Absent <u> </u>
Council Member Becker	Present <u> x </u>	Absent <u> </u>
Council Member Courtenay	Present <u> x </u>	Absent <u> </u>
Council Member Dysinger	Present <u> x </u>	Absent <u> </u>

Determination of Quorum: Yes X No

Also present: Attorney Cassidy

Pledge of Allegiance

Supervisor Holdridge led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moment of Silence

The meeting began with a moment of silence for Charlie Kirk, followed by Supervisor Holdridge's statement regarding recent shootings in the country. Supervisor Holdridge expressed concern about gun violence in the United States, noting his shooting at a political event while being asked about mass shootings, along with another school shooting in Denver. He mentioned this was the third political assassination attempt in recent months, stating that the country severely needs to do better. Supervisor Holdridge emphasized that this situation makes many people, particularly those of his generation, fearful about living in a country with more guns than people. Council Member Courtenay responded that discussions rather than hate are needed, suggesting Ronald Reagan did it best when he had a disagreement. He'd invite them over to the White House with a 6 pack of beer, and they would discuss it. Council Member Becker said the issue is more about mental illness than guns. Supervisor Holdridge concluded by noting that other countries have violent video games, violent culture, and mental illness, but only the United States experiences this level of gun violence.

RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT THE 8/20/25 & 8/27/25 MEETING MINUTES

Supervisor Holdridge asked if everyone had reviewed the Meeting Minutes. Supervisor Holdridge asked for any debate points, comments, or questions, of which there were none.

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Council Member Courtenay and second by Council Member Ardisana to accept the Minutes from the August 20, 2025 and August 27, 2025 Town Board Meetings as presented by Town Clerk Zappala.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana, Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger

ADOPTED

SUMMARY OF BILLS

Supervisor Holdridge reported that the Town would be paying bills in the amount of \$252,483.52

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. John Filosa, a 33-year resident of the Fieldcrest development, addressed the Board regarding his request to opt out of the garbage district. He explained that when he first moved in, he was told by the builder to get his own garbage carrier, which he had for 10 years before the Town established a garbage tax district in 2001.

Mr. Filosa explained that due to his heart disease and disability from his career as a New York firefighter, bringing garbage cans down his steep driveway has become dangerous for his health, requiring him to take nitroglycerin before and after moving the cans. More recently he began taking his garbage directly to the dump himself, placing bags in his SUV and dumping without having to exit his vehicle.

He said the Town had already made exceptions to the garbage tax for commercial properties, renters, condos, Town-owned properties, properties not accessible by regular trucks, religious properties, and mixed-use properties. Mr. Filosa contends the Town never addressed the needs of vulnerable groups like the elderly, disabled, and chronically ill. He believed the Town violated the 1992 Disabilities Act by not providing an option to opt out for people in his situation.

Supervisor Holdridge responded that after discussing the matter with officials and the attorney, there did not appear to be a way to grant an exemption, but he was willing to have them review the issue again. Attorney Cassidy indicated she would review the situation and try to have a response by the next meeting on September 24th.

REPORTS

Council Member Dysinger reminded everyone about the 9/11 memorial service scheduled for September 11th at 6:00 PM at Carpenter Park.

He also discussed the comprehensive plan and zoning changes, noting that responses were due by October 7th, with a public hearing scheduled for October 22nd. Council Member Dysinger expressed concern about a change made to AR 0.3 zoning to add religious and public schools, which was not recommended by the comprehensive plan committee in order to protect open spaces.

Council Member Dysinger reported that the Planning Board still has two open positions, with one resident recently expressing interest. He was critical of the Planning Board's decision to cancel their September 1st meeting despite having several matters to discuss, including the comprehensive plan, zoning changes, a proposed software package, and three months of outstanding meeting minutes.

Regarding the software package for the Planning Board, Council Member Dysinger mentioned that both he and Melissa had a Zoom meeting with one of the co-founders of MuniCollab. While he found the software interesting with potential benefits, he expressed concerns about the company being relatively new and the need for the Planning Board to provide their analysis of the software, identifying benefits and an implementation plan.

Deputy Supervisor Becker reported on attending the Moodna Basin Committee meeting with Council Member Courtenay, noting that the committee approved next year's budget with an increase of 1.81%, which was below the tax cap. He also discussed issues raised at the Village Board meeting regarding the PDJ lumber operation at the former Chester lumber facility, which has been operating up to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, causing stress for nearby residents. Additionally, he mentioned concerns about water runoff from the solar project being installed between Chester and Goshen, stating that the building department was aware and would be meeting with the engineer to address these issues.

Council Member Courtenay added that the Moodna Basin Committee's ability to stay under the tax cap was due to forward-thinking budget planning over recent years.

He also announced that the Bellvale Community would be having their fall open house on October 4th, 2-5pm.

Council Member Ardisana mentioned that the Sugar Loaf sidewalks is now under construction, making roads crowded, and advised people to be patient. He also announced that the Sugar Loaf Engine Co. would be having their Oktoberfest on September 20th, 3-8pm

Town Clerk Zappala announced:

Chester Senior Independence Program is looking for both people in need of support and volunteers to assist, with their next training on September 16th. More information on chester-ny.gov.

Senator Skoufis Senior Picnic, September 30th, 11am-2pm at the SLPAC. All residents of Chester, Monroe, Goshen, Warwick and Tuxedo are welcome.

Town of Chester Trunk or Treat, October 25th, 11am-1pm.

Supervisor Holdridge provided updates on several projects:

- The sidewalks project was expected to be completed by the last week of September, in time for the 5K events on October 4th and the fall festival the following week.
- The Vivian Lane issue has been ongoing for a year and a half, with the highway department recently accepting a flooding/runoff mitigation plan that is being implemented. He added the issue was inherited because before he became supervisor a document was signed to forego the Chester Planning Board's authority and give it to Goshen because the field is in Goshen but the circuit is in Chester. He is working with specific neighbors regarding concerns about their private properties.
- The additional parking spaces at the senior center needed a revised plan due to the steep grade where they were initially planned. A new sketch from the engineer was expected soon.
- The Town received money back from the insurance claim for a previous fraud situation, with the claim now closed.

Attorney Cassidy provided updates on two litigation matters:

- Property at 3549 Route 94: She reported that two pieces of litigation had been resolved favorably for the Town. In the first case, a motion to dismiss was granted in September 2024, with the court finding the property owner did not have a permit for filling work. Although the plaintiff filed a notice of appeal, they did not perfect it and the time to do so had expired. The second case, a tax certiorari proceeding challenging the assessor's determination that the property was not eligible for an agricultural assessment exemption, had been withdrawn by the petitioner.
- Former Supervisor's claim: Supervisor Holdridge noted that the former supervisor's claim against the Town had not moved forward, and the statute of limitations for filing a lawsuit had passed, effectively closing the matter, as per insurance attorney for the Town.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Supervisor Holdridge presented the following department reports:

- EMS: There were 98 total dispatches with 69 transports. Total responses were 94, meaning there were 4 instances where no unit was available. The dedicated Chester unit had an average response time of 8.5 minutes, while additional Empress units had an average response time of 18.5 minutes. The grand total average response time for the month was 9 minutes and 44 seconds. Full report online at chester-ny.gov
- Building Department: There were 25 new building permits in August, 39 closed building permits, 297 total open permits, 54 total inspections, 28 total complaints, and 7 municipal searches.
- Animal Control: Responded to 11 calls for loose, lost, or found dogs; 4 calls for sick or injured raccoons; 3 calls for injured or deceased deer; 2 calls for deceased or injured geese; 2 calls for bear sightings; 1 call for a snake in a house; and 1 call for a person bitten by a cat. Full report online at chester-ny.gov
- Chester Senior Independence Program: For August, 2 people were assisted by 1 volunteer, with a total of 3 services provided and 2 hours dedicated by the volunteer. A new volunteer was trained during the month. Full report online at chester-ny.gov
- Town Historian: The report noted that 2,299 items are cataloged in Chester's historical society, with 1,081 of those publicly accessible. The historian attended multiple events and trainings. Supervisor Holdridge expressed

concern for the historian and his partner Leslie, who are experiencing health issues. Full report online at chester-ny.gov

- Police Department: There were 304 calls for service, with officers driving 15,295 miles during the month. There were 12 arrests and multiple instances of non-criminal activity. Officers attended several community events including the Kiwanis Picnic, Tour De Goshen, and the Community Foundation Barbecue. Full report online at chester-ny.gov

PARKS & REC REQUEST FOR BURGLAR/PANIC ALARM SYSTEM AT THE SENIOR CENTER

Supervisor Holdridge noted that according to an email from the Police Chief, PN's quote of \$2,468 was the cheapest by far and included more equipment than the next lowest quote from RPC Electric. Despite the price disparity, both Michelle and the Police Chief were comfortable with the PN quote.

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Supervisor Holdridge and second by Council Member Courtenay to accept the quote from PN in the amount of \$2,468 for the burglar/panic alarm system at the Senior Center.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana, Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger

ADOPTED

RESOLUTION TO CREATE WATER OPERATOR POSITION WITH ORANGE COUNTY CIVIL SERVICE LIST

Council Member Becker requested an executive session to discuss this position, but it was determined that the Board would proceed with creating the position now and discuss specific details later in executive session.

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Council Member Becker and second by Council Member Dysinger to create the Water Operator position with the Orange County Civil Service.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana, Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger

ADOPTED

RESOLUTION TO PURCHASE \$4601 HUDSON RIVER TRUCK & TRAILER

Supervisor Holdridge explained that the current trailer is no longer worth repairing. Council Member Dysinger expressed concern about the lack of justification for the purchase, noting that while he had no issue with buying a trailer, he was concerned about the procurement procedure. Supervisor Holdridge indicated that the Parks Department had worked with the Highway Department and Council Member Becker regarding specifications for what they needed.

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Council Member Courtenay, seconded by Council Member Ardisana, to purchase the \$4,601 Hudson River Truck & Trailer using \$3,369.82 in ARPA funds and the remainder from the \$2,000 appropriation.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana, Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger

ADOPTED

RESOLUTION TO AUCTION WATER DEPT. TRAILER AND VARIOUS HIGHWAY DEPT. ITEMS

The Board discussed auctioning items listed by the Water Department and Highway Department, which first needed to be declared surplus. These include:

1- 2008 Ford F350 that was replaced this year.

1-1996 Chevy 3500 flatbed that was replaced this year.

1 - 1991 John Deere yard mower

1 - 2005 Park and Rec trailer

1 - CAT bucket

1-1998 Salsco woodchipper

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Council Member Dysinger, seconded by Council Member Courtenay to declare all items listed by the Water Department and Highway Department as surplus items.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana, Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger

ADOPTED

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Council Member Courtenay, seconded by Council Member Ardisana to approve all surplus items for auction, with provision to reject any bid.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana, Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger

ADOPTED

PARKS ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATION TO REHAB CARPENTER PARK RESTROOMS

Supervisor Holdridge acknowledged that the bathrooms at Carpenter Park could use rehabilitation. He mentioned that the Town had applied for a CDBG grant from the County for Carpenter Park, which would include a full renovation of the bathrooms to make them ADA compliant and modernize them. In the meantime, he suggested having the engineer look at possible temporary ventilation solutions.

Council Member Courtenay recommended budgeting for bathroom improvements in case the grant is not received, noting that this should be discussed during the upcoming budget workshops. Council Member Becker agreed that they should have a contingency plan.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE NEW TANG DYNASTY SLPAC RENTAL REQUEST

Supervisor Holdridge noted that New Tang Dynasty would be paying the Town just over \$17,250 for their rental of the Sugar Loaf Performing Arts Center. Before the vote, he read comments submitted by resident Ryan Senning, who could not attend the meeting.

The comments expressed concerns about renting to New Tang Dynasty, describing them as associated with "far-right extremist, anti-vaccine misinformation peddling, QAnon, and 2020 election conspiracy theorist" groups. The resident questioned how the group identified the venue, who facilitated the request, and expressed concerns about the group's alleged discriminatory practices and potential for violent protests at their events.

Supervisor Holdridge responded that the group knew of the location from a previous rental attempt that didn't materialize due to scheduling conflicts, and that the Performing Arts Center director facilitated the current request. He stated that political screenings of renters would be a "slippery slope" and that the Town does not endorse any political beliefs of groups that rent Town properties. He confirmed that he had spoken with the Police Chief about security concerns and noted that the rental agreement includes provisions for security and insurance.

Attorney Cassidy clarified that the resolution was before the Board only because the rental amount exceeded the director's authorization limit of \$10,000.

Supervisor Holdridge addressed additional online comments from resident Jeff Zahn, who questioned whether there should be a line drawn regarding free speech and whether it was responsible to rent to groups where violence might be a possibility. Supervisor Holdridge emphasized that the Town does not typically research the political beliefs of groups renting Town properties and reiterated that as a government entity managing public property, free speech considerations apply differently than they would for a private company.

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Council Member Dysinger, seconded by Council Member Courtenay to approve the New Tang Dynasty SLPAC rental request.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana, Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger

ADOPTED

OVERTIME RATE MOA WITH THE TEAMSTERS LOCAL 445 WHITE COLLAR BARGAINING UNIT

After some initial discussion, the Board decided to table the item for further discussion in executive session.

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Supervisor Holdridge, seconded by Council Member Courtenay to table the Overtime Rate MOA discussion.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana, Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger **ADOPTED**

BUDGET MODIFICATIONS

Supervisor Holdridge presented budget modifications of \$25,000 to cover Police Department vehicle expenses for the rest of the year and \$21,000 for the Sugar Loaf Water District power repairs.

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	DEBIT	CREDIT
<u>Part Town</u>			
Vehicle Expense	25,000	B3120-464	B0599
<u>Sugar Loaf Water</u>			
Power Repairs	21,000.00	SW4-8320-433	SW4-0599

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Council Member Becker, seconded by Council Member Dysinger to approve the budget modifications as presented.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana, Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger **ADOPTED**

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE PURCHASE OF \$4,141.29 MARLEY FLOORING

Supervisor Holdridge apologized for not including this item on the agenda. The purchase of Marley flooring from Diamond Grade Media for the Performing Arts Center was discussed.

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Council Member Becker, seconded by Council Member Dysinger to approve the purchase of \$4,141.29 Marley flooring from Diamond Grade Media for the Performing Arts Center.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana, Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger **ADOPTED**

RESOLUTION TO SET SPECIAL DISTRICTS PUBLIC HEARING ON 10/8/25

Supervisor Holdridge explained that this was an annual formality related to assessment rolls for all special districts in Chester.

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Council Member Courtenay, seconded by Council Member Ardisana to set the Special Districts Public Hearing for October 8, 2025.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana, Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger **ADOPTED**

RESOLUTION TO CONSENT TO FRONTIER ABANDONMENT OF CABLE TELEVISION SERVICE

Supervisor Holdridge noted that this was another formality as Frontier had already abandoned the service but needed the Town's consent under their franchise agreement. He clarified that it only affected one property.

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Council Member Courtenay, seconded by Council Member Ardisana to consent to the Frontier abandonment of cable television service.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana, Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger **ADOPTED**

EXECUTIVE SESSION – PERSONNEL

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Council Member Dysinger, seconded by Council Member Ardisana to enter into executive session at 7:55pm for personnel and contract discussions.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana, Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger **ADOPTED**

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Council Member Dysinger, seconded by Council Member Becker to adjourn the executive session at 8:25pm.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana, Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger **ADOPTED**

New Business

RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF PARK ATTENDANT MATT KENNY

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Council Member Dysinger, seconded by Council Member Courtenay, to accept the resignation of Matt Kenny as Park Attendant.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana, Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger **ADOPTED**

Supervisor Holdridge thanked Matt for his time at the Parks and Recreation Department.

RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT CAPELLI SPORTS BOND REDUCTION TO \$200,000

The Board reviewed the recommendation from Lanc & Tully regarding the bond reduction for Capelli Sports Complex.

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Council Member Dysinger, seconded by Council Member Courtenay to accept the Capelli Sports bond reduction to \$200,000.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana, Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger **ADOPTED**

RESOLUTION TO PROMOTE JOE JANOTS TO WATER OPERATOR POSITION

Deputy Supervisor Becker explained that Joe Janots received his water license on July 30th. There had been some discrepancies between the union and the Town on how the pay would be handled, but an agreement had been reached. The promotion would be retroactive to August 7th since the delay was not Mr. Janots' fault.

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Council Member Becker, seconded by Supervisor Holdridge to promote Joe Janots to Town of Chester Water Operator effective August 7th, with all associated back pay, per union contract.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana, Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger **ADOPTED**

Deputy Supervisor Becker expressed enthusiasm about having a third operator, which would provide needed backup.

OVERTIME RATE MOA WITH THE TEAMSTERS LOCAL 445 WHITE COLLAR BARGAINING UNIT

After having had discussion in Executive Session on this matter, the Board returned to this agenda item.

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Council Member Courtenay, seconded by Council Member Ardisana to accept the Overtime Rate MOA with the Teamsters Local 445 White Collar Bargaining Unit.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana, Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger **ADOPTED**

PUBLIC COMMENT

David Collins, 3 Sanford Avenue, commended the Board for the lighting at the Commons, noting that his children came home excited about how nice it was for them and their classmates to attend events there. He appreciated how the Town Board works to benefit residents in ways they might not realize.

Supervisor Holdridge added that he attended Friday Night Lights for the first time with the new lights, describing it as magical. He noted that residents were very happy with the Board's work on this project, and also praised the improved quality of the field, which many remembered as previously being just a dirt patch.

ADJOURNMENT

ON A MOTION OFFERED BY Council Member Dysinger and second by Council Member Courtenay to adjourn the meeting at 8:30pm, there being no further business brought before the Town Board.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Ardisana, Becker, Courtenay, Dysinger **ADOPTED**

Respectfully submitted,

Linda A. Zappala, RMC
Town Clerk
2025-09-10