

TOWN BOARD MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING

January 14, 2026

6:45pm

Call to Order

Supervisor Holdridge called the Town Board meeting to order at 6:45pm.

Attendance

Town Clerk Zappala called the roll:

- Supervisor Holdridge: Present
- Council Member Becker: Present
- Council Member Cassara: Present
- Council Member Courtenay: Present

Determination of Quorum: Yes X No

Also Present: Attorney Cassidy

Pledge of Allegiance

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT THE 12/30/25 MEETING MINUTES AND THE 1/2/26 REORG MEETING MINUTES

Supervisor Holdridge asked if everyone had a chance to read the December 30th and January 2nd Minutes, to which all Council Members confirmed they had. There were no questions or debate points.

MOTION by Council Member Courtenay, second by Council Member Becker to accept the Minutes of December 30, 2025 and January 2, 2026. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

SUMMARY OF BILLS

Supervisor Holdridge stated that the Town would be paying bills in the amount of \$754,010.59.

SUPERVISOR HOLDRIDGE'S 2025 RECAP AND 2026 AGENDA

Supervisor Holdridge explained he had prepared a lengthy recap document to share, but would not go through it all in the interest of time. He highlighted that from January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2025, the Town had been awarded around \$2,261,000 in grant funding. He also highlighted the Town's 24/7 dedicated ambulance service, preservation of 130 acres of open space, and brought back Friday night lights for the local youth.

For his 2026 agenda, Supervisor Holdridge outlined the following goals:

- Execute a plan to decrease the cost of ambulance services in Chester.
- Reduce the budget further or maintain a budget under the tax cap for 2027.

- Start construction in Carpenter Community Park on walkway, bathroom, and lighting projects that were awarded \$270,000 in grant funding.
- Finish the comprehensive plan update.
- Seek more grant funding for infrastructure, public services, and parks and recreation facilities.
- Update and certify the preservation plan and hold a public referendum on the recently state-authorized community preservation fund.
- Finish pedestrian-friendly infrastructure projects and explore additional parking improvements in Sugar Loaf.
- Continue to work full-time as Supervisor and handle residents' concerns and issues efficiently.
- Keep ICE out of the Town of Chester.

Supervisor Holdridge then shared information about ICE's interest in a warehouse facility at 29 Elizabeth Drive in the Village of Chester. He stated that about a week ago they learned ICE had included this property in a report that outlined possible processing facility sites across the country. The warehouse is a vacant Pep Boys property owned by Carl Icahn. He also mentioned that ICE had published a notice of activity in a 100-year floodplain in Chester.

Supervisor Holdridge expressed deep concerns about an ICE facility coming to Chester, citing 32 deaths in ICE custody in 2025, a guilty plea by an ICE officer for sexual abuse of a detainee, and recent shootings by ICE agents, including the killing of Renee Good on January 7, 2026. He stated he did not want any of that happening in Chester.

The Supervisor also addressed the economic impact, stating that while some on social media claimed an ICE facility would benefit the local economy, he disagreed. He noted that business owners he spoke with were not thrilled with the idea and did not believe there would be any benefit to their businesses. He also pointed out that the Town, Village, library, ambulance district, and local school districts would lose tax revenue if the federal government took over the building, as they have collected hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxes on the Pep Boys warehouse over the years.

Supervisor Holdridge mentioned that Senator James Skoufis, County Executive Steve Neuhaus, and Congressman Pat Ryan had all come out against ICE's move. He shared an email address (ice.sustainability@ice.dhs.gov) for the public to submit comments by January 16, 2026.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Supervisor Holdridge opened the floor for public comments, limiting speakers to about a minute and a half due to the number of people present and the length of the agenda.

Ms. Carol Sotiropoulos, Monroe, spoke about trying to make an area-wide movement to get every Town and Village to sign resolutions in support of the MELT Act and the New York for All Act to better protect immigrants. She stated these resolutions would go to the legislature and governor to show Towns and Villages support these measures, which also prevent ICE from wearing masks aside from SWAT teams.

Mr. Michael Sussman, Chester, thanked the Supervisor for his leadership on the ICE issue. He spoke about the community's growth and diversification over the 35 years since he served on the Board, saying the community has become remarkably diverse. He argued that putting an ICE facility in Chester would be a slap in the face to the progress made, and expressed concern about further militarization of the County.

Mr. Allan Goldhammer, Esopus, stated that an ICE facility would bring invasive damage to the heart of the Hudson Valley. He expressed his belief that building the facility is wrong-hearted and against his vision of America. He assured the Board they would find support up and down the valley if they looked for it.

Mr. Matt Barca, Orange County, expressed fears about the militarization of neighborhoods and stated he was concerned about ICE pitting police officers against the community.

Mr. Ryan Senning, Chester, asked the Board members to state their personal positions on the ICE facility coming to Chester, as he had heard clear opposition from Supervisor Holdridge and Council Member Courtenay but not from the other Council Members.

Ms. Leslie Mauchline, a lifelong resident of Orange County, stated opposition to an "ICE internment camp" in Orange County. She criticized ICE as no longer being a professional law enforcement agency, describing them as "underqualified

masked thugs" who have been given license to unleash violence. She cited examples of ICE agents allegedly acting outside their legal scope.

Ms. Yvonne Carruthers, Beacon, expressed appreciation for the Board's response to her email. She made a historical reference to Auschwitz, stating it began as a detention center, and urged the Town to keep the facility out to avoid that kind of legacy.

Ms. Liz Oliver, Beacon, voiced strong opposition to the planned ICE detention facility. She stated that as a native of Minneapolis, she has been close to the trauma being inflicted on people there. She urged the Board to use whatever power they had to delay or obstruct the federal government's plans.

Noah Snyder, a high school senior from the Village of Woodbury, expressed concern about what the ICE holding center represents. As a descendant of Holocaust survivors, he stated that harm begins when decisions go unquestioned. He urged Chester and Orange County to continue fighting against the center.

Mr. Greg Klein, Orange County resident and former volunteer firefighter, expressed concern about the environment and atmosphere changing significantly if 80,000 immigrants were being processed. He mentioned the incidents in Minnesota involving Renee Good and expressed concern about ICE targeting innocent people.

Mr. John Holmes, a Marine veteran, thanked the Board for their position and urged them to remain steadfast. He contrasted his military service, where they stood with faces uncovered, with ICE agents who use hoods and conduct operations without proper identification. He reminded everyone that all white faces present were either immigrants or descended from immigrants.

Mr. John McLaughlin, an 86-year-old veteran and resident of the Town of Newburgh, stated that ICE operates completely outside the realm of the constitution, largely in violation of the Fourth Amendment. He requested a copy of the Board's resolution to bring before the council of the Town of Newburgh.

Ms. Mary Beth Terrell, Campbell Hall, shared her experience of falling in love with Orange County 50 years ago when she came for college. She described Chester as the kind of Town "where people have cows" and expressed that it should remain that way, without an ICE facility.

Ms. Lillian O'Brien, Middletown, expressed how heartened she was by the turnout at a recent meeting where people came from all over the region. She compared the current situation to a successful fight against a landfill project years ago, emphasizing that the whole community worked together for a year to prevent it. She urged unity in opposing the ICE facility.

Online, Mr. Joshua Koff expressed sympathy that this was happening to the Town, stating that none of them asked for the facility, the attention, or the burden. He thanked the Board for speaking about it and offering time for the community to speak.

Ms. Stacy Padilla thanked everyone from out of Town for representing peace in the Hudson Valley. In response to a question about what the Town could do directly, Supervisor Holdridge explained that the facility is proposed in the Village of Chester, not the Town of Chester, so the Town has no direct zoning, planning, or building jurisdiction over the facility. He noted that when the federal government wants to do something, it usually doesn't have to comply with local zoning, building, or planning laws. He clarified that he had not passed any resolution yet but had provided the MELT Act and New York for All Act to the rest of the Town Board for review, which they would take up at a future meeting.

Mr. Alan Clarkson shared that the Department of Homeland Security had inspected the warehouse the previous day, indicating time was short. He also mentioned that the investigation of Renee Good's shooting had shifted focus from the perpetrator to Good herself, with authorities searching for connections she might have had with activist groups.

Mr. Kieran Conroy, Highland Mills, spoke about his connection to Chester, having grown up in the area. He discussed his experiences working with Native American communities and expressed concern about ICE targeting Native Americans, stating they had recently kidnapped tribal citizens from Pine Ridge.

Ms. Rosa Ferrara, Town of Warwick, identified herself as Hispanic and American, born in Puerto Rico. She spoke about being targeted for speaking her language and emphasized that everyone has a right to be in America, a land founded by immigrants. She drew parallels to World War II and Auschwitz, urging people to stand up and protect their neighbors.

PUBLIC HEARING ON CELLULAR END POINT OPT-OUT LOCAL LAW

Town Attorney Elizabeth Cassidy provided a summary of the proposed local law regarding cellular endpoint opt-outs. She explained that the Town uses cellular endpoints attached to water meters to transmit data for billing purposes. Some

residents had concerns about the use of cellular technology, so the Town Board instructed her to prepare a local law authorizing residents to opt out of that process.

Supervisor Holdridge clarified that they had not yet agreed to an opt-out fee, which would be decided at the next Town Board meeting. They were instituting the opt-out procedure tonight after the public hearing, but the fee would be determined later.

Supervisor Holdridge asked for a motion to open the public hearing.

MOTION to open the Public Hearing at 7:35pm by Council Member Courtenay, second by Council Member Becker on the matter of Introductory Local Law 13 Of 2025, A Local Law to opt Out of Installation of Cellular Endpoints for Water Meters. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

Ms. Christine Mauer, Creamery Pond Road, Sugar Loaf, spoke in strong opposition to the proposed opt-out fee. She argued that requiring residents to pay a fee to retain traditional non-transmitting water meters was unfair and coercive. She noted that in July 2019, the Town Board had passed a resolution petitioning the New York State Public Service Commission to allow customers to retain non-smart analog electric and gas meters without fees or penalties. She provided copies of that resolution to all Council Members.

Ms. Meryl Newler, a resident of Lake Hill Farms since 1976, questioned the doubling of the water rate from \$5.75 per thousand gallons to \$10 per thousand gallons and the change from biannual to quarterly billing. She noted her January tax bill for water had increased by 8.6%. She supported the opt-out law and expressed concern about her water meter's location in relation to metal objects in her basement, citing the installation manual's warning about maintaining distance from transmitters. She mentioned her communications with local assemblymen who were receptive to legislation allowing homeowners to refuse smart meter installation without fees.

Mr. Joshua Koff commented online that countless studies have demonstrated there is no risk to human health from cellular endpoint transmitters, though he had no direct comment on the fee.

Mr. Michael Sussman, Chester, thanked the Board for considering the issue and agreeing with an opt-out option. He noted that while there might be a small slice of the population that believes they suffer health consequences from these exposures, very few people would actually opt out. He suggested that imposing a fee creates an unnecessary barrier and would be symbolically more appropriate to respect these individuals without creating polarization.

Supervisor Holdridge asked for a motion to close the public hearing.

MOTION to close the Public Hearing at 7:50pm by Council Member Courtenay, second by Council Member Becker. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

Town Attorney Elizabeth Cassidy clarified that the resolution she had drafted did not set a fee but simply authorized the opt-out legislation. She read the resolution, which stated that while the Town Board had not seen ill effects from cellular endpoint technology, they desired to provide property owners with the option of not using it for collecting water meter data.

TOWN OF CHESTER
TOWN BOARD

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT INTRODUCTORY LOCAL LAW 13 OF 2025, A LOCAL LAW TO OPT OUT OF
INSTALLATION OF CELLULAR ENDPOINTS FOR WATER METERS

WHEREAS, The Town of Chester utilizes cellular endpoint technology to collect water meter reading data to reduce required manpower and for the immediate detection of water leaks. The Town Board recognizes that there are some who are concerned as to potential ill effects of such technology. While the Town Board has not seen such ill effects, the Town Board desires to provide property owners with the option of not using cellular end point technology for collecting water meter data; and

WHEREAS INTRODUCTORY LOCAL LAW 13 OF 2025, A LOCAL LAW TO OPT OUT OF INSTALLATION OF CELLULAR ENDPOINTS FOR WATER METERS was introduced before the Town Board of the Town of Chester on December 10, 2025; and

WHEREAS, a duly noticed public hearing was held on January 14, 2026; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that after consideration, the Town Board hereby finds that the proposed local law will not result in any adverse environmental impacts and issues a “Negative Declaration” pursuant to the NYS Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Board hereby adopts INTRODUCTORY LOCAL LAW 13 OF 2025, A LOCAL LAW TO OPT OUT OF INSTALLATION OF CELLULAR ENDPOINTS FOR WATER METERS as Local Law 1 of 2026; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Clerk is hereby directed to file the same with New York State Department of State.

Supervisor Holdridge asked if there were any comments or questions from the Board members. There were none.

MOTION by Council Member Becker, second by Council Member Cassara to adopt Local Law 1 of 2026, A Local Law to Opt Out of Installation of Cellular Endpoints for Water Meters as written.

**TOWN OF CHESTER
TOWN BOARD**

**LOCAL LAW 1 OF 2026, A LOCAL LAW TO OPT OUT OF INSTALLATION OF CELLULAR ENDPOINTS
FOR WATER METERS**

BE IT ENACTED, by the Town Board of the Town of Chester as follows:

Section 1. Legislative Intent.

The Town of Chester utilizes cellular endpoint technology to collect water meter reading data to reduce required manpower and for the immediate detection of water leaks. The Town Board recognizes that there are some who are concerned as to potential ill effects of such technology. While the Town Board has not seen such ill effects, the Town Board desires to provide property owners with the option of not using cellular end point technology for collecting water meter data.

Section 2. Chapter 95 of the Town of Chester Town Code, entitled “Water”, section 3, entitled “Meters” is hereby amended to read as follows:

- A. All water supplied to residential users in districts shall be through water meters approved by the Town Board. There shall be no tampering with water meters or breaking of meter seals with the intent to slow, stop or alter the readings of the meter. All water meters shall be the property of the Town of Chester, and any damage to a meter shall be reported to the Town Clerk within five days of such damage. The owner of the premises in which a water meter is installed shall be liable for any and all damage to said meter when such damage is either intentionally caused or caused by the negligence of the owner, occupant, agent or employee.
- B. Property owners elect to have meters read manually by providing written notice to the Town Clerk. Property owners who elect to have their water meter read manually shall be charged an opt out fee on each water bill. Such opt out fee shall be established by resolution of the Town Board from time to time and shall be subject to § 95-8, “Water rates; nonpayment of bills”.

Section 3. Chapter 95 of the Town of Chester Town Code, entitled “Water”, section 7, entitled “Promulgation of rules and regulations authorized” is hereby amended to read as follows:

The Town Board shall have the right to promulgate rules, regulations or restrictions by resolution relating to the operation of the water district, including restrictions on the use of water and the prohibition of water for certain purposes if the Town Board finds that circumstances exist which necessitate the imposition of such regulations and/or prohibitions. The Town Board may further promulgate rules, regulations or restrictions by resolution concerning the implementation of advancing technology and the means of property owners opting out of the use of such technology. The Town Board

shall publish such rules, regulations or restrictions in the official Town newspaper as soon as possible after their adoption and in no event more than five days after their effective date. The rules, regulations or restrictions shall have the same force and effect as if they were a part of this article.

Section 4. Authority.

This local law is adopted pursuant to section 10 of the Statute of Local Governments which provides local governments the power “to adopt, amend and repeal ordinances, resolutions and rules and regulations in the exercise of its functions, powers and duties”.

Section 5. Severability.

If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, or part of this Local Law or the application thereof to any person, firm or corporation, or circumstance, shall be adjusted by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid or unconstitutional, such order or judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, or part of this Local Law or in its application to the person, individual, firm or corporation or circumstance, directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment or order shall be rendered.

Section 6. Effective Date.

This local law shall take effect upon filing with the Secretary of State.

The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

PUBLIC HEARING ON SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE LOCAL LAW

Supervisor Holdridge explained that the law would require property owners with land in front of a sidewalk to maintain it and clear it during inclement weather. He noted this was not likely to be the last time they would address this issue, as there might be further discussions about possible Town involvement in clearing sidewalks. However, they needed to get something on the books for now.

Supervisor Holdridge asked for a motion to open the public hearing on the sidewalk maintenance local law.

MOTION to open the Public Hearing at 7:55pm by Council Member Courtenay, second by Council Member Becker on the matter of Introductory Local Law 14 of 2025, A Local Law to Amend Chapter 81, “Street Excavations; Driveways” To Provide for The Regulation and Maintenance of Sidewalks. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

Mr. Nick Zungoli expressed disagreement with handing over sidewalk maintenance responsibility to individual property owners. He observed that after recent snowfalls, areas in front of residential properties were not cleared, though businesses had maintained their sections. He noted that other municipalities in the area take care of snow removal on sidewalks and in parking areas. He also pointed out that the sidewalks are in the Town's right of way since Kings Highway is now under Town rather than County jurisdiction. He suggested the cost to the Town would be minimal, requiring just a snowblower and a couple of hours of labor.

Supervisor Holdridge stated he planned to revisit this issue once they had a full Board, noting they planned to appoint a new member in February after interviews were completed. He explained there had been a deadlock on how to handle the situation so far.

Mr. Senning asked for clarification on why they were assigning shoveling to residents, and Council Member Becker explained this is the norm in almost every code in New York State. He noted that even in the Village of Chester, which cleans sidewalks, their code references that residents are responsible if the Village cannot do it. He explained that in some instances, where sidewalks were installed along state roads, it was mandated that the Village maintain those sidewalks. Mr. Senning commented that comparing Sugar Loaf to other business districts was inappropriate because

Sugar Loaf is very mixed, with standard businesses, residences, and hybrid properties. He suggested that because Sugar Loaf is unique, it might require a unique solution, potentially having the Town handle snow removal.

Supervisor Holdridge asked for a motion to close the public hearing.

MOTION to close the Public Hearing at 8:00pm by Council Member Courtenay, second by Council Member Becker. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

Town Attorney Cassidy read the resolution, which stated that the Town Board desired to provide a regulatory framework for the maintenance of sidewalks by adjoining property owners and a mechanism should such maintenance not occur in a timely manner.

TOWN OF CHESTER
TOWN BOARD

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT INTRODUCTORY LOCAL LAW 14 OF 2025, A LOCAL LAW TO AMEND CHAPTER 81, "STREET EXCAVATIONS; DRIVEWAYS" TO PROVIDE FOR THE REGULATION AND MAINTENANCE OF SIDEWALKS

WHEREAS, The Town Board of the Town of Chester desires to provide a regulatory framework for the maintenance of sidewalks by adjoining property owners and for a mechanism should such maintenance not occur in a timely manner for the health, safety and welfare of the public.

WHEREAS, INTRODUCTORY LOCAL LAW 14 OF 2025, A LOCAL LAW TO AMEND CHAPTER 81, "STREET EXCAVATIONS; DRIVEWAYS" TO PROVIDE FOR THE REGULATION AND MAINTENANCE OF SIDEWALKS was introduced before the Town Board of the Town of Chester on December 10, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board of the Town of Chester previously declared itself to be Lead Agency for purposes of review under the NYS Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) and further declared that the proposed local law is an unlisted action; and

WHEREAS, a duly noticed public hearing was held on January 14, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the proposed local law was referred to the Orange County Department of Planning pursuant to GML 239 and by letter dated December 19, 2025, the County indicated that the matter was one of local determination

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that after considering the thresholds as set forth in 6 NYCRR 617.5(c), the Town Board determines that this action is more appropriately classified as a Type II action pursuant to 6 NYCRR 617.5(c)(1) (maintenance or repair involving no substantial changes in an existing structure or facility) and (33) (adoption of regulations, policies, procedures and local legislative decisions in connection with any action on this list); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that INTRODUCTORY LOCAL LAW 14 OF 2025, A LOCAL LAW TO AMEND CHAPTER 81, "STREET EXCAVATIONS; DRIVEWAYS" TO PROVIDE FOR THE REGULATION AND MAINTENANCE OF SIDEWALKS be adopted as Local Law 2 of 2026

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Clerk is hereby directed to file the same with New York State Department of State.

Supervisor Holdridge asked if there were any questions or debate points from the Board. There were none.

MOTION by Council Member Becker, second by Council Member Courtenay to adopt Local Law 2 of 2026, A Local Law to Amend Chapter 81, "Street Excavations; Driveways" To Provide for The Regulation and Maintenance of Sidewalks as written. The motion carried with all in favor.

**TOWN OF CHESTER
TOWN BOARD
LOCAL LAW 2 OF 2026,
A LOCAL LAW TO AMEND CHAPTER 81, “STREET EXCAVATIONS; DRIVEWAYS” TO PROVIDE FOR
THE REGULATION AND MAINTENANCE OF SIDEWALKS**

BE IT ENACTED by the Town Board of the Town of Chester as follows:

Section 1. Legislative Intent

The Town Board of the Town of Chester desires to provide a regulatory framework for the maintenance of sidewalks by adjoining property owners and for a mechanism should such maintenance not occur in a timely manner for the health, safety and welfare of the public.

Section 2. Article 81, entitled “Street Excavations, Driveways” is hereby amended as follows:

Chapter 81 shall be renamed “Streets and Sidewalks”

A new Article IV, entitled “Maintenance of Sidewalks” shall be inserted to read as follows:

§ 81-19 – Responsibility for clearing and maintenance of sidewalks.

The owner or occupant of a property, whether occupied or not, in the Town shall keep any sidewalk adjoining such property free from the obstruction of snow and ice and free from dirt, filth and weeds or other obstructions including personal property and shall keep and maintain such sidewalk in safe and proper condition. No owner or occupant of a house or building adjacent to a street or sidewalk of the Town shall allow snow, ice or water to accumulate on such house or building, nor shall the owner or occupant of a house or building allow snow, ice or water to fall from such building upon a street or sidewalk of the Town. Leaders or drains erected to the side of a house or building shall be so placed that a flow of water therefrom shall not run over a street or sidewalk of the Town.

- A. It shall be the duty of the owner or occupant of a property to cause the sidewalk adjacent thereto to be cleared of snow and ice within 24 hours after snow shall cease falling.
- B. In case any sidewalk shall have ice thereon and the severity of weather shall be such that the same cannot be removed, it shall be the duty of such owner or occupant of a house or building adjacent to said sidewalk to deposit sufficient quantities of salt, sand or some equally good substance as will render the passage of pedestrians thereon free from danger of slipping and falling.
- C. In the event an obstruction is due to weeds, dirt, debris or other items unrelated to snow, the Property Owner or Occupant shall remove such items within 5 calendar days of receiving a written notice by the Highway Department, Chester Police Department or Code Enforcement Officer.

§ 81-20 Removal by the Town

In the event snow or ice is not cleared from a sidewalk within 24 hours of the conclusion of a weather event, the Highway Department shall remove such snow and ice and shall apply sand or salt to the sidewalk. In the event weeds, dirt, debris or other items unrelated to snow are not removed within 5 days as per § 81-19(C), the Highway Department shall remove such matter. Removal by the Town of Chester shall not operate to excuse the property owner from maintaining sidewalks as per § 81-19.

§ 81-21 Cost of Removal by the Town

The Highway Superintendent shall notify the Town Clerk of any expense incurred by the quantity and rate of labor, equipment and materials used for any such removal. The Town Clerk shall promptly present to the owner and the cost of such removal shall be billed to the property owner as set forth on the last assessment roll of the Town of Chester. If not paid within 30 days, the cost thereof shall be assessed against the property and become a lien thereon, collectible in the same manner as delinquent Town taxes.

§ 81-22 Hearing as to Costs

A property owner may request a hearing before the Town Board to determine the justness of the actual expense of removal within 30 days of receiving notice of the charge.

The existing Article IV, entitled "Penalties" shall be renumbered as Article V.

§ 81-19, entitled "Penalties for offenses" shall be renumbered to § 81-23.

In all other respects, Chapter 81 shall remain unchanged.

Section 3. Authority.

This local law is adopted pursuant to the authority set forth in Town Law §§ 130(4) and 130(7).

Section 4. Severability.

If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, or part of this Local Law or the application thereof to any person, firm or corporation, or circumstance, shall be adjusted by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid or unconstitutional, such order or judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, or part of this Local Law or in its application to the person, individual, firm or corporation or circumstance, directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment or order shall be rendered.

Section 5. Effective Date.

This local law shall take effect upon filing with the Secretary of State.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

REPORTS

Supervisor Holdridge stated he would dispense with the reports submitted for the sake of time. All reports can be found at chester-ny.gov.

He shared two updates from the Orange County DPW:

- Regarding Kings Highway, the County would be providing free paving between spring and fall. Supervisor Holdridge had advocated for paving from shoulder to shoulder throughout the business and historical districts to ensure uniform surface area for future parking.
- The intersection at Leone Lane, Laroe Road, and Kings Highway would be reconfigured, with the much-maligned divider in Leone Lane being removed by the Orange County DPW this year.

Council Member Becker, as a member of the Moodna Commission, reported they were moving forward on several infrastructure projects with the current year's budget:

- New pumps at Surrey Meadows pump station.
- A new control panel at Sugar Loaf pump station.
- A new generator for Lake Hill Farms pump station.
- A budgeted bypass installation and new pumps at Walton Lake Estates pump station.

He emphasized these upgrades demonstrated the Board's commitment to improving aging facilities before they became emergency situations. He also mentioned that the water department had recently observed a direct tap on a 10-inch water main overseen by the Village of Chester Water Department, which provided valuable learning experience. Additionally, he noted that Chester Solar 1 LLC would soon begin paying rent for the finalized project on Vivian Lane.

Town Clerk Linda Zappala announced three upcoming events:

- The Chester Historical Society's annual meeting on January 18th at 2 PM at the Senior Center, featuring a presentation on the history of the Yelverton Inn.

- The Kiwanis annual fish and chips dinner on February 20th (the first Friday of Lent) for takeout or dine-in at Chester Academy.
- The Chester Alumni Association tricky tray on February 21st at 1 PM at St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

Town Attorney Cassidy alerted everyone to fraud attempts targeting Planning Boards, Zoning Boards of Appeals, and applicants throughout Orange County. She explained that fraudsters were accessing public application documents, obtaining applicants' contact information, and sending emails requesting wire transfers for escrow fees. She emphasized that no municipality in Orange County requests wires from applicants, and anyone receiving such requests should call their respective municipality to verify.

Supervisor Holdridge added that municipalities faced billions of dollars in fraud losses in 2025, but the Town of Chester had been mostly successful at preventing fraud attempts.

COMPTROLLER MEYER EDUCATION REQUESTS

Supervisor Holdridge presented Comptroller Meyer's education requests: \$170 for a February 4th class on Foundations of Cash Management, and \$1,300 for the NYGFOA Annual Conference in Albany from April 14th to April 17th, covering conference fees and hotel costs.

MOTION by Council Member Becker, second by Council Member Courtenay to approve Comptroller Meyer's education requests: \$170 for a February 4th class on Foundations of Cash Management, and \$1,300 for the NYGFOA Annual Conference in Albany from April 14th to April 17th, covering conference fees and hotel costs. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

SUGAR LOAF CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REQUEST FOR FESTIVAL ROAD CLOSURES

Supervisor Holdridge presented the Sugar Loaf Chamber of Commerce request for Festival Road closures on May 23-24 and October 10-11, 2026 for the spring and fall festivals.

Council Member Becker questioned whether they should approve both dates at once or wait on the fall date until closer to the time. Supervisor Holdridge explained it was best to do them now to avoid forgetting, which had happened in the past. He noted that the Chief and the Chamber had been in close contact over recent years and everything had run smoothly.

MOTION by Council Member Courtenay, second by Council Member Cassara to accept the Kings Highway road closures on May 23-24 and October 10-11, 2026. The motion carried with three ayes and one abstention.

VOTE: AYES(3): Holdridge, Cassara, Courtenay, ABSTAINED: (1) Becker

ADOPTED

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED HIGHWAY/WATER UNION INCLEMENT WEATHER MOA

Supervisor Holdridge explained that the language was drafted by their labor attorney following a conversation he had with union representatives from the highway and water departments. The MOA would outline the process for sending employees home during inclement weather, which currently requires a decision by the Town Supervisor in conjunction with the department head. He noted that the Water and Highway Departments typically don't go home during inclement weather, and this would only apply in extreme cases.

Council Member Becker expressed preference for such decisions to be made by the Board rather than just the supervisor. Supervisor Holdridge disagreed, citing practicality issues with having the Board meet or communicate in a timely manner during emergency situations.

Council Member Becker argued that inclement weather is known about days in advance, sometimes a week ahead, allowing time for Board decisions. Council Members Cassara and Courtenay agreed with Council Member Becker that it should be a Board decision.

MOTION by Council Member Becker, second by Council Member Courtenay to table the resolution The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

RESOLUTION TO APPOINT MIKE POPOLOSKI TO THE CHESTER PLANNING BOARD

Supervisor Holdridge noted that Council Member Cassara had already met with Mr. Popoloski when he was on the Planning Board, and Council Members Becker and Courtenay had also met with him. He had a recommendation from the Planning Board.

MOTION by Council Member Cassara, second by Council Member Courtenay to accept the appointment of Mr. Popoloski to the Planning Board. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE RETAINER AGREEMENT WITH SOKOLOFF STERN LLP

Supervisor Holdridge explained this was for the Barry v. Reilly, III, et al case, and was a formality he had previously mentioned to the Board. They needed to accept the retainer agreement to move forward with the defense of the Town.

MOTION by Council Member Cassara, second by Council Member Courtenay to accept the retainer agreement with Sokoloff Stern. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

RESOLUTION TO SET REGULAR TOWN BOARD WORK SESSION ON THE FOURTH THURSDAY OF THE MONTH AT 6:00PM

MOTION by Council Member Courtenay, second by Council Member Cassara to set regular Town Board Work Sessions on the fourth Thursday of the month at 6:00pm. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS REQUEST FOR TOWN OF CHESTER TO SPONSOR FREE THROW CONTEST

Supervisor Holdridge presented the request from the Knights of Columbus for the Town to cover their free-throw contest under its insurance. The event was planned for January, though no specific date was provided.

Council Member Becker questioned why they would need to use the Town of Chester's insurance when they might have their own, especially since the event would take place at a school facility rather than a Town facility.

Supervisor Holdridge read the request, which stated they were looking for the Town's collaborative efforts in initiating a free-throw contest, with the Town's support under its insurance umbrella. They also requested to use the Town's basketball athletic supplies.

The Board agreed to approve the use of their basketball equipment but table the insurance coverage request for further discussion.

MOTION by Supervisor Holdridge, second by Council Member Cassara to approve or authorize the use of Town basketball equipment for the event. The motion carried with all in favor.

MOTION by Council Member Becker, second by Council Member Courtenay to table the Knights of Columbus insurance coverage request. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE PURCHASE OF \$57,365.78 2026 CHEVY TAHOE PPV 4WD

Supervisor Holdridge presented the resolution to purchase a 2026 Chevy Tahoe PPV 4WD for \$57,365.78, replacing a 2021 Chevy Tahoe with approximately 95,000 miles. He noted that by the time the new vehicle was approved, purchased, and delivered, the 2021 vehicle would have well over 105,000 miles. The Town had budgeted \$60,000 for this purchase, so it was coming in under budget.

In response to a question from Council Member Becker, Supervisor Holdridge confirmed they would keep the 2021 vehicle and use it to replace one of their older secondary vehicles.

MOTION by Council Member Courtenay, second by Council Member Becker to approve the purchase a 2026 Chevy Tahoe PPV 4WD for \$57,365.78 off State bid. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay **ADOPTED**

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE \$200,000 LOAN FROM THE DB FUND TO THE B FUND

Supervisor Holdridge explained this was to make the B Fund whole after prepayments made before the end of the year to save money in the long run. He clarified for the public that while they needed to cover the costs with other funds for now, all money would be put back into the proper funds eventually.

MOTION by Council Member Becker, second by Council Member Courtenay to authorize the \$200,000 Loan from the DB Fund to the B Fund. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay **ADOPTED**

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE \$15,000 LOAN FROM THE A FUND TO THE SW3 FUND

MOTION by Council Member Courtenay, second by Council Member Cassara to authorize the \$15,000 Loan from the A Fund to the SW3 Fund. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay **ADOPTED**

RESOLUTION TO APPOINT WALTER POPAILO TO THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Supervisor Holdridge explained that Walter was already on the Zoning Board of Appeals, but they had not included his re-appointment on the reorganization document. This resolution was to correct the oversight.

MOTION by Council Member Becker, second by Council Member Cassara to approve the appointment of Walter Popailo to the ZBA. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay **ADOPTED**

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE USE OF THE CHESTER SENIOR CENTER FOR A GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION BREAKFAST ON FEBRUARY 5TH

Supervisor Holdridge noted that Comptroller Meyer had coordinated with Michelle and Kristen, and the event would not conflict with any other activities scheduled for that day.

MOTION by Council Member Becker, second by Council Member Cassara to approve the use of the Chester Senior Center for a Government Finance Officers Association Breakfast on February 5th. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay **ADOPTED**

RESOLUTION TO ADVERTISE RFP FOR CLEANING SERVICES

Supervisor Holdridge explained he had sent out a document that Council Member Becker had provided earlier in the year. It outlined everything they would need for the four main properties: Town Hall, Police Department, Highway

Department, And Senior Center. They needed to release the RFP to allow people to respond and then negotiate with potential contractors.

Council Member Becker suggested they add to the bid specifications a price quote for deep cleaning of floors at the Police Department and Senior Center, noting this should be done at least once a year but had not been done by their current cleaning company.

The Board agreed to amend the RFP language and set a return date of February 11th, with a decision to be made by February 25th so contracts could begin on March 1st.

MOTION by Council Member Becker, second by Council Member Courtenay to amend the RFP language to include deep cleaning. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

MOTION by Council Member Becker, second by Council Member Courtenay to approve the language and release the RFP with the February 11th deadline. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE EPIC FUND AS AN INVESTMENT OPTION FOR THE TOWN OF CHESTER

Supervisor Holdridge noted this had been explained at the reorganization meeting and would give them another investment option. Town Clerk Zappala commented the maximum deposit would need to be defined.

MOTION by Council Member Courtenay, second by Council Member Cassara to authorize the EPIC fund as an investment option up to \$15,000,000. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE 2026 REORGANIZATIONAL DOCUMENT NYSLERS WORKDAY HOURS FROM 6 HOURS PER DAY TO 8 HOURS PER DAY FOR NEIL MEYER (COMPTROLLER), GABRIELLE GUASTAMACCHIA (SECRETARY TO THE POLICE CHIEF), AND MARK BONO (LABORER)

Supervisor Holdridge noted this had been explained in an email from Comptroller Meyer and was a formality for New York State.

MOTION by Council Member Becker, second by Council Member Courtenay to approve the amendment to the Standard Workday Resolution from 6 hours per day to 8 hours per day for Neil Meyer (Comptroller), Gabrielle Guastamacchia (Secretary to the Police Chief), and Mark Bono (Laborer). The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

RESOLUTION TO INCREASE DRAKE LOEB (PLANNING BOARD ATTORNEY) RATE FROM \$225 TO \$250/HOUR

Supervisor Holdridge explained they had already accepted this rate increase but wanted to formally accept it since they hadn't specifically stated it during the reorganization meeting.

MOTION by Council Member Becker, second by Council Member Courtenay to approve the rate increase from \$225 to \$250/hour for Drake Loeb. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

Supervisor Holdridge added that they've been doing a wonderful job for the planning Board, with Dominic specifically mentioned as doing great work.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE PBA UNION CONTRACT MOA

Supervisor Holdridge explained the contract included minor language changes and a 2.25% raise each year for the three years of the contract (2026-2028).

Council Member Cassara, who had not been part of the negotiations, abstained from voting.

MOTION by Council Member Courtenay, second by Council Member Becker to accept the PBA union contract MOA. The motion carried with three ayes and one abstention.

VOTE: AYES(3): Holdridge, Becker, Courtenay, ABSTAINED (1): Cassara ADOPTED

Supervisor Holdridge thanked the PBA union and everyone who participated in the negotiation process, noting it was long and arduous but resulted in a mutually agreed decision.

RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT PLANNING BOARD RESIGNATION OF MARK ROBERSON

Town Clerk Zappala noted the resignation was effective as of January 5th according to the letter received. Supervisor Holdridge explained Mark could no longer serve due to his career commitments. The Board members thanked Mark for his service.

MOTION by Council Member Becker, second by Council Member Cassara to accept the resignation of Mark Roberson, effective January 5, 2026. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay ADOPTED

DISCUSSION ON SUGAR LOAF HISTORICAL SOCIETY ROAD NAME REQUEST FOR KINGS HIGHWAY

Supervisor Holdridge shared that while the idea of renaming Kings Highway sounded nice, he wasn't sure if renaming a historical road for someone who wasn't from Chester was appropriate. He suggested a bench, plaque, tree, or other memorial might be more suitable, but acknowledged he was just one person on the Board.

Council Member Courtenay asked if the sponsor of the letter could provide more information. He suggested that rather than renaming the road entirely, they could do what had been done in Surrey Meadows, where Price Road remained but had a dedication "in memory of" added to the sign.

Mr. Jay Westerveld from the Sugar Loaf Historical Society clarified that they meant a dedication rather than a renaming, suggesting a secondary sign. He explained they were thinking of a colloquial dedication, not changing the official name of the road. He acknowledged that while the state trooper wasn't from Chester, he gave his life to protect everyone.

The Board agreed to move forward with a dedication rather than renaming. Supervisor Holdridge stated he would reach out to the highway department and bring the matter back for a formal vote at a later date.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE 3-YEAR CONTRACT WITH CHIEF OF POLICE DANIEL DOELLINGER

Supervisor Holdridge noted everyone had seen the contract, which included 3% annual increases over three years.

Council Member Cassara stated he would abstain as he had not been involved in the process.

MOTION by Council Member Courtenay, second by Council Member Becker to approve the three-year contract of Chief Daniel Doellinger.

The motion carried with three ayes and one abstention.

VOTE: AYES(3): Holdridge, Becker, Courtenay, ABSTAINED (1): Cassara ADOPTED

EXECUTIVE SESSION – PERSONNEL

The Board entered into executive session to discuss a personnel matter and later returned to open session.

MOTION BY Council Member Courtenay and second by Council Member Cassara to enter into Executive Session at 8:35pm on a matter of personnel.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

MOTION BY Council Member Courtenay and second by Council Member Cassara to adjourn the Executive Session at 8:45pm.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

New Business

After an Executive Session, Supervisor Holdridge presented one item of new business: accepting an offer for special counsel to review religious uses in AR-3 zoning for their comprehensive plan. The Board had received two proposals in response to their RFP and reached a consensus to select Harris Beach, Attorneys at Law.

MOTION by Council Member Courtenay, second by Council Member Cassara to accept the proposal from Harris Beach and authorize the Supervisor and Town Attorney to communicate with them about the scope of their work and required resources. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

Council Member Becker requested an amendment to the cleaning services RFP to include pricing for special cleanings after facility rentals, which might require revising their fee schedule if costs came in higher than the current \$175 charge.

MOTION by Council Member Becker, second by Council Member Courtenay to amend the RFP to include pricing for post-rental cleanings. The motion carried with all in favor.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

PUBLIC COMMENT

Supervisor Holdridge opened the floor to public comment, maintaining the minute and a half time limit.

Lillian O'Brien, Middletown, spoke about seeing many people who were afraid at the meeting earlier in the evening. She shared her personal experience of being told to "go back to her country" despite having a Native American father and Puerto Rican mother (who is an American). She expressed concern for young people and stated that an ICE detention center would send a message that the community accepts this kind of treatment and could lead to targeting of anyone, regardless of appearance.

Online, Mr. Joshua Koff quoted "Do not obey in advance" as the first rule in opposing tyranny, urging resistance even though the federal government would likely "force their way in."

Ethan Weber, Port Jervis, expressed support for the community against the ICE facility. She stated that ICE's terrorizing of immigrant communities is unconstitutional and that history has shown ICE's end goal is not enforcement of immigration laws but suppression of dissent. She warned that the detention center would eventually be used against all community members, including Board members and police, as a reminder of what happens to those who "step out of line."

Online, Lydia Cuadros, Sugar Loaf, asked who Kings Highway would be renamed after. Supervisor Holdridge clarified they were not renaming the road but would create a dedication to Trooper William V. McDonough, a State Trooper who died in the line of duty in Chester. There would be a secondary signage, not a renaming.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION TO adjourn the meeting at 8:55 PM made by Council Member Becker, second by Council Member Courtenay, and approved unanimously.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay

ADOPTED

Respectfully submitted,

Linda A. Zappala, RMC
Town Clerk
2026-1-14