

TOWN BOARD MEETING

September 23, 2026

6:45 PM

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
- Council Member Diffley: 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 9/9/26 TOWN BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Supervisor Holdridge asked if everyone had reviewed the minutes from the September 9, 2026. No questions or debate points were raised.

MOTION by Council Member Courtenay, seconded by Council Member Diffley to accept the September 9, 2026 Meeting Minutes as presented by Town Clerk Zappala.

The motion carried.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

SUMMARY OF BILLS

Supervisor Holdridge reported that the Town would be paying bills in the amount of \$453,405.21.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Supervisor Holdridge called for a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of litigation.

MOTION to enter into Executive Session at 6:50pm was made by Council Member Becker and seconded by Council Member Cassara.

The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

The Board convened in Executive Session.

MOTION to adjourn the Executive Session was made at 7:31pm by Council Member Becker and seconded by Council Member Courtenay.

The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

PUBLIC HEARING ON ANNUAL PREPARATION OF SPECIAL DISTRICT ASSESSMENT ROLL

The following is the notice as delivered to all property owners and appearing in the Times Herald Record on September 16, 2026.

**TOWN OF CHESTER
1786 KINGS HIGHWAY, CHESTER, N Y 10918**

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING – SPECIAL DISTRICTS

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE THAT the Town Board of the Town of Chester will hold a public hearing at the Town of Chester Town Hall, 1786 Kings Highway, Chester, NY on Wednesday, September 23, 2026 at 6:45PM or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard for the purpose of reviewing, pursuant to Section 202-a of the Town Law, the assessment rolls prepared for the following special districts within the Town: Chester Ambulance District, Walton Lake Estates Water, Surrey Meadows Water, Lake Hill Farms Water, Sugar Loaf Hills Water, Fieldcrest Water, Greens at Chester Water, Refuse District, Benefit Area 1, Benefit Area 2, Benefit Area 1A, Consolidated Sewer District 1, Consolidated Sewer including Operation & Maintenance, Consolidated Sewer Benefit, Sewer District 4A, Sewer District 4A Benefit Area, Sewer District 4A Operation & Maintenance, Sewer District 5, Sewer District 5 Benefit Area, Sewer District 5 Operation and Maintenance, Lake Region Sewer District 7, Lake Region Sewer District Operation and Maintenance, Sewer District 8, Ashford Estates Drainage District, Fox Hill Drainage District, Eagle Crest Drainage District, Warwick Ridge Drainage District, Woodridge Drainage District, Chesterdale Drainage District and any other special districts within the Town of Chester.

Copies of the special district assessment rolls are on file in the Office of the Town Clerk, 1786 Kings Highway, Chester, NY and may be inspected there during normal business hours by any interested party.

The Town Board will hear all persons who desire to comment either in favor of, or in opposition to, the adoption of said rolls at the time and place set forth herein. Persons may appear in person or by agent. Written comments should be addressed to the Town Board, Town of Chester, 1786 Kings Highway, Chester, NY 10918 or may be delivered to the Town Clerk at, or prior to, the hearing.

**BY ORDER OF THE TOWN BOARD,
TOWN OF CHESTER**

Linda A. Zappala, Town Clerk

1786 Kings Highway, Chester, NY 10918

Dated: September 8, 2026

Supervisor Holdridge called for a motion to open the Public Hearing on the Annual Preparation of the Special District Assessment Roll.

MOTION to open the Public Hearing was made at 7:31pm by Council Member Courtenay and seconded by Council Member Cassara.

The motion carried.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

Town Attorney Elizabeth Cassidy provided context for the hearing, explaining that each year the Town is required to prepare an assessment for purposes of taxation of its special districts and that the roll had been made available for public review. Town Clerk Linda Zappala added that most residents are part of at least the garbage district, and that every owner of property in the Town of Chester had received notice of the hearing. She noted that some residents may also be in additional special districts for water, sewer, or drainage.

Supervisor Holdridge characterized the hearing as a routine, annual formality and opened the floor to public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was received.

MOTION to close the public hearing was made at 7:32pm by Council Member Becker and seconded by Council Member Courtenay.

The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

ADOPTION OF SPECIAL DISTRICT ASSESSMENT ROLL - 2027

MOTION to adopt the Special District Assessment Rolls, was made by Council Member Becker and seconded by Council Member Courtenay.

The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

PUBLIC HEARING ON INTRODUCTORY LOCAL LAW 7 100% DISABLED VETERAN TAX

EXEMPTION – Introduction of local law and setting a public hearing for September 23rd

The following is the notice as appearing in the Times Herald Record on September 17, 2026.

TOWN OF CHESTER
1786 KINGS HIGHWAY
CHESTER, NY 10918

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

**TOWN OF CHESTER
Introductory Local Law #7 of 2026**

A LOCAL LAW AMENDING ARTICLE V (VETERANS TAX EXEMPTIONS) OF CHAPTER 87 (TAXATION) OF THE TOWN OF CHESTER TOWN CODE TO PROVIDE FOR AN ADDITIONAL EXEMPTION FOR THE PRIMARY RESIDENCE OF DISABLED VETERANS

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

Section 1. Legislative Purpose

The purpose of this local law is for the Town Board to “opt-in” to the tax exemption for disabled veterans as authorized by New York Real Property Tax Law § 458-a (11).

Please take notice that the Town Board of the Town of Chester will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, September 23, 2026 at 6:45PM in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 1786 Kings Highway, Chester, NY. Said public hearing is to hear comments on the above captioned proposed local law.

A copy of the proposed local law is on file in the Town Clerk’s Office and is available for inspection during normal business hours (Monday-Friday, 8 am to 5 pm).

Any person interested in the proposed local law may appear in person or by agent. All written communications should be addressed to the Town Clerk at the above address.

BY ORDER OF THE TOWN BOARD

TOWN OF CHESTER
LINDA A. ZAPPALA
TOWN CLERK

DATED: September 17, 2026

Supervisor Holdridge called for a motion to open the Public Hearing on Introductory Local Law 7 100% Disabled Veteran Tax Exemption.

MOTION to open the Public Hearing was made at 7:33pm by Council Member Cassara and seconded by Council Member Courtenay.

The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

Supervisor Holdridge provided background on the local law, noting that it had first been discussed approximately two meetings prior. He explained that the New York State Legislature, through the adoption of Real Property Tax Law Section 458-a, Subsection 11, had authorized municipalities to opt into providing a tax exemption for 100% disabled veterans — that is, veterans who have been determined by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to be 100% disabled and unable to work. Supervisor Holdridge emphasized that the opt-in is not automatic and that the Town had elected to pursue the maximum exemption permitted under state law. He estimated that just under a dozen residents in the Town of Chester met the requirements for this exemption.

Supervisor Holdridge shared that upon learning of the opportunity, he worked with the Town Assessor and Town Attorney Cassidy to pursue the local law, stating that he did not believe it to be controversial. He opened the floor to the rest of the board for comment.

Council Member Becker expressed support, noting that the Town was following the lead of other municipalities and that the exemption represented a meaningful way of giving people who have served us something back. Council Member Courtenay agreed, calling it a small token of thanks for what our disabled veterans have given up. Council Members Cassara and Diffley concurred without dissent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was received.

MOTION to close the public hearing was made at 7:35pm by Council Member Courtenay and seconded by Council Member Cassara.

The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

ADOPTION OF LOCAL LAW 7, OF 2026, A LOCAL LAW AMENDING ARTICLE V (VETERANS TAX EXEMPTIONS) OF CHAPTER 87 (TAXATION) OF THE TOWN OF CHESTER TOWN CODE TO PROVIDE FOR AN ADDITIONAL EXEMPTION FOR THE PRIMARY RESIDENCE OF DISABLED VETERANS

TOWN OF CHESTER TOWN BOARD

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT INTRODUCTORY LOCAL LAW 7 OF 2026, A LOCAL LAW AMENDING ARTICLE V (VETERANS TAX EXEMPTIONS) OF CHAPTER 87 (TAXATION) OF THE TOWN OF CHESTER TOWN CODE TO PROVIDE FOR AN ADDITIONAL EXEMPTION FOR THE PRIMARY RESIDENCE OF DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, the New York State Legislature through the adoption of § 458-a (11) of the Real Property Tax Law (RPTL) has authorized municipalities to adopt a local law providing that the primary residence of any seriously disabled veteran shall be fully exempt from taxation and special district charges, assessments and special ad valorem levies, provided that such veteran meets all other requirements of RPTL § 458-a (11).

WHEREAS, the Town of Chester Town Board desires to authorize such exemption to the limited number disabled veterans with a primary residence in the Town of Chester; and

WHEREAS Town Board of the Town of Chester introduced INTRODUCTORY LOCAL LAW 7 OF 2026, A LOCAL LAW AMENDING ARTICLE V (VETERANS TAX EXEMPTIONS) OF CHAPTER 87 (TAXATION) OF THE TOWN OF CHESTER TOWN CODE TO PROVIDE FOR AN ADDITIONAL EXEMPTION FOR THE PRIMARY RESIDENCE OF DISABLED VETERANS by resolution on August 26, 2026, and

WHEREAS, a duly noticed public hearing was held on September 23, 2026; and NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that having heard and considered the public comment, the Town Board adopts INTRODUCTORY LOCAL LAW 7 OF 2026, A LOCAL LAW AMENDING ARTICLE V (VETERANS TAX EXEMPTIONS) OF CHAPTER 87 (TAXATION) OF THE TOWN OF CHESTER TOWN CODE TO PROVIDE FOR AN ADDITIONAL EXEMPTION FOR THE PRIMARY RESIDENCE OF DISABLED VETERANS as Local Law 8 of 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Clerk shall cause said local law to be filed with the New York Secretary of State and shall file a copy of said local law with the New York State Department of Veteran's Services.

MOTION to adopt Local Law 8 100% Disabled Veteran Tax Exemption, was made by Supervisor Holdridge and seconded by Council Member Becker.

TOWN OF CHESTER
TOWN BOARD

LOCAL LAW 8 OF 2026, A LOCAL LAW AMENDING ARTICLE V (VETERANS TAX EXEMPTIONS)
OF CHAPTER 87 (TAXATION) OF THE TOWN OF CHESTER TOWN CODE TO PROVIDE FOR AN
ADDITIONAL EXEMPTION FOR THE PRIMARY RESIDENCE OF DISABLED VETERANS

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

Section 1. Legislative Purpose

The purpose of this local law is for the Town Board to “opt-in” to the tax exemption for disabled veterans as authorized by New York Real Property Tax Law § 458-a (11).

Section 2. Article V, entitled “Veterans Tax Exemptions” of Chapter 87, entitled “Taxation” of the Code of the Town of Chester is hereby amended to add § 87- 7 “Additional Exemption for Primary Residence of Disabled Veterans” reading as follows:

ARTICLE V - Veterans Tax Exemptions

§ 87-7. Additional Exemption for Primary Residence of Disabled Veterans.

A. An exemption is hereby granted to seriously disabled veterans in accordance with § 458-a (11) of the Real Property Tax Law of the State of New York. The exemption shall be as provided, administered, and subject to the eligibility requirements specified by § 458-a (11).

B. The primary residence of any seriously disabled veteran shall be fully exempt from taxation and special district charges, assessments, and special ad valorem levies, provided that such veteran meets all other requirements of this section and such veteran has met at least one of the criteria set forth in paragraph (1) of this subsection and the criterion set forth in paragraph (2) of this subsection.

(1) To be eligible for such exemption, a veteran:

- a) Must have been discharged or released from active military, naval, space, or air service, including army and air national guard service performed pursuant to federal orders under Title 10 of the United States Code, under honorable conditions; or

b) Must have a qualifying condition, as defined in Section 1 of the Veterans' Service Law, and must have received a discharge other than bad conduct or dishonorable from such service; or

c) Must be a discharged LGBT veteran, as defined in Section 1 of the Veterans' Service Law, and must have received a discharge other than bad conduct or dishonorable from such service; and

(2) To be eligible for such exemption, a veteran must be considered by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to be permanently and totally disabled as a result of military service, as evidenced by a letter, official form, or other document sent to such veteran from such department that specifically states such veteran is considered to be permanently and totally disabled as a result of such service.

C. In no case shall the taxable assessed value of the property of a qualifying veteran be reduced below zero. Nothing contained herein shall be construed to require or authorize the discontinuance of any exemption granted pursuant to subdivision 3 of section 458 of Title 2 of Article 4 of the Real Property Tax Law.

Section 3. Chapter 87, entitled taxation shall be further amended by renumbering § 87-7 through § 87-37 to § 87-8 through § 87-38 in sequential order.

Section 4. The Town shall notify the Department of Veterans' Services of the adoption of this local law no later than 30 days after its adoption.

Section 5. This local law shall take effect upon filing with the Secretary of State.

Vote Rollcall:

Supervisor Holdridge	Yes <u>X</u>	No <u> </u>	Abstain <u> </u>	Absent <u> </u>
Council Member Becker	Yes <u>X</u>	No <u> </u>	Abstain <u> </u>	Absent <u> </u>
Council Member Cassara	Yes <u>X</u>	No <u> </u>	Abstain <u> </u>	Absent <u> </u>
Council Member Courtenay	Yes <u>X</u>	No <u> </u>	Abstain <u> </u>	Absent <u> </u>
Council Member Diffley	Yes <u>X</u>	No <u> </u>	Abstain <u> </u>	Absent <u> </u>

ADOPTED

PUBLIC HEARING ON INTRODUCTORY LOCAL LAW 8 – Annual Tax Cap Override Authorization in case the Town Board needs to override the tax cap for the 2027 Budget

The following is the notice as appearing in the Times Herald Record on September 17, 2026.

TOWN OF CHESTER
1786 KINGS HIGHWAY
CHESTER, NY 10918

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

**TOWN OF CHESTER
Introductory Local Law #8 of 2026**

A Local Law to Override the Tax Levy Limit Established in General Municipal Law § 3-C

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

Section 1. Legislative Intent.

It is the intent of this local law to override the limit on the amount of real property taxes that may be levied by the Town of Chester pursuant to General Municipal Law § 3-c, and to allow the Town of Chester

Town Board to adopt a budget for the fiscal year 2027 that requires a real property tax levy in excess of the “tax levy limit” as defined by General Municipal Law §3-c.

Please take notice that the Town Board of the Town of Chester will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, September 23, 2026 at 6:45PM in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 1786 Kings Highway, Chester, NY. Said public hearing is to hear comments on the above captioned proposed local law.

A copy of the proposed local law is on file in the Town Clerk’s Office and is available for inspection during normal business hours (Monday-Friday, 8 am to 5 pm).

Any person interested in the proposed local law may appear in person or by agent. All written communications should be addressed to the Town Clerk at the above address.

BY ORDER OF THE TOWN BOARD
TOWN OF CHESTER

LINDA A. ZAPPALA
TOWN CLERK

DATED: September 17, 2026

Supervisor Holdridge called for a motion to open the Public Hearing on Introductory Local Law 8 – Annual Tax Cap Override Authorization.

MOTION to open the Public Hearing was made by Council Member Courtenay and seconded by Council Member Diffley at 7:36pm.

The motion carried.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

Supervisor Holdridge explained that this is a routine annual action municipalities must take to preserve their ability to override the state-set tax levy cap if needed during the budgeting process. He noted that the tax cap this year, as established by the New York State Comptroller's Office based on the prior year's budget and expenditures, is 2.39 percent. He acknowledged that in his role as budget officer, working alongside the Town Comptroller, it appeared that staying within that cap would be pretty much impossible, citing global economic and geopolitical pressures, but assured the public that the Board was actively working on the budget.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Brian Ross came forward to request a clarification on the nature of the tax cap, stating he found the concept somewhat confusing. He asked whether there was a ceiling on how far the town could go above the cap, and whether exceeding the cap would result in a property tax increase.

Supervisor Holdridge responded that any percentage increase in the budget over the prior year would result in a tax increase, even if the Town remains below the cap. Town Attorney Cassidy offered a technical clarification, noting that the tax cap specifically applies to the tax levy rather than the overall budget. She explained that any upward adjustment to the levy would produce a tax increase, with or without the cap.

Supervisor Holdridge added that he had presented detailed annual budget presentations each year since becoming budget officer and intended to do so again in October, likely in the second week of the month during which he reviews all major budget lines and educates the public on areas of increase or decrease. He further explained that different residents pay into different budget lines and special districts, so some lines may go down while others go up depending on the circumstances.

Mr. Ross then referenced language from an AI-generated summary of the local law that he had researched, which described the override as approved by the town board and stated that, in school districts, voter approval is also required, while towns do not require a voter referendum. He asked for clarification on the phrase "voter approved." Town Attorney Cassidy explained that the AI summary was accurate: for municipalities, the override is adopted by local law through the town board, while school district budgets are subject to an annual public

vote at the polls. The distinction in the AI summary referred to that difference. Mr. Ross acknowledged the clarification, accepting that the formatting of the AI-generated document had led to his confusion.

Robert Klein, asked a question related to Local Law 7, previously adopted. He inquired whether the village and school district could reject the 100% disabled veteran exemption adopted by the Town. Supervisor Holdridge reiterated that the exemption is specific to each jurisdiction and each must opt in independently.

MOTION to close the public hearing was made at 7:45pm by Council Member Courtenay and seconded by Council Member Diffley.

The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

ADOPTION OF INTRODUCTORY LOCAL LAW 8 OF 2026, A LOCAL LAW TO OVERRIDE THE TAX LEVY LIMIT ESTABLISHED IN GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW § 3-C

TOWN OF CHESTER
TOWN BOARD

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT INTRODUCTORY LOCAL LAW 8 OF 2026,
A LOCAL LAW TO OVERRIDE THE TAX LEVY LIMIT ESTABLISHED
IN GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW § 3-C

WHEREAS, the Town Board wishes to have the ability to override the tax cap in order to meet the financial needs of the Town.

WHEREAS, Introductory Local Law 8 of 2026, entitled A Local Law to Override the Tax Levy Limit Established in General Municipal Law §3-C was introduced by the Town Board on August 26, 2026; and

WHEREAS, a duly noticed public hearing was held on September 23, 2026; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Introductory Local Law 8 of 2026 entitled A Local Law to Override the Tax Levy Limit Established in General Municipal Law §3-C is hereby adopted as Local Law 9 of 2026; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Clerk shall transmit such local law to the Secretary of State for filing.

MOTION to adopt Local Law 9 of 2026, A Local Law to Override the Tax Levy Limit Established in General Municipal Law § 3-C was made by Council Member Becker and seconded by Council Member Courtenay.

Local Law 9 of 2026

A Local Law to Override the Tax Levy Limit Established in General Municipal Law § 3-C

Adopted 9-23-2026

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

Section 1. Legislative Intent.

It is the intent of this local law to override the limit on the amount of real property taxes that may be levied by the Town of Chester pursuant to General Municipal Law § 3-c, and to allow the Town of Chester Town Board to adopt a budget for the fiscal year 2027 that requires a real property tax levy in excess of the “tax levy limit” as defined by General Municipal Law §3-c.

Section 2. Authority.

This local law is adopted pursuant to subdivision 5 of General Municipal Law § 3-c, which expressly authorizes the Town Board to override the tax levy limit by the adoption of a local law approved by a vote of at least 60% of the Town Board.

Section 3. Tax Levy Limit Override – Budget Authorization.

The Town Board of the Town of Chester hereby overrides the tax levy limit for the Town of Chester for 2027 and authorizes the Town of Chester, after completing all required procedures for the adoption of a budget, to adopt a budget for 2027 that requires a tax levy that is greater than the tax levy limit calculated for 2027 pursuant to § 3-c of the General Municipal Law.

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 adjudged 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 immediately upon filing with the Secretary of State.

The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

PUBLIC COMMENT

Richard Logothetis opened his remarks with a note about microphone usage, reminding speakers that online attendees can only hear the proceedings through the microphone, and urged all speakers to use it regardless of how loud their voices may be in person. Mr. Logothetis raised two matters. First, he addressed the ongoing issue of truck traffic through the Hamlet of Sugar Loaf, noting that despite progress made by the town board, the community, and local individuals — including residents Nick Zungoli on traffic calming measures, commercial trucks continue to pass through the hamlet, apparently guided by GPS routing. He proposed working with the county to establish designated truck route signage, noting that similar signage exists elsewhere and that truckers tend to follow marked alternate routes suited to their vehicles. He acknowledged that a truck route may have already been discussed, but observed that the necessary signage was not in place. He estimated that as few as five signs might be sufficient to address both entry points of the hamlet, and expressed confidence that the cost would be minimal. Supervisor Holdridge acknowledged the suggestion and committed to looking into getting signage in coordination with the highway department. Mr. Logothetis then raised a second matter related to a drainage and stream issue affecting his property, which he had previously discussed with Supervisor Holdridge. He described installing a new box culvert on his property last year, similar in size to one installed at the firehouse, but noted that water was backing up because the stream downstream had become heavily clogged. He requested that the town arrange a meeting among himself, the town engineer, the highway department, and representatives from the railroad, to develop a coordinated plan for clearing the stream and allowing water to drain properly down the hill. He acknowledged that the highway department is restricted from working on property that is not town-owned, and noted his belief that the stream may be on water district property. Supervisor Holdridge committed to speaking with the highway department about organizing such a meeting and suggested that the town engineer should be present as well, citing concerns about wetlands in the area. Mr. Logothetis confirmed there were no wetlands directly at the problem site, but agreed that the engineer's expertise in drainage made his involvement important.

Adrienne, representing the Sugar Loaf Chamber of Commerce, came before the board to present a proposal to install two poles in the right-of-way at Kings Highway, which would be used to hang community event banners. She noted that many surrounding towns including Warwick, Greenwood Lake, Goshen, and Florida have mechanisms to hang banners advertising local events, while Chester does not. She explained that the Chamber had already had two banners made, the first for a spring festival that did not occur, and the second for the upcoming fall festival, but had not yet been able to hang them due to the absence of an installation plan. She

described a design developed with local input that would create a sort of archway at the southern entrance to Sugar Loaf, near the railroad tracks and firehouse, accessible to the Town of Chester, the Sugar Loaf Community Foundation, the Chamber of Commerce, the Fire Department, and others for advertising local events. The banners are 20 feet by 3 feet, double-sided, and made of vinyl. She noted that because they can be updated with a printed vinyl date sticker each year, the banners are highly reusable and cost-effective, with examples from Warwick Press having been reused for 15 years.

Supervisor Holdridge stated that he is "very much in favor" of the concept but that the Town needed to ensure the highway department was comfortable with the installation before proceeding, particularly with respect to snow plowing operations and liability in the right-of-way. He indicated the Town was studying a similar installation in the Village of Warwick as a model.

Council Member Becker raised a concern about the use of 8-by-8 treated wood posts, noting a recent incident in which a telephone pole had fallen and caused significant damage. He expressed a preference for metal posts over wood, citing questions about long-term durability and structural integrity. Discussion ensued about whether telephone poles in Sugar Loaf could serve as anchor points; it was noted that there are no telephone poles on opposing sides of Kings Highway through Sugar Loaf, making a spanning arrangement impractical without new poles.

Supervisor Holdridge indicated that the matter would be referred to the town engineer for a structural analysis, and Council Member Becker reiterated that a thorough review is necessary for long-term safety, particularly in the event of high winds.

Adrienne acknowledged the concerns and expressed hope that the installation could be completed in time for the spring festival, as the fall festival was only approximately two and a half weeks away.

Noel Spencer, a longtime resident of the Goosepond Mountain Road area and former county legislator, addressed the board on behalf of a group of approximately ten neighbors scheduled to meet the following Sunday. Mr. Spencer described the road serving his development as a narrow private road on which two cars cannot pass each other, and raised concerns about emergency vehicle access following recent fires at an open-air development where the fire department had difficulty reaching the scene. He asked whether there is a process by which residents could form a special improvement district to address road conditions and improve emergency access. Town Attorney Cassidy confirmed that there is a legal process by which a special improvement district can be formed. She indicated she would resend to Supervisor Holdridge, and through him to Mr. Spencer's group, an email she had previously prepared summarizing the relevant citation and process. She advised that the residents would likely want to engage both legal counsel and an engineer to assist with the petition process, design of any road improvements, and navigation of the statutory requirements. She noted that the process is longer than most would prefer, but that it is a well-defined legal path. Mr. Spencer confirmed that the residents currently self-fund their own snow removal and road maintenance, and indicated that a special district could make a meaningful difference.

Surveillance Cameras and Drone – Preliminary Remarks by Supervisor Holdridge

Observing that several of the remaining public comment registrants had signed up to speak on the subjects of cameras and drones, Supervisor Holdridge offered prefatory remarks before those speakers came forward. He made the following points:

- The Town of Chester does not own or operate any Flock cameras. There are no Flock cameras in the Town.
- He had received multiple comments by email and had seen posts on social media. He had been collecting these and intended to bring them in a compiled form to the Police Chief so that accurate answers could be provided. He planned to deliver a public presentation, similar to past presentations on other issues of public concern, to address the questions collectively.
- The Town's 11 roadway cameras cannot be accessed by any outside party and require a warrant for use in specific investigative instances.

He stated that he was trying to be as open and transparent as possible and wanted to ensure that no one felt anything was being hidden or withheld from the public.

Nicole Houston, resident of Middletown, identified herself as the Libertarian write-in candidate for the New York State Senate, 42nd District; a former elected representative from the Middletown School District; a newly elected member of the New York State Libertarian Committee; a national delegate for the National Libertarian Committee; and the acting Vice Chairwoman of the Orange County New York Libertarian Party. She stated that

she administers an online social media group of over 10,000 Orange County citizens who were closely following developments in Chester. Ms. Houston addressed the board directly, stating that the Town's actions, including the installation of 11 cameras by the Town and nearly 100 cameras by the Village, and the proposed purchase of a drone constituted an infringement upon the liberties of anyone who lives in, passes through, or does business in Chester. She characterized the cameras and proposed drone as instruments of mass surveillance. She cited crime statistics she had researched, asserting that Chester's crime rate is 44 percent below the national average, lower than approximately 83 percent of major U.S. cities with populations over 50,000, and safer than nearly all nearby Orange County towns, and asked the board to reconcile those statistics with the scale of surveillance being contemplated. She raised concerns about the Town's lack of meaningful oversight over these technologies and warned of potential lawsuits. She quoted from George Orwell's 1984, citing the novel's depiction of pervasive government surveillance and its psychological toll, and argued that mass surveillance kills spontaneity and privacy, trains citizens to act as if constantly observed, and dissolves a healthy relationship between government and citizens. She invoked Article 1, Chapter 12 of the New York State Constitution and the Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution as legal frameworks she believed were being violated.

Zach Streichert, a resident of Sugar Loaf, addressed the board on the same subject. He identified the cameras as automatic license plate readers (ALPRs) and stated his view that their use invades our privacy and is incompatible with our civil rights. He called for the permanent removal of the surveillance systems.

Christine Maurer, resident of Sugar Loaf representing Residents Against Surveillance, described as a coalition of Orange County citizens who oppose the tracking and monitoring of innocent people, asked the board to take down the fixed surveillance cameras in Sugar Loaf on Kings Highway, in front of Town Hall, and in the Town's parks, and to reject the purchase of a surveillance drone. Ms. Maurer argued that Chester and Sugar Loaf already have low crime rates and that violent crime is well below national averages. She stated that there is no crisis that justifies permanent cameras recording ordinary residents every day. She offered the analogy that prisons are the most heavily surveilled places in America and yet violence and crime still occur within them, questioning whether cameras on utility poles would meaningfully transform public safety in Chester. She raised Fourth Amendment concerns, citing *Carpenter v. United States*, in which the U.S. Supreme Court recognized that individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy in the totality of their physical movements, even in public. She argued that long-term government tracking invades that expectation of privacy, and that a town-owned drone would represent an even greater intrusion, given its capacity to peer into backyards and hover over community gatherings. She noted that in cases of genuine need, such as a missing person or a fleeing felon, the town could request use of the county's drone rather than owning and operating its own. She cited several communities across the country, including Fort Collins, Framingham, Ithaca, and Saranac Lake that had canceled camera programs or rejected expanding surveillance for similar reasons. She asked the board to preserve the tools police need for specific legitimate investigations, but stop the routine observation of residents simply living their lives.

Steph Kowalski, resident of Warwick, also representing Residents Against Surveillance, expressed concern that the Police Chief appeared to be acquiring surveillance equipment without adequate checks and balances from the board. Supervisor Holdridge responded that when he defers to the Police Chief for specific answers, it is because the Chief is more knowledgeable about the technical and operational details, not because the Chief is above the board's authority. He clarified that the board had voted on the camera-related grants on two separate occasions, once in 2024 and once in 2025, both of which were publicly noticed on agendas. Ms. Kowalski stated she intended to file FOIL requests and raised the point that regardless of whether the cameras are technically labeled "Flock" cameras, the software on existing cameras could potentially be upgraded to Flock-equivalent functionality. She reviewed the Town's existing policies for license plate readers and the proposed unmanned aerial system policy and characterized them as insufficient to protect citizens, noting numerous gaps in the written policies. She provided a personal example in which a license plate reader had been used in conjunction with a property damage claim at a high school, resulting in enhanced footage that, in her account, altered vehicle colors and was used to pursue a claim she viewed as unfounded. She argued this illustrated how surveillance evidence could be misused. She asked that all documentation and emails submitted to the board on these matters be ensured to be foil-able. Supervisor Holdridge confirmed that all communications he has received on these matters are foil-able, with the exception of attorney-client privileged communications. Ms. Kowalski also raised a practical concern that operating a police drone may require an aviator's license, which could entail additional training and personnel costs. She suggested that if the Police Chief did not feel equipped to police the area without these technologies, the Board should consider whether additional officers on duty might be a more appropriate solution, stating that you're taking away our rights to make his job easier.

Daniel Serritello, a resident of Chester and recently elected chairperson of the Orange County Libertarian Party, thanked the board for its stated commitment to following up and answering questions about the cameras and

surveillance methods. He identified himself as a strong supporter of constitutional limits on government power and individual rights, including Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable searches and seizures, and registered his concern about whether the surveillance equipment being discussed was consistent with those protections.

Christine Koenig, a resident of Chester, stated that she had reviewed the Town's drone policy, the public safety video surveillance policy, and the automated license plate reader (ALPR) policy, and that her concerns had become broader than any one piece of equipment. Ms. Koenig acknowledged that she had been told by board members that residents had the opportunity to speak up when the camera purchase was originally brought before the board, but argued that when the item appeared on the agenda, the technology in the cameras was not generally known nor understood, and that a line item referencing a grant to purchase cameras and license plate readers did not provide residents with sufficient information to evaluate the long-term implications. She stated that she still does not fully understand what data the cameras are currently collecting, and observed that the board itself could not answer that question despite having voted to approve the purchase. She identified specific deficiencies in the existing policies: the camera and ALPR policies do not clearly state how long non-evidentiary data is retained, whether data is stored locally or by a third party, or what specific requirements are needed to request data for review. She further noted that the surveillance camera policy states that the system may be integrated with facial recognition, and asked whether that meant facial recognition was currently implemented or could be activated without further board approval. She argued that checking whether a passing vehicle is stolen is fundamentally different from reconstructing where a particular resident has traveled over weeks or months, and that the policy should recognize that distinction. Ms. Koenig called for the Town to address transparency by giving residents a clear process to determine whether surveillance information about them exists, how long it is kept, who has accessed it, whether it has been shared with other agencies, and how to file a complaint if the system is misused. She stated she was not suggesting that cameras or plate readers or drones can never serve a legitimate public safety purpose, but was asking the town to establish clear limits, meaningful audits, public reporting, data retention rules, cybersecurity standards, and independent oversight, before these technologies are implemented. She expressed concern about the integration of these technologies with AI systems and the cumulative implications for individual privacy as data is ingested into a larger ecosystem. She concluded by urging the board to ensure it understands what it is approving before voting.

Board Response to Public Comment on Surveillance

Supervisor Holdridge acknowledged that Ms. Koenig's remarks contained valid criticism, and reiterated that the decisions regarding the cameras were made approximately two years ago, and that while the board had reviewed the details at the time, he wanted to ensure all answers provided going forward were accurate. He acknowledged his own conflicting thoughts on the privacy debate and emphasized that he was gathering all written questions and concerns to bring to the Police Chief for accurate responses before making any presentation.

Supervisor Holdridge also made clear that he has a high regard for the Town's Police Chief, stating the Chief is of the highest caliber and that he would not accept characterizations of the department as acting with bad intent or malice. He acknowledged the Police Chief's stated reasoning, using modern technology to deter and solve crime, protect the public, and locate missing persons, while agreeing that valid privacy concerns warranted a serious public discussion.

Council Member Becker noted that the Chester Police Department had recently undergone a comprehensive state accreditation process, being scrutinized on over 120 individual items, and passed with distinction. He stated that he stood behind the Chief and the department 100 percent, while acknowledging that the policy documentation may not have satisfied all members of the public and that further answers would be forthcoming.

Council Member Courtenay similarly expressed full support for the Police Chief, noting that the Chief was born and raised in the Town, and described attending the accreditation debriefing, during which state evaluators completed the process in an unusually short three days; a notable achievement. He reiterated his personal support for the department while acknowledging the broader surveillance debate.

Online public comments from Greg Quackenbush were read into the record. The first comment expressed appreciation for the Board's consideration of the banner pole proposal for Sugar Loaf. The second comment asked why Town residents were being offered only two options on the ballot for highway superintendent. The third online comment, apparently submitted during the surveillance discussion, stated, she doesn't speak for me. Supervisor Holdridge responded to the highway superintendent question by clarifying that the highway superintendent is currently an elected position and that there are three candidates on the ballot this year. He noted there is also a referendum on the ballot to change the position from elected to appointed.

Michelle Kaiser, a resident of Warwick asked the board directly what it would take, in terms of a percentage of residents opposing the cameras, for the board to remove them. Supervisor Holdridge acknowledged that it was ultimately a political decision for the board and indicated he had begun researching whether the matter could be placed before voters in a referendum. He acknowledged he did not yet know whether that was legally possible. He stated that a sizable resident petition might influence board members, and invited any citizens who oppose the surveillance technology to make their voices heard, contact his office, and engage in direct conversation.

Supervisor Holdridge closed the first public comment period and noted there would be an additional public comment period at the end of the meeting.

REPORTS

Supervisor Holdridge's Report:

Supervisor Holdridge reported on several recent activities. The Town held its 3rd Annual Senior Picnic, attended by approximately 350 people. He thanked the Parks and Recreation Department, Chester PD, Empress EMS, the Town of Monroe, Dial-a-Bus, food vendors, Warwick Supervisor Jessie Dwyer as co-host, and Senator James Skoufis, whose \$10,000 grant made the event possible. Council Member Becker and Council Member Diffley attended on behalf of the board, as did Town Clerk Zappala.

The Town also held its 2nd Annual Family Fun Day, funded by a \$5,000 grant from Orange County. Supervisor Holdridge noted a slight dip in attendance compared to the prior year and said feedback suggested moving the event earlier in the summer and to a day other than Saturday due to youth sports conflicts. Council Members Diffley and Cassara attended, along with Town Clerk Zappala.

Supervisor Holdridge also participated in the Shop Rite/Help Black Bag Hunger event alongside Town Clerk Zappala and other volunteers.

He attended a meeting of the Monroe-Woodbury Community Coalition, a group approximately one year old, focused on addressing drug and alcohol addiction among younger community members. He noted a suggestion from that meeting to place Narcan and naloxone kits in the Town's parks, in addition to the existing kits at Town Hall and the Senior Center. He indicated he would bring this for further discussion with the Parks and Recreation Department.

Finally, Supervisor Holdridge reported attending Chester High School government classes to speak to students about the importance of local government, noting that many day-to-day quality-of-life decisions are made at the local level. He stated he would be visiting Monroe Woodbury's high school the following week for the same purpose.

Deputy Supervisor Becker's Report:

Council Member Becker reported on a recent Moodna Commission meeting, noting that the budget had been substantially finalized, subject to any remaining changes. He also reported on a tree dedication ceremony at Knapp View honoring Tracy Schuh, Leslie Smith, and Eddie Szulwach, describing it as very heartfelt and nicely received.

Upcoming Events and Announcements

Town Clerk Zappala provided the following announcements.

- Sugar Loaf 5K - October 3, 2026, 8:30 – 10:30 AM Kings Highway and Kings Highway Bypass, White Oak and Bellvale Road with limited access. Kings Highway Bypass and Bellvale Road - one lane open.
- Sugar Loaf Community Foundation Car Show – 10:30am – 2:30pm at various locations as filled: 1366, 1355, 1398, 1405 Kings Highway. Parking at Sugar Loaf Fire Department. All roads open.
- Chester Historical Society 2026 Penny Social, Sunday, October 4, 2026. Doors open: 1pm/Calling: 2pm. Admission \$5 (includes two cards. Chester Senior Center, 81 Laroe Road.
- VOCA Arts “Chalk it Up”, Saturday, October 10, 2026, 10am-1pm, Erie Depot Train Station, 19 Winkler Place.
- Sugar Loaf Chamber of Commerce Fall Festival – October 10 & 11, 2026 along Kings Highway in the hamlet.

- Mortgage Tax Receipts – August 2026 - \$45,028.50

Town Attorney Elizabeth Cassidy reported on a pending claim filed against the Town arising from the John Riley shooting incident, in which the victim had sued the Town. She was pleased to report that defense counsel, Sokolov Stern had achieved a court-granted motion to dismiss, and that the Town had been removed from the case. Supervisor Holdridge thanked the defense team on behalf of the Board.

BOND RESOLUTION AMENDMENT FROM \$120,000 TO \$200,000 – Highway Garage Roof And Gutters

Supervisor Holdridge presented a bond resolution amendment increasing the authorized bond amount for the Highway Garage Roof and Gutters project from \$120,000 to \$200,000. He confirmed that board members had received the associated documentation by email. No questions or debate points were raised.

Town Attorney Cassidy noted for the record that the bond resolution is subject to permissive referendum, meaning a member of the public may challenge the resolution within the applicable statutory period.

Meeting of the Town Board of the

Town of Chester, in the

County of Orange, New York

September 23, 2026

* * *

A meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Chester, in the County of Orange, New York, was held at the Town Hall, 1786 Kings Highway, Chester, New York, on September 23, 2026.

There were present: Hon. Brandon Holdridge, Supervisor; and

Board Members: Tom Becker, Council Member
Giuseppe Cassara, Council Member
Robert Courtenay, Council Member
Stephen Diffley, Council Member

There were absent: none

Also present: Linda Zappala, Town Clerk

* * *

Council Member Courtenay offered the following resolution and moved its adoption:

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF CHESTER, NEW YORK, ADOPTED

SEPTEMBER 23, 2026, AMENDING THE BOND RESOLUTION

ADOPTED ON MARCH 11, 2026 RELATING TO THE CONSTRUCTION
OF IMPROVEMENTS TO THE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT ROOF

Recitals

WHEREAS, the Town Board of the Town of Chester, in the County of Orange, New York, has heretofore duly authorized the issuance of bonds to finance the construction of construction of improvements to the Highway Department roof at the estimated maximum cost of \$150,000, which amount was appropriated for such purpose pursuant to the bond resolution adopted by said Town Board on March 11, 2026; and

WHEREAS, it has now been determined that the estimated cost of such project is \$200,000, and it is in the public interest to increase said appropriation by \$50,000 and to increase the principal amount of bonds authorized by a like amount;

Now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF CHESTER, IN THE COUNTY OF ORANGE, NEW YORK (by the favorable vote of not less than two-thirds of all members of said Town Board) AS FOLLOWS:

Section (A) The bond resolution of the Town of Chester duly adopted by the Town Board on March 11, 2026, entitled:

“Bond Resolution of the Town of Chester, New York, adopted March 11, 2026, authorizing the issuance of bonds in a principal amount not to exceed \$150,000 to finance the construction of improvements to the Highway Department roof, stating the estimated maximum cost thereof is \$150,000 and appropriating said amount for such purpose,”

is hereby amended to read as follows:

BOND RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF CHESTER, NEW YORK,
ADOPTED MARCH 11, 2026 AND AMENDED SEPTEMBER 23, 2026,
AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS IN A PRINCIPAL
AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$200,000 TO FINANCE THE
CONSTRUCTION OF IMPROVEMENTS TO THE HIGHWAY
DEPARTMENT ROOF, STATING THE ESTIMATED MAXIMUM
COST THEREOF IS \$200,000 AND APPROPRIATING SAID AMOUNT
FOR SUCH PURPOSE

THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF CHESTER, IN THE COUNTY OF ORANGE, NEW YORK, HEREBY RESOLVES (by the favorable vote of not less than two-thirds of all the members of said Town Board) AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The Town of Chester, in the County of Orange, New York (herein called the “Town”), is hereby authorized to issue bonds in a principal amount not to exceed \$200,000 pursuant to the Local Finance Law, constituting Chapter 33-a of the Consolidated Laws of the State of New York (herein called the “Law”), to finance the construction of improvements to the Highway Department roof.

Section 2. The estimated maximum cost of the project described herein, including preliminary costs and costs incidental thereto and the financing thereof, is \$200,000 and said amount is hereby appropriated for such purpose. The plan of financing includes the issuance of bonds in a principal amount not to exceed \$200,000 to finance said appropriation, the levy and collection of taxes on all the taxable real property in the Town to pay the principal of said bonds and the interest thereon as the same shall become due and payable.

Section 3. The following additional matters are hereby determined and declared:

(a) The period of probable usefulness applicable to the object or purpose for which said bonds are authorized to be issued, within the limitations of Section 11.00 a. 12 (a)(2) of the Law, is fifteen (15) years.

(b) The proceeds of the bonds herein authorized and any bond anticipation notes issued in anticipation of said bonds may be applied to reimburse the Town for expenditures made after the effective date of this resolution for the purpose for which said bonds are authorized. The foregoing statement of intent with respect to reimbursement is made in conformity with Treasury Regulation Section 1.150-2 of the United States Treasury Department.

(c) The proposed maturity of the bonds authorized by this resolution will exceed five years.

Section 4. Each of the bonds authorized by this resolution and any bond anticipation notes issued in anticipation of the sale of said bonds shall contain the recital of validity as prescribed by Section 52.00 of the Law and said bonds, and any notes issued in anticipation of said bonds, shall be general obligations of the Town, payable as to both principal and interest by general tax upon all the taxable real property within the Town. The faith and credit of the Town are hereby irrevocably pledged to the punctual payment of the principal of and interest on said bonds and any notes issued in anticipation of the sale of said bonds and provision shall be made annually in the budget of the Town by appropriation for (a) the amortization and redemption of the bonds

and any notes in anticipation thereof to mature in such year and (b) the payment of interest to be due and payable in such year.

Section 5. Subject to the provisions of this resolution and of the Law and pursuant to the provisions of Section 21.00 of the Law relative to the authorization of the issuance of bonds with substantially level or declining annual debt service, Section 30.00 relative to the authorization of the issuance of bond anticipation notes and Section 50.00 and Sections 56.00 to 60.00 and 168.00 of the Law, the powers and duties of the Town Board as to authorizing bond anticipation notes and prescribing the terms, form and contents and as to the sale and issuance of the bonds herein authorized, and of any bond anticipation notes issued in anticipation of said bonds, and the renewals of said bond anticipation notes, and as to executing contracts for credit enhancements and providing for substantially level or declining annual debt service, are hereby delegated to the Supervisor, the chief fiscal officer of the Town.

Section 6. The validity of the bonds authorized by this resolution, and of any notes issued in anticipation of the sale of said bonds, may be contested only if:

- (a) such obligations are authorized for an object or purpose for which the Town is not authorized to expend money, or
- (b) the provisions of law which should be complied with at the date of the publication of such resolution, or a summary thereof, are not substantially complied with,

and an action, suit or proceeding contesting such validity is commenced within twenty days after the date of such publication, or

- (c) such obligations are authorized in violation of the provisions of the constitution.

Section 7. This bond resolution is subject to a permissive referendum and the Town Clerk is hereby authorized and directed, within ten (10) days after adoption of this resolution, to publish or cause to be published, in full, in the official newspaper of the Town, having a general circulation within said Town, and to post on the sign board of the Town maintained pursuant to the Town Law, a Notice in substantially the form appearing in Exhibit A hereto.

Section 8. The Town Clerk is hereby authorized and directed, after said bond resolution shall take effect, to cause said bond resolution to be published, in summary, in the official newspaper of the Town, together with a Notice in substantially the form as provided by Section 81.00 of the Local Finance Law, constituting Chapter 33-a of the Consolidated Laws of the State of New York.

Section (B) The amendment of the bond resolution as set forth in Section (A) of this resolution shall in no way affect the validity of any liabilities incurred, obligations issued, or action taken pursuant to said bond resolution prior to amendment, and all such liabilities incurred, obligations issued, or action taken shall be deemed to have been incurred, issued or taken pursuant to said bond resolution, as amended.

Section (C) Said bond resolution, as amended, is subject to a permissive referendum as therein provided. In the event that a valid petition protesting against said bond resolution and requesting that it be submitted to the electors of said Town for their approval or disapproval is filed and the Proposition submitted therefor is defeated, the validity of the bond resolution adopted on March 11, 2026, shall not be in any way affected and shall remain in full force and effect.

* * *

The adoption of the foregoing resolution was seconded by Council Member Becker and duly put to a vote on roll call, which resulted as follows:

AYES: **Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley**

NOES: None

The resolution was declared adopted.

TOWN OF CHESTER CAMP REFUNDS – 3 Families Adding To \$1,325 In Refunds

MOTION by Council Member Courtenay, seconded by Council Member Cassara to approve \$1,325 in refunds. The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

NOVA SCOTIA TRIP CANCELLATION REFUNDS – 9 People Adding To \$3,469 In Refunds

MOTION by Council Member Becker, seconded by Council Member Courtenay to approve \$3,469 in refunds. The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

SUGAR LOAF CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PSA REQUEST FOR FALL FESTIVAL – Graphic To Be Displayed Until October 11th

MOTION by Council Member Courtenay, seconded by Council Member Cassara to approve the billboard advertising of the Sugar Loaf Chamber of Commerce Fall Festival through October 11, 2026.

Councilman Becker raised a concern about a third-party involvement without an agreement. Supervisor Holdridge clarified that it is the Town Clerk's Office that handles these requests, but the Town Attorney will be looking into the matter further.

The motion carried.

VOTE: AYES(4): Holdridge, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley, ABSTAIN(1): Becker

ADOPTED

PARKS & REC DEPARTMENT TRACTOR REQUEST – Kubota Tractor for Either \$57,125.00 Or \$49,600.00

Supervisor Holdridge presented the Parks and Recreation Department's request to purchase a Kubota tractor. Two options were before the board: the base model at \$49,600.00 and the model with a full cab at \$57,125.00. Both options had been sourced through Sourcewell cooperative purchasing, consistent with the Town's procurement requirements. Town Comptroller Meyer had advised the board that the purchase could be financed over three years or paid outright from fund balance.

The context for the request was explained: the tractor is needed to aerate the field at Carpenter Park, and the existing school arrangement, whereby the school aerates the Commons fields in exchange for use of that space does not cover Carpenter Park. The cost of contracting out the aeration had been estimated at approximately \$6,000 to \$7,000. The tractor would also be used for over-seeding and has a bucket attachment, offering additional utility.

Council Member Becker expressed a preference for the cab model, noting that should the Town pursue sidewalk maintenance in the future, a cab would be necessary, and a snow blade attachment could also be added. The board reached consensus on the cab model. Discussion then turned to financing versus fund balance. The Town Comptroller confirmed that sufficient fund balance existed — specifically in account A7110.200 — and the Board agreed that an outright purchase from fund balance was preferable to a financed arrangement at an estimated interest rate of approximately 5 percent. Several board members noted that even a modest expenditure can affect the ability to stay within the tax cap, and that outright purchase was the more fiscally straightforward option. Parkland fee funds were noted as an available and appropriate source given the parks-related nature of the purchase.

MOTION by Council Member Courtenay, seconded by Council Member Diffley to approve the purchase of the Kubota tractor at a cost of \$57,125.00.

Vote Rollcall:

Supervisor Holdridge	Yes <u>X</u>	No ____	Abstain ____	Absent ____
Council Member Becker	Yes <u>X</u>	No ____	Abstain ____	Absent ____
Council Member Cassara	Yes <u>X</u>	No ____	Abstain ____	Absent ____
Council Member Courtenay	Yes <u>X</u>	No ____	Abstain ____	Absent ____
Council Member Diffley	Yes <u>X</u>	No ____	Abstain ____	Absent ____

ADOPTED

MOTION by Council Member Becker, seconded by Council Member Cassara to allocate \$57,125 from fund balance to A7110.2.

The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

NEW BUSINESS

Highway Department Request to Auction Vehicles and Equipment Items

Supervisor Holdridge presented a late request from the Highway Department to declare several pieces of equipment surplus and authorize their auction. The items included: a 2010 Chevy utility body; a 1993 single-axle dump truck with plow, sander, and tailgate; a 10-foot wing; two one-way funnel plows; and two John Deere tractor/mowers previously used by Parks and Recreation. No questions or debate were raised.

MOTION to declare the listed vehicles and equipment items surplus was made by Council Member Becker and seconded by Council Member Courtenay.

The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

MOTION to authorize the auction of the declared surplus vehicles and equipment items was made by Council Member Becker and seconded by Council Member Courtenay.

The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

Budget Amendment – \$15,000 Transfer from Personal Services to Engineering

Supervisor Holdridge presented a budget amendment transferring \$15,000 from the personal services line to cover engineering costs incurred in connection with coverage of the building department between existing lines rather than a budget increase. Town Comptroller Meyer explained that the transfer would cover approximately one to two months, after which the situation would be reassessed. The board was satisfied that the arrangement was the appropriate mechanism for managing the salary and engineering coverage transition.

MOTION to approve the budget amendment transferring \$15,000 from personal services to cover engineering costs was made by Council Member Courtenay and seconded by Council Member Diffley.

The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

Sugar Loaf Community Foundation PSA Request for Super Saturday Events

Supervisor Holdridge presented a PSA request from the Sugar Loaf Community Foundation for billboard display related to the October 3rd Super Saturday events. Town Clerk Zappala noted that she would need to verify whether the two PSA requests, this one and the Chamber's Fall Festival request could run concurrently.

MOTION to approve the Sugar Loaf Community Foundation PSA request for the Super Saturday events was made by Council Member Courtenay and seconded by Council Member Cassara.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

Sugar Loaf Chamber of Commerce – \$500 Blanket Fee Request for Fall Festival Peddlers' Permits

Supervisor Holdridge presented the Sugar Loaf Chamber of Commerce's request to consolidate individual peddler permit fees for the Fall Festival into a single \$500 blanket fee, consistent with the arrangement used in the past. No questions or debate were raised.

MOTION to approve the \$500 blanket fee for Fall Festival Peddler Permits was made by Council Member Courtenay and seconded by Council Member Cassara.

The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

Water Department Request for Well Drilling – Sugar Loaf Water District

Supervisor Holdridge presented a request from the Water Department to authorize the drilling of a new well in the Sugar Loaf Water District. Council Member Becker, who oversees water matters, provided extensive background on the issue.

He explained that the Sugar Loaf Water District has faced longstanding challenges, including issues with discolored water from its primary well. The failure of that well forced the district to rely more heavily on a secondary well that has been affected by E. coli, requiring ongoing treatment. A third well had been drilled on

the other side of the railroad tracks, but its initial 72-hour pump test showed that it influenced neighboring properties, preventing its approval at current capacity. Due to the prevalence of wetlands in the area, there are very limited options for new well siting.

The new well being proposed would be drilled near the existing wells, at a location approved by the Town's engineer, though County approval had been slower than desired. Council Member Becker noted that if the new well is successful, the goal would be to stop relying on the Ecoli-affected well for primary supply, while retaining it as a backup. He indicated that recently a pitless adapter on that well had broken, necessitating a switch to the front well, underscoring the importance of redundancy. The broader plan envisions utilizing up to four wells to provide resilience to the district.

Two bids were received. The lower quote, from Roarke Well Drilling, was \$20,150 — approximately \$7,000 less than the other bid — and was within budget. The department hoped to complete the drilling before winter.

MOTION to approve the bid from Roarke Well Drilling in the amount of \$20,150 for the drilling of a new well in the Sugar Loaf Water District was made by Council Member Becker and seconded by Council Member Cassara.

The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

Water District Relevy – 2027 Town and County Tax Roll

Town Clerk Zappala asked that a memorandum submitted to the Board on September 22nd concerning the relevy for five water districts not been placed on the agenda could be taken up. The following levy amounts for the 2027 Town and County Tax Roll were read into the record:

- Walt Lake Water District: \$20,923.54
- Surrey Meadows Water District: \$17,270.00
- Lake Hill Farms Water District: \$41,252.37
- Sugarloaf Hills Water District: \$11,87.00
- Fieldcrest Water District: \$5,450.00

Supervisor Holdridge confirmed that the Board members had received the memorandum in their mailboxes. No questions or debate were raised.

MOTION to approve the relevy for the five water districts as stated by Town Clerk Zappala for the 2027 Town and County Tax Roll was made by Council Member Becker and seconded by Council Member Courtenay.

The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nicole Houston returned to the podium for a second time. She stated that in her view, board members had attempted to reframe the public's objections to surveillance technology as a personal attack on the Police Chief, which she characterized as a deflection from the substance of the comments. She reiterated that none of the speakers during public comment had made negative remarks about the Police Chief, personally. She also cited documented cases, which she stated she had researched of surveillance systems being hacked by bad actors, including instances in which cameras near playgrounds had been accessed by predators and systems near nature trails had been exploited to track individuals. She expressed the opinion that the board's oversight plan was insufficient and biased toward justifying the cameras rather than objectively evaluating them. Ms. Houston also commented that it was her personal view that it was in poor taste for Supervisor Holdridge to praise the State Senator's sponsorship of community events funded by taxpayer money during what she described as campaign season, at a time when families are struggling financially and seniors face rising utility bills.

Greg Quackenbush, via online comment, sought clarification on his earlier question about the highway superintendent ballot, noting that his question had been about the options presented on the referendum, not

about the candidates. Town Attorney Cassidy provided a clarification: for the current election cycle, the highway superintendent is an elected position for a one-year term. If the referendum is adopted by the voters, the position would become an appointed position filled by the Town Board. Supervisor Holdridge further clarified that by state law, there are only two possible configurations — elected or appointed — and that the position cannot be converted to a civil service position. If the referendum does not pass, the elected status remains.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Council Member Courtenay, and second by Council Member Cassara to adjourn the meeting at 9:15pm there being no additional business brought before the Board.

VOTE: AYES(5): Holdridge, Becker, Cassara, Courtenay, Diffley

ADOPTED

Respectfully submitted,

Linda A. Zappala, RMC
Town Clerk
2026-9-23