

TOWN BOARD MEETING

September 24, 2026

6:00 PM

Call to Order

Supervisor Holdridge called the Town Board meeting to order at 6:00pm.

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.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Supervisor Holdridge opened the floor to public comment. No public comments were received.

DISCUSSION ON PARKING OF TRAILERS LOCAL LAW

Town Attorney Cassidy had drafted a proposed local law to address the parking of trailers on town streets, stemming from a public complaint as well as several related issues that had arisen regarding individuals leaving trailers on public roads.

She provided the Board with an overview of her draft, explaining that she had worked from the Town's existing Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL) local law, and began editing it to address the issues at hand. She noted she had also forwarded the draft to Police Chief Doellinger for his review and was sharing his comments with the Board in order to receive direction.

Section 1 – Reference to "Commercial" Vehicles

The Chief had noted that the reference to "commercial" vehicles in Section 1 made the law appear as though it would only apply to trailers owned by businesses and not private persons. Attorney Cassidy advised the Board that she had already removed the word "commercial" from the draft so that the law would apply to trailers generally, whether privately owned or owned by a business.

Section 3 – Prohibition on Large Vehicles and the Question of Time Limits

The Chief's comment concerned the law as written, which, he noted, could be interpreted to mean that a landscape contractor with a small dump truck unloading mulch, or delivery vehicles such as UPS and FedEx trucks, which often exceed 10,000 pounds, could not be parked on a town street at all. The Chief suggested this

seemed more restrictive than the original intent of the law, which he believed was aimed at preventing overnight parking, and proposed that the Board consider adding a common-sense temporary parking provision.

Attorney Cassidy agreed with this observation and noted that the existing code's structure, opening with a blanket statement that "there shall be no parking on any town street of the following vehicles" and then providing a list, created interpretive ambiguity. She suggested the language needed to be restructured to more clearly delineate between an outright prohibition and a time-limited allowance.

Supervisor Holdridge suggested addressing this by restructuring the introductory sentence so that the listed vehicle types "shall only be able to be parked for 48 consecutive hours," followed by a lettered list of vehicle categories.

Council Member Courtenay raised a practical concern about winter parking regulations, asking how the proposed time limit would interact with seasonal overnight parking bans in subdivisions such as Surrey Meadows. Attorney Cassidy clarified that winter parking prohibitions would continue to apply to all vehicles, and the proposed provision would govern other seasons.

Boats and Boat Transporters

Council Member Cassara noted that the concern was not with FedEx or UPS trucks or mulch dump truck, which would obviously be gone within a day or two due to the nature of their work, but rather with scenarios where someone detaches a boat trailer with their pickup truck and leaves it on the street indefinitely.

*Council Member Becker arrived at 6:10pm.

Council Member Becker asked whether the prohibition on boat transporters should include the boat itself, to prevent someone from removing the boat from the trailer, leaving the boat on the street, and driving away with the trailer. The Board found this scenario far-fetched but conceded that stranger things have happened, with Council Member Becker sharing an anecdote about a boat left on a street corner in his neighborhood registered to Connecticut plates, which remained there for three days. The Board agreed the language should be amended to read boats and transporters to cover both.

Enforcement Concerns – Sergeant Bruce Chambers, Town of Chester Police Department

Sergeant Bruce Chambers addressed the Board on behalf of the Police Department, raising a significant enforcement concern with a 48-hour limit. He explained that without stationing an officer to physically monitor a specific vehicle, the Department would inevitably face situations where a vehicle owner claims they had stepped away briefly and were unaware their vehicle had been there for 48 hours, making the provision nearly impossible to enforce from a practical standpoint. He suggested that an overnight prohibition would be far more enforceable.

Sergeant Chambers also acknowledged the tire-marking practice used in the Village for parking enforcement, but noted there had been Fourth Amendment concerns raised nationally about that method, and deferred to Attorney Cassidy for legal guidance if the Board wished to pursue it.

Supervisor Holdridge asked Sergeant Chambers to clarify if he meant that a vehicle simply should not be parked overnight at all. Sergeant Chambers confirmed that was his meaning, stating that overnight presence of such vehicles constitutes an obstruction to traffic and that anything beyond an overnight provision would be almost impossible for the police department to enforce.

The Board reached consensus in favor of adopting an overnight prohibition rather than a 48-hour limit. The discussion converged on 11:00PM, matching the existing snow emergency parking regulation. Attorney Cassidy confirmed she would define overnight consistently with the existing standard.

Vehicles in Excess of 10,000 Pounds – Section Reference (Chief's Third/Fourth Point)

Sergeant Chambers raised an additional concern: the draft law, while intended to regulate trailers and boat haulers, retained a provision prohibiting vehicles in excess of 10,000 pounds from parking on town property. He characterized this as potentially overly restrictive, noting that many standard pickup trucks now exceed that weight threshold, and that subjecting all such vehicles to the prohibition could create unintended consequences for residents who park on the street during the summer or on a routine basis.

Attorney Cassidy concurred, acknowledging that modern vehicles—including heavy electric vehicles with large battery packs—are increasingly approaching or exceeding 10,000 pounds, making the threshold potentially unwieldy. Council Member Becker raised the point that the intent was to address larger commercial vehicles like dump trucks, not personal pickup trucks.

Sergeant Chambers suggested raising the threshold to 15,000 pounds as a more workable figure. He also referenced Vehicle and Traffic Law Section 1200(c), which permits any vehicle to stop temporarily to discharge merchandise or passengers regardless of a local law, and suggested this statutory provision could address the concerns about landscapers or delivery vehicles making temporary stops without requiring additional language in the local law.

Attorney Cassidy acknowledged this was a business decision for the Board and confirmed she could draft the provision at whatever weight threshold the Board chose. The discussion also included the question of more-than-two-axle vehicles, with Attorney Cassidy noting the existing code already addressed this, aimed at preventing tractor-trailers from parking in residential neighborhoods, while understanding that a local plumber bringing home a work truck is not the concern.

Waiver Provision – Highway Superintendent

Attorney Cassidy noted that she had included a provision in the draft allowing individuals who know in advance that they will need to keep a trailer on a street for an extended period—such as during a multi-day moving process or a larger landscaping project—to apply to the Highway Superintendent for a temporary waiver. She emphasized this was not intended to require coming before the Town Board, but rather to give the Highway Superintendent discretionary authority to approve specific situations where a trailer could be safely parked temporarily. Council Member Becker suggested that any such waiver should also include a recommendation that the area be appropriately coned off or marked for visibility, and that the Highway Superintendent should be able to refuse requests for placement in dangerous locations such as blind corners. Attorney Cassidy agreed, noting the Highway Superintendent would have that discretion.

Authority to Remove Vehicles – Concurrent Jurisdiction for Police

Attorney Cassidy highlighted another amendment she had made: expanding the authority to remove vehicles from town streets to include the Town of Chester Police Department, in addition to the Highway Superintendent. She noted that under the current code, only the Highway Superintendent held that authority. Sergeant Chambers and Council Member Becker confirmed this had been a problem during the previous winter's severe snowstorms, when police officers on patrol encountered abandoned vehicles blocking roadways but could not remove them without first reaching the Highway Superintendent or his foreman—who were themselves occupied managing snow-clearing operations with their crews. Attorney Cassidy characterized the amendment as concurrent jurisdiction, adding that no additional approval was required; police officers would simply have the authority to act in emergency circumstances.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Attorney Cassidy summarized that the discussion had addressed the majority of Chief Doellinger's comments. She confirmed she would clean up the draft, restructure the relevant sections for clarity, and circulate a revised version to the Board and to the Chief. Council Member Cassara noted, for informational purposes, that the boat trailer that had originally prompted the complaint had reappeared on Creamery Pond Road overnight, and that if the Board received constituent emails on the matter, they could advise that the issue was being actively worked on.

Attorney Cassidy was also asked to forward Chief Doellinger's original email to the full Board, as Council Member Becker noted it had not been included in the materials he received.

DISCUSSION ON SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Supervisor Brandon Holdridge introduced the next discussion item, noting that the Board had been sent a copy of a draft social media policy on September 15th. Town Attorney Elizabeth Cassidy led the discussion.

Background and Context

Attorney Cassidy explained that drafting a social media policy had been on her to-do list for some time and that the Supervisor had asked her to formalize one before any changes were made to the Town's social media presence. She noted that the Town currently operates two social media presences of note: a Facebook page maintained by the Chester Police Department, and the Chester Rec page, which effectively serves as the Town's primary public-facing Facebook page and is used for broadcasting town meeting livestreams.

Facebook's Technical Constraints – Personal Account Linkage

Attorney Cassidy explained a key technical limitation of Facebook: in order to maintain and administer a page, it must be linked to a personal account. She noted this was not an ideal arrangement from a governance standpoint, but that it is the reality of how the platform operates. As a result, the policy she drafted does not require individuals to surrender their personal login credentials, but instead requires that each department page have at least two named administrators, and that the names of those administrators be provided to the Town Clerk or named Social Media Administrator. When an administrator leaves service, a replacement must be named and the process repeated.

Policy Structure – Roles and Responsibilities

Attorney Cassidy explained that the policy establishes two distinct roles: a "page administrator," who manages the content and day-to-day operation of a specific department's page, and a "communications manager," a broader oversight role she noted is not a civil service position. She cautioned the Board that she wanted to review the draft one more time to ensure she had not inadvertently interchanged the two titles, as she had caught a similar error elsewhere in the document.

She explained that under the policy, the Board would approve the overall framework by resolution, and then pass subsequent resolutions naming individuals to the designated roles. For PD's page, the existing administrators would be recognized in their current roles. For the general town page, a designated town employee would be named; potentially a staff member from the Clerk's office or the Recreation Department.

Page Security and Breach Protocol

The policy includes a requirement that if an administrator's personal account is hacked or compromised, they must immediately notify the Town so that the compromised account can be removed as an administrator and a replacement designated. Council Member Becker asked whether this would involve a password change; Attorney Cassidy confirmed it would more precisely involve severing the hacked personal account from the town page and attaching a new account in its place. The policy provides that in the event of an administrator's departure or unavailability, the remaining administrator retains access and can add a new second administrator, ensuring continuity at all times.

Archiving and Public Records (FOIL) Obligations

An extended discussion arose regarding the obligations of the Town with respect to archiving social media content as public records. Town Clerk Zappala raised the concern that, once the pages become official Town pages, they would be subject to FOIL, records retention schedules, and archiving requirements. She noted that archiving could only proceed from the date the Town begins formally managing the pages, and that retroactive archiving would require significant manual effort. Attorney Cassidy suggested future grant-funded interns could work on adding older content to the Town's archive over time.

A question was raised about the legal status of records that exist on a third-party platform (Meta/Facebook) but have not yet been archived by the Town. Attorney Cassidy opined that because the Town created the content, it is a record regardless of whether the Town has a copy of it in a searchable archive system. She suggested these might effectively be considered permanent records so long as they exist on the platform, and that the Town retains an affirmative obligation not to delete them. She also noted that in a practical sense, a FOIL requester seeking specific Facebook posts could rely on the platform itself for access, even if the Town's internal search systems cannot easily query those older posts.

Attorney Cassidy recommended moving forward with archiving from the date of adoption of the policy and addressing older content on a best-effort basis, characterizing it as a choice of modern technology and records.

Naming the Official Town Page

The Board briefly discussed what the official Town of Chester Facebook page should be called. Supervisor Holdridge proposed "Town of Chester, NY," consistent with how the Town of Warwick has named its page. Attorney Cassidy noted, however, that a public group—distinct from a page—already exists under a similar name with approximately 726 members and had posted as recently as 11 hours before the meeting. She also noted that the name "Town of Chester" has been taken on Facebook by a town in Western Massachusetts with approximately 489 followers, compared to the Town's current following of approximately 2,600.

The discussion also revealed that the Chester Rec page currently exists in two forms—one classified as a page and one as a public figure—both associated with the Town, and that these two presences would need to be merged. Council Member Diffley expressed concern that other Facebook groups with "Chester" in the name could potentially be mistaken for the official town government page. Supervisor Holdridge suggested the cover photo feature the Town Seal, and Attorney Cassidy agreed that labeling the page as a "government organization" within Facebook's own classification system would further distinguish it from community groups.

No final name was decided, but the discussion converged generally on a name that would clearly identify the page as the official municipal government's presence.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Attorney Cassidy confirmed she would make a final pass through the policy to verify that the role titles were consistently and correctly used, and would then circulate the final version to the Board for adoption at the October Board meeting. The Board confirmed it was comfortable with the overall direction of the policy. Supervisor Holdridge also asked Sergeant Chambers to confirm with Chief Doellinger that PD already had two designated page administrators, which Sergeant Chambers confirmed was the case.

NEW BUSINESS

Highway Garage Roof Replacement Bid – NSI

Supervisor Holdridge raised the first item of new business, noting it had not been placed on the agenda the prior evening but required timely action as the Highway Department needed the work to commence in October. He explained that bids had been received for the complete removal and replacement of an older section of metal roof—approximately 8,900 square feet—at the Highway Garage building.

Supervisor Holdridge reported that the engineering firm had reviewed the bids and recommended NSI as the lowest bidder, noting that NSI's bid came in approximately \$114,000 lower than the next lowest bid.

Council Member Becker sought clarification on whether the bid included gutters and leaders. It was confirmed the bid covers the roof only. During a prior meeting, the bond for this project had been increased from \$120,000 to \$200,000 in anticipation of adding gutters and leaders as a separate procurement.

Supervisor Holdridge noted that the accepted bid of approximately \$170,000 would leave approximately \$30,000 in available bond funds, with the remaining amount under the public works exemption, requiring only three quotes rather than a full bid. Attorney Cassidy confirmed, for the record, that the bond authorization represents a cap rather than a floor, meaning that if the project comes in under the bonded amount, the Town is not obligated to bond the full sum; conversely, if the project exceeds the bond, the resolution would need to be amended.

No objections or further debate arose.

MOTION to approve the award of the Highway Garage roof replacement bid to NSI in the amount of \$170,000 was made by Council Member Courtenay and seconded by Council Member Becker.

The motion carried unanimously.

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

ADOPTED

Request for Additional Use of the Recreation Shed (Mavericks Organization)

Supervisor Brandon Holdridge introduced the second item of new business, referencing two emails circulated to the Board. The emails concerned a request from an organization identified as the Mavericks for additional use of the shed at the Chester Commons recreation facility.

Supervisor Holdridge summarized the concern that the groups currently using the shed are either direct extensions of the Town's recreation programs or the school district, which assists with field maintenance, and that the Town's parks and recreation staff were opposed to allowing yet another external organization to use the facility.

Council Member Cassara expressed agreement with the position that certain items, like grills, should be stored outside rather than in the shed, and the Board indicated this had already been addressed or was in the process of being addressed.

Council Member Becker agreed that there was simply insufficient room in the shed for an additional organization to store football equipment, food items, and other materials, and stated he was not in favor of allowing the additional usage. He also raised a broader policy concern that granting access to one organization would open the door for future requests from others. The Mavericks are not affiliated with the Town in any way beyond renting field space, and that allowing storage access on that basis would set a difficult precedent.

Supervisor Holdridge noted that, as an alternative to shed usage, the possibility of the organization renting a temporary storage pod or enclosed trailer had been suggested. Council Member Becker raised the option of a rented trailer that could be brought on and off site as needed, which would keep the organization's equipment off-site between uses.

Attorney Cassidy raised a liability concern: storing a private organization's equipment in a Town-owned shed creates risk for the Town, particularly in the event of fire or other damage, even with certificates of insurance in place. She stated that as a policy matter, when organizations are granted field use agreements, the agreement should be clear that they are receiving use of the field—not additional storage facilities—and recommended that any field use agreement make this explicit.

The Board also discussed the matter of propane tanks. Council Member Becker asked whether it was legally permissible to store propane tanks inside a closed shed. Council Member Cassara noted that the fire department stores propane tanks outdoors, and the Board agreed that any grill with an attached propane tank must be stored outside the shed.

The Board reached consensus in opposition to granting the Mavericks' request for shed usage. Recreation Department Head Deshler indicated she has ideas for longer-term facility planning that she intends to bring before the Board at a future work session when 2027 projects are discussed.

Cintas / UniFirst Cleaning Supply Procurement Service

Supervisor Brandon Holdridge raised the third item under new business, noting he had emailed the Board approximately a month prior regarding a procurement service for cleaning materials through Cintas. He expressed interest in piloting the service at Town Hall to consolidate the procurement of cleaning supplies, mats, soap dispensers, paper towel holders, and related consumables under a single vendor that would also replenish materials on a scheduled basis.

Council Member Becker said he had used a similar service in a prior professional capacity and had found it effective, and confirmed he was in favor. Council Member Cassara indicated via a prior email response that he was also on Board with trying Cintas.

Town Clerk Zappala noted the Town had previously used this service and was discontinued. It was estimated it had been at least six years, noting that the old mat-service equipment at Town Hall appeared to have been there for a very long time.

Supervisor Holdridge expressed confidence that the service could generate savings, citing a cost analysis conducted by the Comptroller. He proposed starting with Town Hall only, on a trial basis, and noted the service is expected to be available on a monthly rather than strictly annual contract. He added that if the Board does not find the rates acceptable upon reviewing the proposal, they can decline and maintain the current approach of shopping for supplies independently.

The Board also discussed what would happen to existing soap dispensers, paper towel holders, and other equipment if they were replaced by Cintas-branded dispensers, which are proprietary and must be used exclusively with the vendor's products. Supervisor Holdridge suggested storing the existing equipment in the building in case the service is ever discontinued and the Cintas dispensers are retrieved.

Supervisor Holdridge confirmed he would resend the Cintas proposal to all Board members for review prior to the next Board meeting, at which a formal decision could be made.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Supervisor Brandon Holdridge opened the floor to public comment.

Lydia Cuadros, via online, suggested Town of Chester, NY Official Site for the Facebook account.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Council Member Courtenay, and second by Council Member Becker to adjourn the meeting at 7:10pm 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
2026-9-24