

**Town of Chester
Official Town Election
March 8th and 10th, 2022**

The Town of Chester election for officers and zoning amendments was held on Tuesday, March 8th, 2022, to act on Articles #1 through #7. The election was held in the Chester Multi-Purpose Room. The polls were opened at 7:00am. Moderator Michael Scott officially closed the polls at 7:00pm. Five hundred seventy (570) votes were cast.

After the ballots were counted, the Meeting continued on Thursday, March 10th, 2022 at 6:00pm in the Chester Multi-Purpose Room. Article #8 through #23 were taken up at that time. One hundred and eleven (111) voters were present.

The Moderator called the meeting to order at 6:00pm and read the preamble. The Pledge of Allegiance was taken and the Moderator explained the procedure for voting.

A motion was made to forego a second reading of the Articles in their entirety before voting; this motion was seconded. The vote was in the affirmative; **Warrant Articles will only be read once.**

The Moderator announced the results of Articles #1 through #7:

Article #1: To choose all necessary Town Officials for the ensuing year.

570 ballots were cast. The results of the election were as follows:

Board of Selectmen for 3 years:

(Vote for not more than 2)

Aaron Mansur	-	178	
Charles Francis Myette	-	352	*

Budget Committee Member for 3 years:

(Vote for not more than 1)

TBD

There were write-in votes:

Charlotte Lister 29

Kevin Scott 4

Ephraim Dobbins 3

Budget Committee Member for 2 years:

(Vote for not more than 3)

Ronald James McKinnon Jr.	-	404	*
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There were write-in votes:

Charlotte Lister 34

Rob Varsalone 3

Kevin Kistler 2

Randy Bestwick 2

Town Moderator for 2 years:

(Vote for not more than 1)

Michael J. Scott	-	486	*
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Supervisor of the Checklist – 6 years:

(Vote for not more than 1)

Sara Jane Bibeau	-	342	*
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Nicholas Tranquillo	-	131	
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School Board Member for 3 years:

(Vote for not more than 2)

Valerie Weider	-	237	
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Alexandre Nolan Bartels	-	171	
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Jonathan Eckerman	-	278	*
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Sabrina N. Harris	-	262	*
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Trustee of the Trust Funds for 3 years:

(Vote for not more than 1)

Thomas J. Paton	-	449	*
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Library Trustee for 3 years:

(Vote for not more than 2)

Deborah J. Munson	-	379	*
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Mary L. Richardson	-	435	*
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Wilcomb Townsend Trustee for 5 years:

(Vote for not more than 1)

Lorna Hazelton	-	470	*
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Wilcomb Townsend Trustee for 1 year:

(Vote for not more than 1)

Beth Swanson	-	252	*
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Kathryn M. Burke	-	78	
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Terry L. Kennett	-	54	
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Elizabeth Liacos - 81

Great Hill Cemetery Trustee for 5 years:
(Vote for not more than 1)

Richard Omer Bellemore - 231
Penny J. Henderson 268 *

Village Cemetery Trustee for 3 years:
(Vote for not more than 1)

Richard Omer Bellemore - 492 *

The School portion of the meeting was closed.

The Moderator congratulated the newly elected officials and read the write-ins. He requested that those interested in one of the open positions contact him at the break.

The Moderator then announced the results of Articles #2 through #7:

Article #2

Are you in favor of the adoption of **Amendment #1** to the Town's Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board?

Amend: Article 2 - Definitions – Impervious Surfaces

Purpose: To add a clarifying definition of “Impervious Surfaces” as referenced in Table 1.

Yes 321 / No 188 Article #2 carries.

Article #3

Are you in favor of the adoption of **Amendment #2** to the Town's Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board?

Amend: Article 2 – Definitions – Sign Types

Purpose: To amend the definitions of various sign types.

Yes 319 / No 188 Article #3 carries.

Article #4

Are you in favor of the adoption of **Amendment #3** to the Town's Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board?

Amend: Article 5.3.3.12 –Bed & Breakfasts

Purpose: To amend Section 5.3.3.12 – Bed & Breakfasts by adding a prohibition against the conversion of detached structures into Bed & Breakfasts.

Yes 210/ No 327 Article #4 fails.

Article #5

Are you in favor of the adoption of **Amendment #4** to the Town’s Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board?

Amend: Article 5.7.8 –Buffers & Setbacks

Purpose: To mitigate excessive impacts to wetlands and their buffers/setbacks by future driveway crossings.

Yes 297/ No 229 Article #5 carries.

Article #6

Are you in favor of the adoption of **Amendment #5** to the Town’s Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board?

Amend: Article 11.2 – ZBA Organization

Purpose: Increase the number of appointed alternate members on the Zoning Board of Adjustment from three (3) to five (5) alternate members.

Yes 320/ No 202 Article #6 carries.

Article #7

Are you in favor of the adoption of **Amendment #6** to the Town’s Zoning Ordinance as proposed by the Planning Board?

Amend: Article 2 – Definitions - Educational Institutions

Purpose: To amend the definition of “Educational Institutions” and differentiate between public and business educational facilities.

Yes 317/ No 203 Article #7 carries.

Article #8 – Recission of Road Agent Position

Shall the Town rescind the action of the 1924 and 1992 Town Meetings to elect a road agent for a two-year term and authorize the Board of Selectmen to appoint a full-time road agent

who will be the Supervisor of Roads. The term of the elected road agent will terminate at the 2023 Annual Town election. Further to raise and appropriate the sum of fifty-five thousand four hundred seventeen dollars (\$55,417) salary and benefits for the Supervisor of Roads position for six months in Fiscal Year 22-23. Salary and benefits for this position will be carried in the Operating Budget in future fiscal years.

Tax Impact:	\$0.08
<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 5 yes / 0 no / 0 abstain</i>
<i>Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 6 yes / 0 no / 1 abstain</i>

The article was moved and seconded to the floor. The Moderator called for discussion.

Selectman Charles Myette said the Road Agent position has gone from a part-time to a full-time job over the years due to the increase in miles of Town roads that need to be maintained as well as the number of projects in the CIP, including red-listed bridges and culverts that need to be repaired.

The Road Agent position has been held by the same person for the last 15 years; this continuity has been important. The Board of Selectmen realized that significant work needs to be done on the Town roads. Projects can take two to three years to get off the ground. The Road Agent currently is elected every two years. The Board of Selectmen would like to see an individual in this position who understands the process, the planning, and the coordination of road projects.

Mat Stover, chairperson of the Public Ways Working Group, thanked the members of the group for their hard work. A summary of the report presented to the Board of Selectmen is available to the public. The working group agreed the position should be changed to an appointed Supervisor of Roads. He outlined the duties of the position. The Road Agent is on call 24/7 and also attends meetings to coordinate departments' efforts. Oversight of the Town infrastructure has increased dramatically and has become a full-time (and overtime) job.

He explained that this position serves as the chief safety officer for Town roads, ensuring they are safe and convenient for use. The highway budget is the largest expenditure item in the Town, next to the schools. There is \$16 million in projects in the CIP. This is a large sum of money and needs a professional, experienced person to manage it.

The benefits to the Town include continuity, long-term consistency, and responsibility. The Town will ensure that the Supervisor of Roads is a well-qualified experienced professional, complying with Town and State laws and regulations. The legislative body will still have the opportunity to approve the highway budget.

The position will be open to any resident who feels they are qualified. It will be a permanent salaried position. The Supervisor of Roads will begin working by January 1, 2023. The current Road Agent will retire in March 2023 at the Town Meeting, so there will be overlap.

Road Agent Mike Oleson said he is 100 percent behind this. The Town has grown too big for an elected position. He and his company will be available when needed. He asked the legislative body to support this article.

Lorna Hazelton asked who is eligible to apply for the position, if there is a job description, and how will a qualified person be selected. Selectman Myette said a job description and advertisement have been created. The position will not be limited to Town employees or residents. If the position is approved, the working group will develop an RFQ and a list of qualifications.

Terry Fitzgerald asked if an engineering background is necessary. Selectman Myette said the individual will need an understanding of road construction and materials, bridges, and culverts. There is a engineering firm that works with the Town that the Supervisor of Roads could consult for support. They will look for the best qualified individual for the position.

Terry Fitzgerald asked if vehicle registration fees are used to care for the roads. Selectman Myette said no, not directly. Monies that come in for Town roads are in a warrant article and are voted on. Terry Fitzgerald said his road is disintegrating and asked if anyone inspects a road after it is paved. Selectman Myette said yes, there is a contract and a guarantee by the contractor. Mike Oleson said he hadn't heard there was a problem with the road and he will look into it.

Discussion being ended, the question was called. The vote was in the affirmative. **Article #8 carries.**

Article #9 – Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) to be added to the Town Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund established at the 2009 Town Meeting in order to prepare for the next Town revaluation in 2024.

Estimated Tax Impact:	\$0.02
<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 4 yes / 1 no / 0 abstain</i>
<i>Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 6 yes / 0 no / 1 abstain</i>

Article #9 was read, moved to the floor, and seconded. The Moderator called for discussion but there was none.

The question was called. The vote was in the affirmative. **Article #9 carries.**

Article #10 – Solar Array at Landfill

Shall the Town vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into a long-term lease for a solar energy company to install a solar farm at the Town's closed landfill on Dump Road on such terms and conditions as determined by the Selectmen and to authorize the Selectmen to take any other actions necessary to carry out this vote.

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.00
Recommended by Board of Selectmen *Tally Vote – 5 yes / 0 no / 0 abstain*

Article #10 was read, moved to the floor, and seconded. The Moderator called for discussion.

Selectman Steve Couture said the Board of Selectmen is acting on legislation passed by the general court to make it easier for municipalities to install solar projects and sell electricity back to the grid to offset the electrical costs for the Town. An RFP was issued and the capped landfill was identified as the best location. One proposal was received, which met the intent of the project. However, it was discovered that the capped landfill is not big enough to make the project economically feasible as proposed.

He presented two options. The article can be tabled, which will allow the Board of Selectmen to continue the work next year. The second option is to amend the article to authorize the Board of Selectmen to continue to work with the same intent: zero cost to the Town, offset electrical expenses, and a lease arrangement on a suitable Town parcel that might still include the landfill.

Jean Methot asked if the cap on the landfill would be penetrated. Selectman Couture said permits would need to be obtained through the Department of Environmental Services. The contractor will be responsible for any issues that occur with the capped landfill. From an engineering standpoint, the area feasible to site this project at the landfill was too small due to the need to avoid causing adverse issues with the landfill.

Ken Biel moved to table this article and it was seconded. The question was called and the vote was in the affirmative. **Article #10 is tabled.**

Article #11 – Discontinuance of Hart Roberts Road

Shall the Town completely discontinue as an open highway under RSA 231:43 the following highway: the entire Hart Roberts Road from the intersection of Hart Roberts Road and Halls Village Road to the intersection of Hart Roberts Road and Jack Road. This discontinuance will take effect June 1st, 2022.

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.00
Recommended by Board of Selectmen *Tally Vote – 5 yes / 0 no / 0 abstain*

The Moderator announced that Realtor Rebecca Curran from ReMax would like to speak to the article. The question was called and the vote was in the affirmative.

Rebecca Curran said she represents the Simonson family, who own 205 acres that are for sale on Jack Road. Hart Roberts Road is their only access to their property, so discontinuing the road will cause them hardship. If this is made a Class VI road, nothing can be built on it, so it will make the property less valuable.

Charlotte Lister asked if the road is discontinued, will it become a Class VI road or a private driveway? She was told it would be a private driveway. She noted that it would be a driveway for two houses, which is unusual. She felt the Planning Board might have a problem with this.

Rebecca Curran said if it becomes a private driveway, there will be no access to the 205 acres that her clients own. She asked how the landowners will be able to access their land.

Dennis Maloney asked the Board of Selectmen the purpose for discontinuing the road.

Selectman Stephen Landau explained the history of this issue. Mr. Hart Roberts allowed his driveway to be used as a road in 1929 due to a bridge failing on Halls Village Road. There is no paperwork showing that the Town accepted it as a road; however, the Town has maintained it in spite of this. The cost to upgrade it to a standard Town road would be between \$200,000 and \$300,000. He said the 205 acres can be accessed from Pomp Road, so the property will not be landlocked by the road being discontinued.

Dennis Maloney asked if anyone asked for the road to be upgraded. He believes it is the best gravel road he has seen and doesn't see where it causes a problem for the Town. The residents on the road probably pay lots of taxes.

The Moderator reminded speakers to address comments to him, instead of to individuals.

Selectman Landau said no one has complained, but it needs to be brought up to Town standards if it is a Town road. It would not be able to stay a 12-foot gravel road. It can also be developed, if it is a Town road.

Dennis Maloney said if a developer wants to build on the road, the Planning Board will then require impact fees and the road can be upgraded. The road is suitable for two houses, not 102 houses.

Mike Oleson said he instigated this article. The road is steep and hard to plow. It presents a risk for the Fire Department and the Highway Department. The new homeowner has removed trees, so the slope is now open for a plow driver to roll a truck. He believes it is dangerous and asked the Board of Selectmen to install guardrails with funds from the Highway Department budget to protect Town drivers and equipment, but this was denied.

At that point, the homeowner interfered with the roadway by building a berm. Water runs down the road, so it has to be graveled. He told the Board of Selectmen he would no longer send Town trucks to plow and maintain the road as it is dangerous. The Fire Department cannot pump water from the road up the hill. He would like the road to be discontinued and the homeowners can maintain it.

Selectman Landau said the 205 acres connect to another parcel, Hidden Valley Campground on Hampstead Road in Derry. Therefore, it is not landlocked. The property is for sale for \$3 million. Mr. Hart Roberts was doing the town a favor in the '20s and '30s. The road can be repaired but at a cost. The Town has graciously agreed to plow the road this year for the homeowners.

Darrell Quinn said when a road is closed, it reverts to the abutters on each side. He's generally against closing Class V roads. This road has been maintained. He asked if the road could be made a Class VI road under ownership of the Town.

Rebecca Curran said comments are incorrect about the property for sale. It is listed at \$1.5 million, not \$3 million. It can be accessed via Pomp Road, but there is a gate and debris blocking the road and it is not maintained. The only feasible access is from Hart Roberts Road. The property will possibly be purchased by different parties, so the Derry owners might not allow access to the Chester property. If it is changed to a Class VI road, it cannot be built on.

Charlotte Lister said she believes a Class VI road can be maintained by the people that use it. A Class VI road is a public right of way. Pomp Road is a Class VI road, so it could be cleaned up and used as an access point.

Betsy Buchanan and Gene Blanchard, residents of Hart Roberts Road, want the road to be discontinued. They have had to behave as though it is a Town road and now the Town said it isn't. Instead of engaging with them to problem solve, the Board of Selectmen decided to discontinue the road, after years of harassment from the Road Agent. They realize they can't fight City Hall. They intend to distance themselves from the Road Agent and the Board of Selectmen. Discontinuing the road will give them a measure of relief and privacy, while protecting them from developers.

Article #11 was read, moved to the floor, and seconded. The Moderator called for further discussion.

Discussion being ended, the question was called. The vote was in the affirmative. **Article #11 carries.**

An intermission was called.

All elected individuals were invited to come to the front of the room to be sworn in.

Selectman Myette congratulated Rhonda Lamphere on her years of service to the Town of Chester as the Town Treasurer, on the Budget Committee, and on the 300th Anniversary Celebration Committee. Ms. Lamphere thanked everyone for the gift and the honor. She said it has been a pleasure to serve the Town for 50 years, especially on the 300th Anniversary Celebration committee. She invited everyone to attend the upcoming celebratory events.

Selectman Landau said as the Selectman's Liaison to the 300th Anniversary Celebration committee, it has been a pleasure to work with the volunteers on the committee. He asked for a round of well-deserved applause. He said the chairman of the committee, Jean Methot, has been a volunteer in Chester for years. He recognized the members of the 300th, including Jeff Dinopoulos, Ed Stuart, Chris Hadik, Sue Rieter, and Nancy Jolin. It has been a ten-year effort to plan this celebration.

The Moderator resumed the Town Meeting at 7:20 pm.

Article #12 – Operating Budget

Shall the Town raise and appropriate the Budget Committee and Selectmen recommended amount of five million four hundred thirty-nine thousand six hundred fifty-seven dollars (\$5,439,657) for the operating budget for the support of Town government for the payment of salaries and for the payment of statutory obligations of the Town. This article does not include appropriations voted in other warrant articles.

	Board of Selectmen	Budget Committee
General Government	\$ 2,527,432	\$ 2,527,432
Public Safety	\$ 1,545,009	\$ 1,545,009
Highways, Streets, Bridges	\$ 793,138	\$ 793,138
Sanitation	\$ 227,750	\$ 227,750
Health & Welfare	\$41,272	\$41,272
Culture & Recreation	\$303,849	\$303,849
Conservation & Eco. Dev.	\$ 1,205	\$ 1,205
Debt Service	\$ 2	\$ 2
Total Appropriation	\$5,439,657	\$5,439,657

Estimated Tax Impact: \$7.37
Recommended by Board of Selectmen Tally Vote – 5 yes / 0 no / 0 abstain
Recommended by Budget Committee Tally Vote – 6 yes / 0 no / 1 abstain

Article #12 was read, moved to the floor, and seconded. The Moderator called for discussion.

Lorna Hazelton asked why there was only \$8 in the Health and Welfare line of the operating budget. The amount appears to decrease every year and she thought it should not be flatlined to \$0. Selectman Myette said the community is in good shape. There have been very few dollars spent in that category over the last several years. As it is a bottom-line budget, if there is a need to expend monies, the Town can do so.

Discussion being ended, the question was called. The vote was in the affirmative. **Article #12 carries.**

Article #13 – CIP Funding

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of six hundred thousand dollars (\$600,000.00) to be added to the capital reserve fund known as the Town's Municipal Capital Improvement Plan Capital Reserve Fund established at the 2013 Town Meeting.

Estimated Tax Impact: \$0.81
Recommended by Board of Selectmen Tally Vote – 5 yes / 0 no / 0 abstain
Recommended by Budget Committee Tally Vote – 6 yes / 0 no / 1 abstain

Article #13 was read, moved to the floor, and seconded. The Moderator called for discussion.

As there was no discussion, the question was called, and the vote was in the affirmative.
Article #13 carries.

Article #14 – CIP Projects

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of seven hundred sixty thousand dollars (\$760,000) for the following projects:

Police	Cruiser with Outfitting	\$56,250
Fire	Repaving of Parking Lot	\$35,000
Highway	Annual Surveying & Engineering Services	\$10,000
Highway	Class 8 Plow Truck, Plow & Sander	\$240,000
Recreation	WP Causeway Bridge Reconstruction & Construction Management	\$418,750

and withdraw seven hundred sixty thousand dollars (\$760,000) from the Municipal Capital Improvement Plan Capital Reserve Fund created for these purposes.

This will be a non-lapsing article per RSA 32:7-a, IV, and will not lapse until the work is complete, or December 31, 2024, whichever comes first.

Estimated Tax Impact:	\$0.00
<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 5 yes / 0 no / 0 abstain</i>
<i>Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 6 yes / 0 no / 1 abstain</i>

Article #14 was read, moved to the floor, and seconded. The Moderator called for discussion.

Charlotte Lister asked if the WP Causeway Bridge was the Wason Pond bridge. She was told it was. She asked what would be done for that amount of money. Mike Oleson answered that it is not a road, it is beach access. It is very expensive to engineer as it has to support emergency vehicles. Fire trucks need to be able to access the beach.

David Lavita said he would like an evaluation to see where the money is going, since the current Road Agent is on his way out and a new person is being hired as the Supervisor of Roads.

Rhonda Lamphere asked what problem will be created if the bridge is not repaired. Fire Chief Phil Gladu explained it is the only means of accessing the beach if there is a medical emergency. The other access is off a small trail which is only suitable for 4-wheel drive vehicles and would increase their response time.

Rhonda Lamphere asked if there was another type of repair that could be done that is less costly. Selectman Myette explained that after the flood earlier this year, FEMA engineers examined and condemned the former structure. They were concerned that the bridge would fail and the culvert under Route 102 would be damaged, possibly taking out the road. It is a safety issue to allow emergency vehicles access as well as a stormwater issue overall.

Selectman Myette said the Town engineer estimated the cost of replacing the bridge, with input from the Fire Department and others. He also estimated the construction costs. The Chester Conservation Commission and the Recreation Commission have put together funds to pay for the initial engineering. The Town will be aggressively looking for grants to fund the project.

David Lavita said it is a lot of money. The country just passed trillions of dollars in infrastructure. A resident asked for a point of order and wanted to call the vote. The Moderator said that was not a point of order. David Lavita suggested shelving the decision due to the infrastructure funds coming from government.

Jack Cannon moved to amend the article to reduce the appropriation by \$418,750, to \$341,250. This will eliminate the project from consideration.

The Moderator called for discussion of the amendment.

Lorna Hazelton asked if this would affect the kids' summer rec program.

Victor Chouinard said if the Town doesn't move forward with the bridge, there will be no access to the beach for the summer Rec program. The current bridge is temporary and probably will need to be removed. Last summer, the bridge was closed for safety purposes.

Dana Theokas said the summer Rec program does use the bridge; there is access without it, but it is limited. The beach is also used by the school cross-country team, which brings other communities to Chester. Without access, this reduces the level of the town. She would like the money to be left in the budget. She said she and Jack Cannon are on the Budget Committee and he never mentioned this issue during their discussions.

Selectman Steve D'Angelo said the bridge would not have been completed by this summer. So, eliminating these funds will not have an impact on the Rec program. A bridge design is needed that will accommodate wildlife.

Selectman Couture said he works with the Department of Environmental Services, although he is not speaking on their behalf. Federal infrastructure funding is potentially available. The Board of Selectman is tracking this issue and trying to avoid using Town monies. They have a better chance of successfully obtaining federal funds if plans are in place, permits obtained, and the design and the engineering work are completed.

Willa Coroka said she is confused by this situation. She thought the Fire Department had UTVs and ATVs available and asked if they could be used in case of emergency. Fire Chief Gladu said they could, but it would delay their response. He gave an example of a medical emergency before the bridge washed out. A resident experienced a severe heat issue, was treated by getting her into an air-conditioned emergency vehicle and administering IV fluids. Without access to the beach via the bridge, they would have had to transport her with an ATV, which would have taken additional time. Willa Coroka suggested using UTVs and tabling this issue for now, while grants are researched.

Royal Richardson asked if \$418,750 will cover the cost of building a bridge or only preparing to build a bridge. Selectman Myette said this is the Town engineer's estimate to build the bridge. A feasibility study will be done to come up with a better number. The timing of building the bridge depends on permitting and funding. This is a non-lapsing fund, so will still be appropriated if it goes into another year. Selectman D'Angelo pointed out that, as an example, repaving the Fire Station parking lot was supposed to be done last year and it was not, so it will be done this year with the same funding.

Andrew Hadik spoke as a taxpayer and the Town Planner. He said the Town engineer, DuBois & King, looked at this site and gave this estimate. The cost of coming up with a design has already been covered, half from Recreation impact fees and half from the Conservation Commission. He understands this amount is for the construction of the bridge.

Jack Cannon asked if the current bridge was structurally sound for pedestrian and horse traffic. Selectman Myette said this question could not be answered as they do not have an engineered design and capacity. The engineer believed that Gator and pedestrian traffic is most likely okay, but they have no official capacity number.

Rhonda Lamphere asked if \$418,750 is appropriated tonight, and additional funds are coming from Recreation impact fees and the Conservation Commission, what is the actual cost to replace the bridge? Selectman Myette said there is a \$62,500 initial estimate from the engineer for the design. There will be no tax impact from this. So, the final cost of the bridge is approximately \$418,750 plus \$62,500. Andrew Hadik said it could possibly be done for less. However, if federal funds are used, the engineering requirements are much tighter. So, this amount has a 25% contingency to cover additional boilerplate engineering to qualify for federal funding.

As there was no further discussion, the question was called as amended. A physical count was done, 42 ayes, 41 nays. **The amendment to Article #14 carries.**

The Moderator called the question, and the vote was in the affirmative. **Article #14 carries.**

Article #15 – Highway CIP Funding

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of one million forty-nine thousand three hundred seventy dollars (\$1,049,370) to be added to the capital reserve fund known as the Highway Capital Improvement Plan Capital Reserve Fund established at the 2015 Town Meeting with one hundred forty-four thousand three hundred seventy dollars (\$144,370) which is the anticipated grant amount this year from the New Hampshire Highway Block Grant to be used to offset this appropriation, three hundred five thousand dollars (\$305,000) from the June 30, 2022 unassigned fund balance, and the remainder of six hundred thousand dollars (\$600,000) to be raised through taxation.

Estimated Tax Impact:	\$0.81
<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 5 yes / 0 no / 0 abstain</i>
<i>Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 6 yes / 0 no / 1 abstain</i>

Article #15 was read, moved to the floor, and seconded. The Moderator called for discussion, but there was none. The question was called, and the vote was in the affirmative. **Article #15 carries.**

Article #16 – Highway CIP Projects

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of one million five hundred one thousand seven hundred thirty-four dollars (\$1,501,734) for roadwork in the Town of Chester and withdraw five hundred fifty-one thousand seven hundred thirty-four (\$551,734) from the funds received from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and the remaining nine hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$950,000) from the Highway Capital Improvement Plan Capital Reserve Fund created for these purposes.

This will be a non-lapsing article per RSA 32:7-a, IV, and will not lapse until the work is complete, or December 31, 2024, whichever comes first.

Estimated Tax Impact:	\$0.09
<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 5 yes / 0 no / 0 abstain</i>
<i>Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 6 yes / 0 no / 1 abstain</i>

Article #16 was read, moved to the floor, and seconded. The Moderator called for discussion.

Mike Oleson pointed out that only \$700,000 of this amount is for roadwork. The rest covers the cost of engineering work on red-listed bridges and the Cole Road project. If oil prices continue to climb, less road work will get done.

Sabrina Harris asked if it would be responsible to defer the road work if the price of oil increases. Mike Oleson said no, a lot of the work being done is to preserve the roads. The cost of the deterioration would be more than cost of the oil.

As there was no further discussion, the question was called, and the vote was in the affirmative. **Article #16 carries.**

Article #17 – Funding Fire Department Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) to be added to the Capital Reserve Fund known as the *Fire Department Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund* established at the 2021 Town Meeting. Further to authorize the transfer of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) from the June 30, 2022 unassigned fund balance for this purpose with no amount to be raised from taxation.

Estimated Tax Impact:	\$0.00
<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 5 yes / 0 no / 0 abstain</i>
<i>Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 6 yes / 0 no / 1 abstain</i>

Article #17 was read, moved to the floor, and seconded. The Moderator called for discussion.

Selectman Landau clarified that there is no tax impact as the funds are coming from the Unassigned Fund Balance (UFB), which consists of taxes previously paid. The Department of Revenue Administration requires towns to keep between 5% and 17%. These are funds already paid that the Town has not spent. It is basically a savings program. They do not know when a fire truck will be needed. This is an attempt to put away funds to earn interest.

Selectman Myette said they have developed the CIP and identified large expenditure items that will occur in the future. The Fire Department has pieces of equipment that cost several hundred thousand dollars. They are setting aside funds every year from the UFB to allow the Town to pay for these expenditures in the future. The Town is currently debt free. By putting money forward, the Town will not have to go out for a bond for large expenditures.

As there was no further discussion, the question was called, and the vote was in the affirmative. **Article #17 carries.**

Article #18 – PACT

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of thirty-eight thousand dollars (\$38,000) for the purpose of providing public, educational, and governmental access television in the Town of Chester. Said funds to be withdrawn from the Special Revenue Fund known as the “PACT” Fund established at the 2003 Town Meeting, separate from the General Fund and funded by Comcast subscribers in the Town of Chester. If passed, this article will have no tax impact.

Estimated Tax Impact:	\$0.00
<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 4 yes / 0 no / 1 abstain</i>
<i>Not Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 6 yes / 0 no / 1 abstain</i>

Article #18 was read, moved to the floor, and seconded. The Moderator called for discussion.

Katelyn Holland said she has volunteered with PACT since 2021. She has been able to be a part of the Chester community and build her filmmaking skills as a result. As a young person in the community, she wants her voice to be heard. PACT is a fantastic opportunity for residents to contribute to the Town and be creative. She urged the residents to vote yes to fund the station. It will cost \$0.

As there was no further discussion, the question was called, and the vote was in the affirmative. **Article #18 carries.**

Article #19 – 300th Anniversary

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to be added to the capital reserve fund known as the *300th Anniversary Celebration Capital Reserve Fund* established at the 2013 Town Meeting.

Estimated Tax Impact:	\$0.01
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<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 5 yes / 0 no / 0 abstain</i>
<i>Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 6 yes / 0 no / 1 abstain</i>

Article #19 was read, moved to the floor, and seconded. The Moderator called for discussion, but there was none.

The question was called; the vote was in the affirmative. **Article #19 carries.**

Article #20 – Master Plan

Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of eight thousand dollars (\$8,000) to be added to the Town Master Plan Capital Reserve Fund established at the 2019 Town Meeting.

Estimated Tax Impact:	\$0.01
<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 5 yes / 0 no / 0 abstain</i>
<i>Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 6 yes / 0 no / 1 abstain</i>

Article #20 was read, moved to the floor, and seconded. The Moderator called for discussion, but there was none.

As there was no discussion, the question was called, and the vote was in the affirmative. **Article #20 carries.**

Article #21 – Winter Road Maintenance Fund

Special Warrant Article. Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred five thousand dollars (\$105,000) to be added to the expendable trust fund known as the Winter Road Maintenance Fund established at the 2006 Town Meeting and increased at the 2017 Town Meeting for the purpose of plowing, salting, sanding and general winter road maintenance in the Town of Chester. The Winter Road Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund shall not exceed one hundred five thousand dollars (\$105,000).

Estimated Tax Impact:	\$0.14
<i>Recommended by Board of Selectmen</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 5 yes / 0 no / 0 abstain</i>
<i>Recommended by Budget Committee</i>	<i>Tally Vote – 6 yes / 0 no / 1 abstain</i>

Article #21 was read, moved to the floor, and seconded. The Moderator called for discussion, but there was none.

Mike Oleson said he doesn't know when winter will end. He is into emergency funds. He will only spend what is needed to plow, sand, and salt the roads. The cost of salt has increased this year. He asked the residents to support this article.

As there was no further discussion, the question was called, and the vote was in the affirmative. **Article #21 carries.**

Article #22 – Petition Warrant Article: Amend Date of Indigenous Peoples Day

Shall the Town vote to amend celebration of Indigenous Peoples' Day to August 9.

Article #22 was read, moved to the floor, and seconded. The Moderator called for discussion.

Oliver Ford said that he made a mistake at the last Town Meeting. He confused the dates and wrote down the wrong one. This article was passed last year for the wrong date. The Town has already approved the celebration; they need to correct the date. August 9th is the internationally accepted date for recognition. He would like to align Chester's celebration with the rest of the world.

As there was no further discussion, the question was called, and the vote was in the affirmative. **Article #22 carries.**

Article #23 – Reports

To hear the reports of Agents, Auditors, and Committees of Officers heretofore chosen and pass any vote relating hereto. To transact any other business that may legally come before the Town.

Russ Norman said a warrant article was presented at last year's Town Meeting for Chester to be its own district in the House of Representatives. Chester has this right due to the Town's size by constitution of the state. The Town voted unanimously to become their own district. He would like an update.

Selectman Landau said the Board of Selectmen has sent letters to Representative Oliver Ford and other representatives, and to the Speaker of the House. They are taking action and will continue to do so, since it was a vote by the legislative body. They understand their responsibility is to do what the legislative body wants.

Oliver Ford said he spoke with Jess Edwards, who said they might wind up joined together again. A final decision has not been reached. The formula for making this decision is complex and requires balancing acts from contiguous towns. Chester does qualify in terms of meeting the minimum requirement. Whether it is done depends if a formula can be written for the entire state so that they are compliant with federal law and regulations. He has no idea when it will be done.

Gene Charron said this was all political. He was in the House for ten years and argued for this. He received calls from other towns, although he wanted to represent Chester. He believes they will not get representation for Chester, but he hopes he will be surprised.

David Lavita said he is new to New Hampshire and has attended all of the meetings. He feels Chester is not represented and there is a lot going on behind the scenes. He asked if there was a vote for state representative coming up this year. He feels Chester should be represented.

Charlotte Lister remind everyone that there is an alternative set of maps that might be fairer than the ones the Legislature is using. They could adopt better maps to help them make a fair decision.

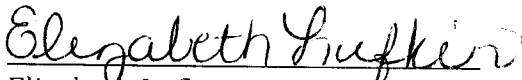
As there was no further business, it was moved to adjourn the Meeting until the second Saturday in March 2023; this motion was seconded. The question was called; the vote was in the affirmative.

The 2022 Chester Town Meeting was adjourned at 8:26pm.

The Moderator thanked the people that made this meeting possible and the tremendous work that was put into organizing it. He also thanked the citizens of Chester for coming out and participating.

A True Copy.

Attest:


Elizabeth Lufkin, Town Clerk

Minutes taken by Beth A. Haggeli

