Town of Chester

Annual Report

7/2015-6/2016
Dedication

The Chester Board of Finance honors Ed Meehan, Larry Sypher, and Tom Englert for their years of service on the Board of Selectmen and various Boards and Commissions and organizations over the past twenty plus years.

Each of them in their own right have an impressive record of volunteering and service to our town. Their service includes participation in many civic and community organizations in Chester and elsewhere in Connecticut. Collectively their service includes officers and members on the Board of Finance, Planning and Zoning, Board of Education, Region 4, WPCA, Town Office Building Committee, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Connecticut Conference of Municipalities.

As Board of Selectmen, they successfully managed town finances, and collaboratively managed various large projects including the Main Street and bridge projects, Town's IT network upgrades, and Town Hall renovation including the new Community Meeting Room.

Ed, Larry and Tom are respected leaders whose values and ethics and dedication to our Community has been exemplified by their always working together for the benefit of Chester, across party affiliations, advancing Chester to where it is today. We appreciate their leadership and dedication as civic leaders and stalwart citizens.

In gratitude for their many contributions to the town of Chester and its citizens, we recognize Ed Meehan, Larry Sypher, and Tom Englert with the dedication of this 2015/2016 Annual Report.
TOWN HALL OF CHESTER
Address: 203 Middlesex Avenue
Chester, CT 06412
Telephone: 860-526-0013
Fax: 860-526-0004
Official Town Web Site: www.chesterct.org

TOWN HALL DIRECTORY
Animal Control 860-388-7082 loretazdanys@chesterct.org
Assessor extension 512 bldgoofficial@chesterct.org
Development Office
  Building extension 207 firemarshal@chesterct.org
  Fire Marshal extension 212 inlandwetlands@chesterct.org
  Inland Wetlands Officer extension 212 zoningofficial@chesterct.org
  Planning and Zoning extension 208
  Sanitarian extension 206
treasury@chesterct.org
Finance extension 215
taxcollector@chesterct.org
First Selectman extension 202 hsc@chesterct.org
Administrative Assistant extension 202
Human Services extension 213
Information extension 202
Parks and Recreation extension 223
Police Services
  Resident Trooper 860-526-3605 policerec@chesterct.org
  Emergency 911
Registries of Voters extension 211 registrar@chesterct.org
Tax Collector extension 513
taxcollector@chesterct.org
Town Clerk extension 511 townclerk@chesterct.org
Treasurer extension 214
treasurer@chesterct.org
Water Pollution Control Authority wpca@chesterct.org

MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS
Chester Elementary School 23 Ridge Road 860-526-5797
Fire Department 6 High Street 860-526-0019
John Winthrop Junior High School Warsaw Street, Deep River 860-526-9546
Meeting House 4 Liberty Street 860-526-0013
Public Library 21 West Main Street 860-526-0018
Public Works Department 16 Grote Road 860-526-0020
Town Hall 203 Middlesex Avenue 860-526-0013
Valley Regional High School Kelsey Hill Road, Deep River 860-526-5328
### Elected Officials

Served Fiscal year: July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selectwomen</th>
<th>11/21/17</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lauren S. Gister</td>
<td>11/21/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charlene Janecek</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carolyn S. Linn</td>
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<tr>
<th>Inland Wetland Commission</th>
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<tr>
<td>Albert Bisacky, Chmn.</td>
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<td>Robert J. Blair III</td>
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<td>Sally A. Sanders</td>
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<td>Kris Seifert</td>
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<td>Kim Senay</td>
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<td>Christine A. Darnell</td>
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<td>Eric Davidson</td>
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<tr>
<th>Town Clerk &amp; Registrar of Vital Statistics</th>
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<tr>
<td>Debra Germini Calamari</td>
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<td>Asst.: Sharon S. Echtman</td>
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<tr>
<th>Town Treasurer</th>
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<tr>
<td>Elizabeth A. Netch</td>
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<td>Julie Netch, Deputy</td>
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<td>Randy Netch, Deputy</td>
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<tr>
<th>Planning and Zoning Commission</th>
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<tr>
<td>Steven Merola</td>
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<td>Keith Scherber</td>
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<td>Vacancy</td>
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<td>Doreen Joslow</td>
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<td>Henry Benjamin Krempel</td>
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<td>Mel Seifert</td>
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<td>Jon Mark Lavy, Chmn.</td>
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<td>Sally L. Murray</td>
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<td>Peter Zanardi</td>
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<th>Tax Collector</th>
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<tr>
<td>Madaline A. Meyer</td>
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<tr>
<th>Planning and Zoning Commission Alternates</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jacqueline Stack</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Sanders</td>
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<td>Patricia Bisacky</td>
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<tr>
<th>Board of Finance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jon Joslow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jennifer Hummel Rannestad</td>
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<td>David W. Cohen</td>
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<td>Charles T. Park</td>
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<td>Virginia Carmany, Chmn.</td>
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<td>Bob Gorman</td>
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<tr>
<th>Library Trustees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karin Badger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandra Senior-Dauer</td>
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<td>Teresa C. Shreiber, Chmn.</td>
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<td>Dennis Tovey</td>
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<td>Margaret A. Carter-Ward</td>
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<td>Edith M. Prisloe</td>
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<tr>
<th>Board of Finance Alternates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glenn Reyer</td>
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<td>Richard C. Nygard</td>
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<td>Lori Ann Sidoti Clymas</td>
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<th>Regional Board of Education</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lori Ann Clymas</td>
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<td>Mario S. Gioco</td>
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<td>Elaine M. Fitzgibbons</td>
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<th>Board of Education</th>
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<tr>
<td>David Fitzgibbons, Chmn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rebecca L. Iselin</td>
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<td>John Stack</td>
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<td>Robert A. Bibbiana</td>
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<td>Tommy Englert</td>
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<td>Charlene O. Fearon</td>
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<td>Arthur R. Henick</td>
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<td>John Ropiak</td>
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<td>Maria Scherber</td>
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<tr>
<th>Registrar of Voters</th>
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<tr>
<td>Leslie Holbrook</td>
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<td>Tracey B. Ohaus</td>
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<tr>
<th>Board of Assessment Appeals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bruce H. Watrous, Chmn.</td>
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<td>Dudley W. Clark, Jr.</td>
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<td>Leroy Edward Ward III</td>
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<th>Water Pollution Control Authority</th>
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<tr>
<td>Felise Cressman</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Pease</td>
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</table>
Albert Arthur Armington, Chmn 11/21/17
Samuel H. Chorches 11/21/17
Leroy Edward Ward III 11/21/17

Zoning Board of Appeals
Mark C. Borton, Chmn. 12/31/19
Vacancy 12/31/19
Vacancy 12/31/19
John J. DeLaura, Jr. 12/31/17
Michael Robert Desnoyers 12/31/17

Zoning Board of Appeals Alternates
Alexander C. Stein 12/31/19
Lisa Tollefson 12/31/19
Brian Sakidovitch 12/31/19

Justices of the Peace
Shirley Joy Davis 01/02/17
Mario S. Gioco 01/02/17
Margaret E. Gister 01/02/17
Paul R. Hinkel 01/02/17
Jonathan A. Joslow 01/02/17
Carl F. Manning 01/02/17
Emily S. Masters 01/02/17
Harvey E. Redak 01/02/17
Melvin F. Seifert 01/02/17
Anna Shubik Sweeney 01/02/17
Jerry A. Walden 01/02/17
Bruce H. Watrous 01/02/17
Whitelaw Wilson 01/02/17

Judge of Probate
Terrance D. Lomme 01/09/19

U.S. Representative-2nd Congressional District
Joe Courtney 01/03/17

U.S. Senators
Christopher S. Murphy 01/03/19
Richard Blumenthal 01/04/17

State Senator-33rd Senatorial District
Art Linares 01/04/17

State Representative-36th Assembly District
Philip J. Miller 01/04/17
### APPOINTED OFFICIALS  Served Fiscal Year: July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounting Manager</td>
<td>Peter Evankow</td>
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<td>Accounts Clerk</td>
<td>Sharon S. Echtman</td>
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<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>Jenny Watrous</td>
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<td>Animal Control Officer</td>
<td>Jae Wolf</td>
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<td>Assessor</td>
<td>Loreta Zdanys</td>
<td>Asst.: Darlene Pollock</td>
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<td>Auditors</td>
<td>O’Connor Davies, LLP</td>
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<td>Board of Fire Commissioners</td>
<td>Richard Schreiber, Chmn.</td>
<td>11/19/19</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Joel P. Severance</td>
<td>11/19/19</td>
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<td>John M. Divis</td>
<td>11/21/17</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bettie Perreault</td>
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<td>Peter J. Zanardi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ex-officio Members</td>
<td>James Schaefer, Chief</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Richard Leighton, Fire Marshal</td>
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<td>Lauren S. Gister, First Selectwoman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Official</td>
<td>Ronald Rose</td>
<td>08/14/16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Clerk</td>
<td>Sharon S. Echtman</td>
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<td>Cable Television Advisory Council</td>
<td>Vacancy (Town)</td>
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<td>Vacancy (School)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cedar Lake Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Vacancy</td>
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<td>Cedar Lake Advisory Committee (cont.)</td>
<td>Vacancy</td>
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<td>Central Regional Tourism District</td>
<td>Vacancy</td>
<td>07/01/17</td>
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<td>Chester Housing Partnership Committee</td>
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<td>Citation Hearing Officers</td>
<td>Elizabeth Perrault, Chmn.</td>
<td>11/21/17</td>
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<td>Richard Schreiber</td>
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<td>Whitelaw Wilson</td>
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<td>Community Decommissioning Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Vacancy</td>
<td>11/21/17</td>
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<td>Vacancy, Alternate</td>
<td>11/21/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compliance Officer</td>
<td>John S. Bennet</td>
<td>11/30/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecticut River Estuary Transit District</td>
<td>Leslie B. Strauss</td>
<td>02/21/17</td>
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<td>Connecticut River Gateway Commission</td>
<td>Margaret Wilson</td>
<td>07/01/16</td>
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<td>Vacancy</td>
<td>07/01/16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservation Commission</td>
<td>Theodore Taigen</td>
<td>11/01/19</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Margaret Wilson</td>
<td>11/01/19</td>
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<td>Patrick Woomer</td>
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<td>Richard P. Holloway</td>
<td>11/01/18</td>
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<td>Vacancy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Margot D. Burns</td>
<td>11/01/16</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Michael P. Prisloe, Jr., Chmn</td>
<td>11/01/16</td>
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Emergency Management
Joel P. Severance, Director
Thomas B. Layton, Deputy
Cy Libby, Deputy
Bruce H. Watrous, Deputy

Inland Wetland Officer
Anna Shubik Sweeney

Library Director
Linda Fox

Lower CT River Valley Council of Governments
Vacancy – BOS Rep. 12/04/17
Vacancy – BOS Rep. 12/04/17

Middlesex County Revitalization Commission
Edmund Meehan 11/21/17

Municipal Agent for Children
Tri-Town Youth Services Bureau, Gail Onofrio, Director

Municipal Economic Development Commission
Michael Sanders 11/01/20
Vacancy 11/01/20
Felise Cressman 11/01/19
Susan Wright, Chmn. 11/01/19
Patricia C. Bandzes 11/01/18

Park and Recreation Commission
Ivey Gianetti 11/01/18
Deron Grabel 11/01/18
Aaron Page 11/01/17
John B. Williams, Chmn. 11/01/17
Vacancy 11/01/17
Susan G. Hotkowski 11/01/16
Elizabeth Libby Williams 11/01/16

Regional Agriculture Council
Bev Tarpill

Regional Mental Health Board
Vacancy 04/30/18

Resident State Trooper
Trooper Matthew Ewing, State Police-Troop F

Sanitarian
Lee Vito

Energy Task Force
Patrick Woomer, Chmn.
Rick Holloway
Sandy Prisloe
Peter Harding
Justin Hardy
Ed Meehan
Bill Bernhart

Engineer
N. L. Jacobson and Associates 11/21/17

Fields/Grounds Committee for Region District 4
Vacancy 11/21/17
Vacancy 11/21/17

Fire Investigator
David Roberge

Fire Marshal
Richard Leighton

Harbor Management Commission
Michael S. Adams 10/03/19
Joel P. Severance, Chmn. 10/03/19
Gordon Van Nes 10/03/19
Everett (Cy) Libby 10/03/17
Leroy Edward Ward 10/03/17

Harbor Management Commission Alternates
Vacancy 10/03/21
Vacancy 10/03/17

Harbor Master
George G. Bartlett

Historian
Robert Miceli

Human Services Director
Rose Bininger
Retirement Board
Lawrence M. Sypher 12/16/18
Vacancy 12/16/18
James Grzybowski 12/16/17
Lori Ann Sidoti Clymas 12/16/16
Van C. Standke, Chmn. 12/16/16

South Central CT Emergency Medical Services Council Inc.
Emily S. Masters 12/01/16

Tree Warden
Scot Mills 11/21/17

Tri-Town Youth Service Bureau Representative
Vacancy 11/21/17

Valley Shore Emergency Communications Board of Directors
Vacancy 11/21/17
Vacancy 11/21/17

Zoning Enforcement Officer
Judy Brown
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

BOARD OF SELECTWOMEN
Lauren S. Gister, First Selectwoman
Charlene Janecek, Selectwoman
Carolyn Linn, Selectwoman

FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016
HIGHLIGHTS OF BOARD OF SELECTMEN ACTIONS AND PROJECTS

July
The Board of Selectmen voted to adopt revised Chester Health Department Fees for Wells, Septic and Food Licenses.

The Board of Selectmen appointed Loreta Zdanys as Town of Chester Assessor for the following year and approved the Assessor Services Agreement between the Towns of East Haddam and Chester for the continuance of services for FY 15/16, as discussed during budget preparation.

The Board of Selectmen approved the use of the Chester Seal on store merchandise at the new Compass Rose apparel store, upon completion and adoption of a letter of understanding developed by the Town Attorney.

First Selectman Meehan reported that the Main Street reconstruction project is underway, that the location of the new water main has caused some necessary readjustment in the location of drainage and hydrants. Additionally, the quantity and cost of materials to fill the trenches was higher than anticipated, but there was also a $15,000 credit issued for an unnecessary curtain drain on the south side of the post office. The south side and Laurel Hill Cemetery catch basins were completed and work was to begin soon on the north side basins and the new culvert.

Aug.
The Board of Selectmen approved a motion to recommend to Town Meeting the renewal of the Resident State Trooper Contract for FY15/16. The local share for the Resident Trooper has increased from 70% to 85%.

The Board of Selectmen reviewed and made recommendations to the Board of Finance for fiscal year 14/15 end of year transfers. Unaudited figures show a surplus of $177,083.00. The Town will be reimbursed $19,541 due to engineering costs on behalf of the WPCA for the Main Street Bridge.

The Board of Selectmen voted to recommend the Capital Improvement Program to the Board of Finance for forwarding to Town Meeting for release of Funds. Items include the renewal of the Resident State Trooper Contract, equipment replacement for Chester Hose Company, HVAC improvements at the elementary school, the purchase of radios for Chester police, and funding for the Main Street Project.

The contract addendum for Main Street East reconstruction from School Lane to Middlesex Avenue was approved at a price of $115,000 for 825 feet.
The Board of Selectmen were briefed on and discussed long term management of Cedar Lake and the surrounding watershed.

First Selectman Meehan announced that the Chester Village West assessment appeal was settled and will impact tax revenue negatively in the amount of $221,000.

First Selectman Meehan also reported a major septic system backup at Chester Elementary School at the end of July, causing approximately $60,000 in cleanup and damage. An insurance claim was been made, and all work was expected to be complete prior to the start of the next school year.

**Sept.** The Board of Selectmen approved new job descriptions for the Assistant Librarian and Circulation Assistant positions, to comply with the need for “double coverage” as approved in the budget.

The Board of Selectmen approved the renewal of the lease at 20 Water Street for two one year terms. Water quality and maintenance needs were discussed and reviewed.

First Selectman Meehan reported on a proposal for a Theatrical Consultant for the Meeting House and preliminary repairs needed to maintain the safety of the building.

The Board of Selectmen reviewed and approved the draft of Chester Hose Company Volunteer Service Awards Program revision dated June 17, 2015 and voted to send it to the Town Attorney and Retirement Board for their review.

First Selectman Meehan reported the Main Street Reconstruction Project as approximately 60% complete, including reclaim of the street, drainage basins installed and granite curbing completed. Invoices currently being paid from STEAP grant funds; no capital funds expended to date.

Main Street Bridge replacement preparation continuing; First Selectman Meehan reported that he was working with the EDC and Merchant’s Association to minimize impact from construction. The Board of Selectmen approved moving the Main Street Water Trough to the Historical Society temporarily to protect it from possible damage due to construction.

The Board of Selectmen voted to send an application to the State Traffic Commission to place a “No Through Trucks” sign at the Cross Road and Butter Jones Road intersections.

**Oct.** The Board of Selectmen approved a request to remove the trees at the War Memorial and replant Pin Oak trees, due to their more appropriate growth configuration for the location.

The balance of capital funds from the Chester Hose Company roof replacement approved to be reallocated to the Firehouse Building Account to help pay for a new boiler.
The Board of Selectmen authorized Town Hall Attic Energy Conservation Project, which should result in less heat loss, lower energy bills and fewer ice dams in the future.

First Selectman Meehan reported on the status of the Main Street Reconstruction Project. Paving expected to be complete in October, the lights in Laurel Hill Cemetery are awaiting further action by Eversource, and street signage and painting remain for completion, along with one driveway at Dave Dengler’s house. Members of the Board of Selectmen and the Main Street Project Committee attended a site walk. There are approximately 25 outstanding items on the “punch list”.

First Selectman Meehan reported that the Governor’s cut in municipal aid resulted in the loss of Chester’s PILOT funding in the amount of $13,552.

Main Street Bridge Project preparations continue, and the contractor and DOT have agreed to additional signage to assist the businesses during the construction period. Frontier still has not moved the wires.

The Library Building Committee reported that they are still working with the architect and have a rough concept for the shape of the building. The Board of Selectmen discussed the pros and cons of a two story building, and asked Jeff Jacobsen to mark out the potential building shape in the North Quarter Park location for assistance in conceptualizing such a large building on the site. There was discussion about whether the grant would be affected by a change in size of the building.

Chester received a Clean Community Award from the DEEP.

**Nov.** The Board of Selectmen voted to lease replacement copiers for the Town Hall and the Library, with the stipulation that the Library will budget for and be responsible for additional costs associated with its printer.

The Board of Selectmen discussed the continuation of the Main Street Project and the possibility of funding it through the State DOT run LOTCIP program, which provides state funding in lieu of federal transportation funds for local road projects. The Board of Selectmen agreed to request that Jeff Jacobsen provide a proposal for the project and begin preparing the LOTCIP application to be ready for submission in early spring.

The new Board of Selectmen discussed the many vacancies on various boards and commissions, as well as the requirement to reappoint major positions (Town Attorney, Town Engineer, Tree Warder, etc.) immediately after an election. The Board will consider the protocol for staggering or changing terms for better continuity in the future, as well as the possibility of changing some positions from elected to appointed.

**Dec.** The Board of Selectmen appointed outgoing First Selectman Ed Meehan as liaison to the State DOT Bridge Replacement Project for the 6 weeks leading up to the road closure.

The Board of Selectmen determined that the Main Street Committee was a valuable asset in assuring consistency and oversight for the Main Street and Bridge Replacement
projects, although there is not a large role for them to play until the major planning for the next phase of the Main Street project begins.

The Board of Selectmen voted to authorize First Selectman Lauren Gister to sign the Memorandum of Understanding to participate in the Homeland Security Grant Program.

Jan. The DOT Main Street Bridge Replacement project is underway. Main Street is closed to traffic and there is only sidewalk passage on one side of the street. There has been good cooperation between residents, merchants and contractors and all attempts will be made to encourage residents to patronize our shops during the construction.

The Board of Selectmen were briefed by and discussed the ETeam’s proposal to purchase Chester’s streetlights from Eversource and convert to LED as a way to save taxpayer dollars and retain control over placement and wattage of existing lighting. Eversource plans to convert all streetlights to LED over the next 3-5 years. Owning Chester’s streetlights would result in a possible net savings of $15-25,000.00 per year.

The Board of Selectmen recommended that the replacement of public works vehicles be staggered in the next Capital Budget and that a new dump truck be purchased within the next year so that both large vehicles will not need replacement at the same time.

First Selectman Lauren Gister was authorized by the Board of Selectmen to enter into and deliver to the State Dept. of Emergency Services and Public Protection Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security any and all documents necessary to carry out the business of the Town of Chester. This was approved specifically to allow for submission of an Emergency Management Grant proposal.

First Selectwoman Gister reported that the Town of Deep River will raise the cost of Chester’s use of the Deep River Transfer Station by $20,000 in the next fiscal year. The cost has not gone up in many years.

Feb. The results of a random OSHA inspection (held on Election Day in November of 2015) were received, and included 12 citations and $1200.00 in fines. The Board of Selectmen reviewed the results of the inspection. First Selectwoman Gister attended an informal conference at OSHA and reported that most of the fines were reduced or vacated, and that most items were corrected by the appropriate departments. The two outstanding items that remain will be corrected in the next few weeks; safety lighting and noise monitoring at the Town Garage.

First Selectwoman Gister reported that interviews have been held with candidates for a new Administrative Assistant to replace Lynne Jacques, who will retire at the end of February. The new Administrative Assistant will be Jenny Watrous. Additionally, two additional personnel have given notice: the Tax Clerk, Sandy Trabucchi, will be moving out of state, and the Head Librarian, Linda Fox, will be retiring in July.

The Board of Selectmen reviewed a list of comments and suggestions from residents regarding the Phase I Main Street Project. The list included culvert walls, lighting, cemetery parking and signage.
The Board of Selectmen discussed fiscal year 15-16 proposed budget increases for contractual salary increase of 3%, the billing for the Resident Trooper program, transfer station costs, care and maintenance of the watershed and Cedar Lake, fire department equipment replacement, and new state requirements for Registrar training. The Board of Selectmen also discussed the increase in unfunded mandates for education and municipalities.

The Board of Selectmen discussed the cost for Chester’s use of the Deep River Transfer Station for bulky waste and recycling. Chester’s agreement with Deep River does not include or allow Chester residents to use the transfer station for normal household waste. Selectwoman Linn agreed to study any alternatives available to Chester for these services and to report formally back to the Board of Selectmen in the future.

First Selectwoman Gister reported that the area First Selectmen have delivered a letter to the Shoreline Times newspaper requesting that they cease distributing unsubscribed papers by tossing them into every driveway. Many prior complaints and individual resident requests have been sent to the paper with no observable result.

Mar. The Board of Selectmen discussed Middlesex Hospital’s request for town support of the paramedic program. The program is underfunded by approximately a million dollars based in part by additional taxes and funding changes at the state level. This will likely be a budget discussion item.

The LOTCIP grant application is complete and ready to be reviewed for submission to RiverCOG to apply for funding of the next Phase (identified on the Master Plan as Phase III) of the Main Street Project.

The Board of Selectmen were briefed on the history of studies done on Cedar Lake and the need for Cedar Lake/Watershed management. The Board discussed the need for a management plan for the area and the possibility of reactivating the Cedar Lake Advisory Committee.

First Selectwoman Gister reported that the Department of Transportation will be scheduling the repaving of Route 148 from the Library to the Ferry Landing. Rather than do the project while the bridge project is occurring, an agreement was reached to postpone the repaving until the fall of 2016.

Apr. The Board of Selectmen discussed the current vacancy on the Planning & Zoning Commission and the proper method for appointing a replacement. Clarification was received from the Town Clerk and the Town attorney that specific statutory guidance calls for the vacancy to be filled directly from the Commission, and not by the Board of Selectmen. The matter was referred to the Planning and Zoning Commission to fill the seat until the next election.

The Board of Selectmen reviewed the proposed amendment to the Volunteer Service Award Program for Hose Company volunteers. The original ordinance has not been amended since March of 2000. The changes to the program and the amendment to the Ordinance must be done simultaneously in conjunction with the upcoming budget.
Selectwoman Gister reported on going noise complaints from residents regarding motorcycles and loud music, particularly emanating from the Pattaconk patio. Additionally, there are now two restaurants using garbage pickup services with multiple cans located on the public sidewalk, sometimes overflowing and blocking access to parking spaces. The Board discussed the possibility of a noise ordinance, other noise reduction actions, arrangements with businesses, and a possible decibel study of the downtown area. Further investigation is needed.

First Selectwoman Gister reported that the Main Street Bridge project is on schedule and the road is anticipated to be open before Memorial Day weekend. The three new decorative lights will not be powered due to the decision by the Board to forgo the electrical box on the sidewalk in front of Simons Marketplace. No other suitable location was found or available to place the box. These lights will be powered during the next phase of the project. The State has done a lighting study and determined that the lighting is adequate without them for safety purposes.

First Selectwoman Gister reported that the Department of Transportation will be scheduling the repaving of Route 148 from the Library to the Ferry Landing. Rather than do the project while the bridge project is occurring, an agreement was reached to postpone the repaving until the fall of 2016.

**May**

The Board of Selectmen discussed the process for moving forward with preliminary design work for Phase III of the Main Street project. A proposal was received for the design portion of the project through the Town Engineer and funds need to be released to proceed. The Board of Finance has concerns about going forward with design work prior to grant funds being approved, and has asked that the funds for the survey and design work be divided into phases, and the money be allocated and released accordingly. The Board discussed having an additional public presentation on the project.

The Main Street Bridge and the road are open, although the Main Street Committee, First Selectwoman, Fire Marshal, contractors and state personnel will be developing a “punch list” for completion of streetscape elements, painting and the crosswalks.

First Selectwoman Gister reported that she has been exploring options for replacement of the Town’s phone system. Parts can no longer be acquired for the current system server, and a new server will likely cost $15-20,000.00.

The Board of Selectmen approved the use of the empty office on the second floor of Town Hall for the Library Director, to replace the necessity for her to work part time from home.

**Jun.**

The Board of Selectmen authorized the approval of the renewal insurance services contract with the Archambault Company (now known as Smith Brothers).

The Board of Selectmen authorized First Selectwoman Gister to sign the first portion of the proposal for survey and engineering work for Phase II of the Main Street Project and
a request to the Board of Finance to release $60,000.00 for the first portion of the design work.

The Board of Selectmen discussed the planning of economic development training for members of boards, departments and the general public, to be scheduled for July.

First Selectwoman Gister reported that, subsequent to the approval of Chester’s budget and the setting of the mil rate, Governor Malloy revised the state’s budget, removing approximately $20 million in municipal aid across the 169 towns. It is unknown what effect this cut will have on Chester in the coming year.

CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

History
In 1973, the Connecticut Legislature recognized the Lower Connecticut River Valley as one of the State’s most important natural, recreational and scenic areas, and authorized establishment of the Connecticut River Gateway Commission. In July 1974, the Commission became operational with eight eligible towns, two regional planning agencies and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection participating.

The Gateway Conservation Zone is about 30 miles long and includes those portions of its eight member towns (Chester, Deep River, East Haddam, Essex, Haddam, Lyme, Old Lyme and Old Saybrook, including the Borough of Fenwick) within view of the river. Since 1973, this area has been recognized as a unique area. The Nature Conservancy has designated the lower Connecticut River as one of its "Last Great Places"; the river’s tidelands were recognized as an “internationally significant” habitat for waterfowl under the terms of the international Ramsar Convention; the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Interior has recognized the Lower Connecticut River Valley as “one of the most important ecological landscapes” in the United States; and in 1999, the River was designated as one of 14 American Heritage Rivers by the President of the United States.

Scenic Preservation Responsibilities
While other organizations have primarily concerned themselves with natural ecological systems in the river valley, this Commission has concentrated much of its attention on the protection of key lands along the river that contribute to the valley’s scenic qualities. Since its inception, the Commission has worked with others to protect well over 1,000 acres of land through over $1 million in gifts or purchase of scenic easements, development rights and fee simple titles. In 2015, in partnership with the Middlesex Land Trust and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Gateway participated in the acquisition of 50 acres of highly visible, historic land on a hillside above the Connecticut River in the Haddam Neck area of Haddam. The property, now known as the “Brainerd Quarry Preserve”, celebrates the long history of the Brainerd family as conservationists and, years ago, colonial quarriers in Haddam Neck and elsewhere.

Land Use Oversight Responsibilities
Another significant role assigned to the Gateway Commission by the 1973 legislation is establishment of common zoning standards for height, setback, lot coverage and the like, which
member towns have agreed to adopt and enforce within the Gateway Conservation Zone. At its monthly meetings, the Commission reviews and acts on zone changes, regulations changes and variance applications affecting land within the Conservation Zone referred to it by local boards and commissions. No zone change or change in regulations affecting land within the Conservation Zone can become effective without the Commission's approval, a statutory responsibility that gives the Commission a great deal of authority and say over land use along the river in the lower river valley. It’s a responsibility that the Commission takes very seriously.

As of June 30, 2016, Gateway member towns of Chester, Deep River, East Haddam, Haddam, Lyme, Old Lyme and Old Saybrook have incorporated the 2004 standards into their zoning regulations as required by State statute. The Gateway Commission has completed new additions to the existing standards and has discussed them with each of the eight member town zoning authorities. It is hoped that the new standards will be adopted and included in each town’s zoning regulations by the end of 2016.

Other Activities
RiverCOG Environmental Planner Margot Burns has continued the collaboration of land trusts within the lower Connecticut River – the Lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange (LTE) - with an eye toward a greater alliance and coordination amongst the trusts. Conservation effectiveness is the goal which is being pursued through regional collaboration without losing individual autonomy. The Gateway Commission’s sister land trust – the Connecticut River Land Trust – participates in the alliance work. Find out about the Exchange at www.lcrlandtrustexchange.org

Delegates
Members as of June 30, 2016 include: Margaret Wilson (Treasurer) of Chester; Nancy Fischbach and Kate Cotton of Deep River; Harvey Thomas and Crary Brownell of East Haddam; Claire Matthews and Jerri MacMillian of Essex; Susan R. Bement and Chip Frey of Haddam, J. Melvin Woody (Chairman) and Emily Bjornberg of Lyme; Peter Cable and Suzanne Thompson (Vice Chairman) of Old Lyme; Madeline Fish (Secretary) and Belinda Ahern of Old Saybrook; Raul de Brigard of RiverCOG; and David Blatt of the Connecticut DEP (Commissioner’s Representative). Fenwick Borough has been designated an ad hoc member and is represented by Borough Warden Fran Adams. Going into fiscal year 2016-2017, the Commission continues to seek a regional representative from RiverCOG.

For more information, contact River COG Deputy Director and Gateway staff J. H. Torrance Downes at (860) 581-8554 or attdownes@rivercog.org. Contact information can also be found on the web at www.ctrivergateway.org.

LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Judy Snyder, Office Manager

RiverCOG, one of Connecticut’s nine Councils of Governments, is governed by the chief elected officials of its 17 member towns: Chester, Clinton, Cromwell, Deep River, Durham, East Haddam, East Hampton, Essex, Haddam, Killingworth, Lyme, Middlefield, Middletown, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, Portland, and Westbrook. The RiverCOG is responsible for planning of regional land use, transportation, emergency preparedness, environmental conservation,
economic development, and homeland security. RiverCOG also provides regional services such as household hazardous waste collection.

Current officers for RiverCOG are Bonnie Reemsnyder (Old Lyme), serving as Chairperson, Michael Maniscalco (East Hampton) as Vice-Chairperson, Noel Bishop (Westbrook) as Secretary, and Carl Fortuna (Old Saybrook) as Treasurer.

Fiscal year 2016 was a year of changes for RiverCOG. It was Sam Gold’s first full year as Executive Director, during which he established himself, learning from the chief elected officials and staff, while at the same time bringing to RiverCOG new management techniques, best practices, and projects. RiverCOG continued a legacy of political engagement with the state and federal government on the behalf of our member municipalities, including a new tradition of holding a COG meeting with the region’s legislators at the state capitol in Hartford during the legislative session.

The agency saw a number of staffing changes in the past year with Long-time serving Deputy Director Jeanne Davies stepped down after fifteen years with RiverCOG and CT River Estuary RPA. Jeanne is now Executive Director of the newly formed CT Resource Conservation and Development District. Jeremy DeCarli is now East Hampton’s Town Planner and Erin Bogan left RiverCOG to start her own business. RiverCOG also welcomed a new planner, Jon Curtis, a recent Master’s of Urban Planning graduate of the University of Pennsylvania. Torrance Downes was promoted to Deputy Director and Nate Hougrand to Associate Planner.

Under state statute, RiverCOG through its Regional Planning Committee (RPC), reviews proposed zoning text and map changes that affect property within 500 feet of municipal boundaries and subdivisions which touch or cross town lines, as well as, municipal plans of conservation and development. The RPC includes a representative and alternate from each municipal Planning Commission in the region. The RPC is working with staff on the first Regional Plan of Conservation of Development for the Lower Connecticut River Valley Region. This plan will be a regional land use policy document that guides regional efforts. The Regional Plan is expected to be completed in 2017. RiverCOG also received a grant from the UConn and the state Department of Housing for a regional resiliency and long term disaster recovery plan. The Resiliency Plan work is being incorporated into the Regional Plan work and public involvement process.

RiverCOG also conducts regional transportation planning as a federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (RiverMPO). As an MPO, RiverCOG is responsible for programing federal and state transportation funds provided to the region by the U.S. and Connecticut Departments of Transportation.

RiverCOG hosts and staffs various regional initiatives and commissions including: the Connecticut River Gateway Commission, the Shoreline Basic Needs Task Force, the Land Trust Exchange, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, the Regional Agricultural Commission, the RiverCOG Strategic Economic Growth Committee and other groups as space and time permits. RiverCOG completed a regional economic strategic plan for the region GrowSmart. This plan, received wide praise throughout the region and will set the stage for future regional economic development planning.
REGISTRARS OF VOTERS
Leslie Holbrook, Democrat
Tracey Ohaus, Republican

The Office of the Registrars of Voters in the State of Connecticut is a position governed by the Connecticut General Statutes and financially supported by the municipality in which the registrar of voters serves. Registrars of Voters work closely with the Office of the Secretary of the State developing methods and procedures to ensure the voting rights of citizens and administer all elections based on current election laws. Although most Registrars of Voters are elected officials, politics does not have any place in a Registrar of Voter’s office. It is the responsibility of both parties to ensure fair and equitable implementation of all laws.

The Registrar of Voters duties include: compile & maintain voter registry list, administer all elections, primaries, audits, referenda and election day registration, organize and conduct annual canvass of voters, voter education, training of polling place officials, certification of petitions, and supervise balloting in nursing and rest homes.

In 2015/2016 the registrars administered a municipal election, a presidential preference primary and the Region 4 referendum.

At the end of the year Chester had 2458 active registered voters: 1008 Democrats, 512 Republicans, 916 Unaffiliated and 22 to minor parties.

TOWN CLERK
Debra Germini Calamari, Town Clerk

The Town Clerk is known as the “Keeper of the Records.” This office maintains all records that pertain to the purchase and sale of real estate, which includes but is not limited to warranty deeds, mortgages, release of mortgages, liens, etc. you can obtain birth, marriage and death records here as well. If you are a veteran and served during war time, you can file your discharge papers with this office and get a reduced rate on your taxes.

The month of June is the time to renew your dog’s license. Proof of a current rabies vaccination and paperwork is also necessary if your dog has been neutered or spayed. Altering your dog will get you a reduced rate in the licensing fee. Renewals can be done either in person or by mail. All dogs have to be licensed once they turn six months old.

Residents may apply for admission as electors at this office on a daily basis and also with the Registrar of Voters, which has limited hours. Registrars will hold special voting sessions prior to primaries and elections. These sessions are filed with the Town Clerk and are posted on the Town board at the Town Hall.

This office maintains and certifies agendas, meeting times and minutes of various Town boards and commissions. The Town Clerk keeps track of all members of every board and commission and their terms of office. All poll ballots and absentee ballots for referendums, primaries and elections are done by this office. The Town Clerk serves as Clerk to Annual and Special Town Meetings and acts as the Custodian of the Town Seal and Registrar of Vital Statistics Seal. The
Town Clerk prepares and administers annual budgets for the office and all duties and responsibilities are prescribed by State Statutes and Town Ordinances.

To save the Town of Chester money, I annually apply for and receive Historic Preservation Grant money which I have used for preservation of old records, back file conversion and file cabinets for the vault, which in turn saves the Town thousands of dollars.

**TOWN MEETINGS**

**September 15, 2015**

VOTED: To appropriate and authorize the expenditure of $48,600 from the Capital Fund – Main Street Account 20-00-31-0000-046 for the reconstruction of Main Street from the intersection of Maple Street to School Lane intersection as recommended by the Board of Finance.

VOTED: To appropriate and authorize the expenditure of $45,000 from Capital Fund – Fire Equipment Replacement Account 20-00-42-0000-235 for the purchase of personal safety clothing, rescue air packs and hoses as recommended by the Board of Finance.

VOTED: To appropriate and authorize the expenditure of $10,000 from Capital Fund – Police Mobile Radio replacement Account 20-00-45-0000-072 as recommended by the Board of Finance.

VOTED: To appropriate and authorize the expenditure of $45,000 from Capital Fund – Chester Elementary School Account 20-00-90-0000-084 for the purchase of HVAC replacement.

VOTED: To authorize the Town of Chester to contract with the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of State Police for services of one (1) Resident State Trooper for the period of July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2017, and to authorize the First Selectman, Edmund J. Meehan, to execute such contract on behalf of the Town of Chester.

**January 27, 2016**

VOTED: To authorize the use of unexpended Capital Improvement Funds in the amount of $39,000.00 from the Firehouse Roof Replacement Account #20-00-36-0000-052 for the replacement of the Firehouse boiler as approved by the Board of Finance.

VOTED: To enact a Resolution to authorize Birth Certificate Copy Fee charges in accordance with the statutory rate for the State of Connecticut.

VOTED: To adopt a Resolution to authorize the First Selectman to enter into and participate with ten other towns and Valley Shore Emergency Communications in applying for funding through the Intertown Capital Equipment (ICE) Grant Program for the acquisition of a multi-site UHF Simulcast System to provide enhanced communications for firefighters and emergency medical personnel.

**April 11, 2016**

VOTED: To appropriate and authorize the expenditure of $115,000.00 from the Capital Fund – Highway Equipment Account 20-00-30-0000-030 for the purchase of a new International Dump Truck for the Public Works Department as recommended by the Board of Finance.

VOTED: To appropriate and authorize the expenditure of $18,000.00 from the Capital Fund – Town Buildings Repair and Code Compliance Account 20-00-36-000-065 for the repair of electrical and other
safety related items, replacement of the damaged stage floor and purchase of fire retardant curtains for
the Chester Meeting House as recommended by the Board of Finance.

**May 3, 2016**

**VOTED BY REFERENDUM:** To approve the Regional School District No. 4 budget of $19,480,374 for the
fiscal year beginning July 1, 2016.

Yes: 59  
No: 33

The total vote from Chester, Deep River and Essex was:

Yes: 290  
No: 220

**May 31, 2016**

**VOTED:** To select the method of payment and due date of installments of property taxes in keeping
with CT General Statutes 12-143 as follows:

a. Real estate taxes due in two halves, first half due July 1, 2016 and the second half due January 1, 2017
b. All motor vehicle bills due in one payment on July 1, 2016
c. All motor vehicle supplement bills due in one payment on January 1, 2017
d. Minimum interest charge of $2.00
e. Negate all bills under $5.00

**VOTED:** To adopt a budget for the Town of Chester for fiscal year July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017 an
amount totaling $13,129,668, as recommended by the Board of Finance.

**VOTED:** To adopt a five year Capital Plan, as recommended by the Board of Finance.

**VOTED:** To authorize the First Selectman and Treasurer to borrow such sums of money from time to
time as may be necessary to defray expenses of the Town in accordance with authorized appropriations
of fiscal year ending June 30, 2017.

**VOTED:** To authorize the following Capital transfer, as recommended by the Board of Finance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-00-01-0000-007</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen-Assigned</td>
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<td>Buildings-Town Building Emergency Generators</td>
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<td>20-00-45-0000-072</td>
<td>Police-Mobile Radio Replacement</td>
<td>20-00-45-0000-072</td>
<td>$  532</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-00-90-0000-090</td>
<td>School-Fire Code/Safety Compliance</td>
<td>20-00-90-0000-090</td>
<td>$  6,934</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-00-42-0000-235</td>
<td>Fire-Equipment Replacement</td>
<td>20-00-42-0000-235</td>
<td>$38,404</td>
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**VOTED:** To authorize the following Capital transfer, as recommended by the Board of Finance:

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<th>Amount</th>
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<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-00-01-0000-007</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen-Assigned</td>
<td>20-00-01-0000-007</td>
<td>$123,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-00-31-0000-446</td>
<td>Infrastructure-Road/Sidewalk Repairs</td>
<td>20-00-31-0000-446</td>
<td>$123,500</td>
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</table>

**VOTED:** To authorize the following Capital transfer, as recommended by the Board of Finance:

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<th>From</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-00-31-0000-046</td>
<td>Infrastructure-Main Street Phase I</td>
<td>20-00-31-0000-046</td>
<td>$314,846</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-00-31-0000-048</td>
<td>Infrastructure-Main Street Phase III</td>
<td>20-00-31-0000-048</td>
<td>$314,846</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VOTED: To authorize the expenditure of $15,000 from the Capital Fund – Town Hall Computer Replacement line item # 20-00-01-0000-092, as recommended by the Board of Finance.

VOTED: To authorize the expenditure of $3,000 from the Capital Fund-Cedar Lake/Watershed line item #20-00-01-0000-042, as recommended by the Board of Finance.

VOTED: To authorize the expenditure of $10,000 from the Capital Fund-Main Street Project III line item # 20-00-31-0000-048, as recommended by the Board of Finance.

VOTED: To authorize the expenditure of $275,000 from the Capital Fund-Road/Sidewalk Repairs line item # 20-00-31-0000-446, as recommended by the Board of Finance.

VOTED: To authorize the expenditure of $75,000 from the Capital Fund-Energy Efficient Projects line Item # 20-00-31-0000-060, as recommended by the Board of Finance.

VOTED: To authorize the expenditure of $67,000 from the Capital Fund-Town Buildings-Repairs/Code Compliance line item #20-00-36-0000-065, as recommended by the Board of Finance.

VOTED: To authorize the expenditure of $45,000 from the Capital Fund-Fire-Equipment Replacement Line item # 20-00-42-0000-235, as recommended by the Board of Finance.

June 30, 2016
VOTED: To appropriate and authorize the expenditure of $60,000.00 from the Capital Fund-Main Street Project III Account 20-00-31-0000-048 for completion of surveys and necessary engineering and design in preparation for the next phase of the Main Street Project, from the Main Street Bridge to the Laurel Hill Cemetery, as recommended by the Board of Finance.

VOTED: To authorize the adoption of the revised Chester Hose Company Volunteer Services Award Program and to amend the Ordinance establishing a Pension Benefit Plan for the Benefit of the Members of the Chester Hose Company, Inc. adopted 12/21/1993 and amended 3/9/2000 to include the following substantive change as recommended by the Board of Selectmen:

a. To provide an increased maximum benefit for length of service to equal $276.00 per month instead of the current $250.00.

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH PROGRAM

“Volunteer activity has been a mainstay for Chester and should be encouraged,” states the Town’s Vision Report. Contributions of time, energy, and skills are essential in helping to keep taxes down and promote the social and economic growth of our Town.

The Town of Chester survives on its volunteers. Volunteer possibilities can be found at Chester Hose Company, various boards and commissions, working at the polls, etc. If you have a desire to help people or provide community service, have a sense of public duty, feel a need to reciprocate because you or someone you know has received volunteer services, or just enjoy giving, your help is always needed.
How the Volunteer of the Month program works:

- Citizens nominate volunteers by letter or by filling out one of the forms available in the Selectman’s Office or online at www.chesterct.org
- The Board of Selectmen reviews the nominees and selects a Volunteer of the Month.
- A Volunteer Plaque displaying each volunteer’s name and month honored will be displayed in the Town Hall for all to see.

FINANCES

ASSESSOR’S REPORT

Loreta Zdanys, Assessor
Darlene Pollock, Assessor’s Clerk

There are a number of state and local programs providing exemptions or tax relief for those who are seniors, veterans, active duty military, blind, totally disabled, and emergency ambulance and fire personnel. For information regarding eligibility, income requirements, and filing periods for the programs, please call our office at 860-526-0013 ext. 512, or visit our office on the second level of the Town Hall. We are open Monday through Thursday from 9:00 to 12:00 and 1:00 to 4:00. The office is closed on Friday.

The assessor’s 2014 grand list prior to the actions of the Board of Assessment Appeals is $442,507,270. The 2014 grand list generates the taxes that provide the primary amount of revenue that is utilized in running the town for the 2015/2016 fiscal year.

BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS

Mark Borton, Chairman

The Board of Assessment Appeals is designed to serve as an appeal body for taxpayers who believe the town has erred in the valuation of their property or erroneously denied them exemptions.

The Board of Assessment Appeals meets in March for Real Estate and Personal Property each year. To file an appeal the taxpayer must make written application on or before February 20th. They must appear or have their attorney/agent appear before the Board at one of its meetings and answer all questions concerning his or her taxable property in the town. Application forms are available upon request at the Assessor’s office or on the town website at www.chesterct.org/permits.

For appeals of Motor Vehicle assessments the board meets annually in September.

From July 2015 to June 2016, there were 3 applications to the Chester Zoning Board of Appeals. One application was denied, one was withdrawn and one was granted. The Zoning Board of Appeals has recommended to the Board of Selectmen and the Planning & Zoning
Commission that they consider rezoning areas of multiple small lots in areas of much larger lots, such as (but not limited to) Castle View Drive and Cedar Lake Terrace.

It is the duty of the three elected members of the board to process each appeal by reviewing the property in question to determine whether the assessment should be reduced, raised, or left unchanged. The Board, as required by law, notifies each taxpayer in writing as to the action taken in response to the appeal.

TREASURER’S REPORT  
Elizabeth A. Netsch, Treasurer

The Treasurer manages the cash flow, investment, and borrowing of Town funds in the most profitable and safe means available. All Town funds are received and disbursed by the Treasurer, when appropriately authorized.

The Treasurer is responsible for the management of the Town General Fund and Board of Education Accounts, which include all accounts that are the depositories for the budgeted revenues and expenditures. There are 12 separate additional funds for specified programs and retirement plans maintained outside the annual budgeted General Fund. The 13 funds are deposited in 21 different accounts at 6 different institutions. The Town reports all funds on a general ledger system.

In a year of exceptionally low rates, with vigilant cash management, interest earned on the General Fund, for the fiscal year 2015/2016, totaled $11,816. This amount exceeded last year’s revenue and this year’s budgeted expectation by 40%. Earnings on other Town accounts were $6,717, excluding retirement funds. This interest and dividend income accumulated from the Treasurer’s office between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016 is revenue available to offset future taxes or purchase goods and services for each fund.

Outstanding bonds include the 2002 issue for the Town Hall, due to retire on October 1, 2017 and the Clean Water debt for the 2009 sewer expansion, which will mature in 2029. In addition, the Town of Chester pays its share, based on its current average daily membership, of the Regional School District 4 bond payments.

Through optimum and safe investments, efficient management of cash flow, and careful review of all orders drawn on the General Government and Board of Education, the Treasurer provides the most effective use of the taxpayers’ money.

TAX COLLECTORS REPORT  
Madaline Meyer

The responsibilities of the Tax Office in Chester include, but are not limited to, the collection of real estate, motor vehicle and personal property taxes, which this year totaled 6296 individual bills and an additional 638 supplemental MV bills for a grand total of 6934 bills, for the 2014 grand list. Each bill is mailed out of our office and is combined into one envelope with exact
match information, as often as possible. This process takes several days and is done, with the help of three or four workers from town, right in our office.

Our collections for the fiscal year from July 1st, 2015 thru June 30th, 2016 on the recent 2014 grand list with the overall expected budget at $11,099,454.00 are as follows:

- Current taxes collected = $10,822,871.48 = 98.71% of budgeted $10,964,454.00
- Back taxes collected = $ 118,120.73 = 131.25% of budgeted $ 90,000.00
- Interest/fees collected = $ 59,109.46 = 131.25% of budgeted $ 45,000.00
- Grand total collected = $11,000,101.67 = 99.10% of budgeted $11,099,454.00

The current collection rate is down a little, but there was a large credit given to one account in town, by court order, and this occurred after budget time, so it was unexpected. If that reduced amount had been collected, we would be over the 100% mark, for sure. It was a total of $111,716 reduction which is quite high for a small town. We did collect above expected amounts for back taxes and interest and fees. As I stated last year, I believe the economy has started to hurt our Town which is a little later than what in other towns and other states. I certainly hear about a lot of people, both young and old who are having a hard time paying their taxes and their bills. We have approximately 35 different accounts that are on a payment plan type schedule. But most of them, keep to the payment plan.

We also are responsible for collecting 43 usage bills for the WPCA and this past year, our WPCA collections had 43 out of the 43 bills paid in full with no account delinquent. The Benefit Assessment collection rate was again this year at 100% with only 39 left out of the original 80 to be paid in the future. The other 41 bills have been paid in full and liens have been released and no longer need to be mailed or collected or referenced.

One other big responsibility that is handled by our office is the registration of aircraft based at Chester Airport. We registered 110 different aircraft, which means we recorded the owner of the aircraft, type of aircraft, weight of the aircraft, FAA registration number and decal number that we issued. This was 6 less aircraft than last year. We have averaged registering between 105 to 125 aircraft over the most recent 10 years. Again this year, the Connecticut department that handles aircraft registrations, CAA, continued their stricter rules and all items had to match completely with the aircraft owner’s current FAA information. FAA registrations are now every 3 years, putting more pressure on aircraft owners to do more paperwork and provide us with their current updated information. Extra time was spent cross referencing this information on the FAA website and the information given to us by the aircraft owner. An aircraft could be a plane, helicopter or even an ultra-light. It continues to be a time consuming process but, luckily, this process takes place in September, October and November, so that is a less busy time for us. We also have the great privilege of meeting many new interesting people who might not live in Chester, but who store their aircraft at our local Chester Airport. Many of these owners are from out of town, but also love Chester, just like us!
The Town of Chester Retirement Board is made up of five Board Members appointed by the Board of Selectmen for a three-year term. Current members of the Retirement Board are Van Standke, Chairman, Lori Ann Clymas, Ray Archambault, James Grzybowski and Larry Sypher. The Retirement Board meets quarterly, and the public is invited to attend. Meeting schedules and agendas are available on the Town web site or from the Town Clerk.

The Retirement Board administers three retirement plans: Town of Chester Retirement Plan for Town employees, the Voluntary Deferred Compensation Plan (457) for Town employees, and the Volunteer Service Award Program (VSAP) for Members of the Chester Hose Company. The Board is responsible for plan administration and investments to fund the plans.

The Town retains Milliman and Company as the actuarial firm to provide the necessary reporting and valuations for the Town Retirement Plan and VSAP. Milliman calculates the annual deposits to be made by the Town to provide the future retirement benefits for plan participants. In addition, Milliman assists the Town by providing administrative and consulting assistance.

The Town budget for FY 2016/17 approved a request for the appointment of a Registered Investment Advisor to advise the Board on asset allocation and investment selection for both the Pension and VSAP plans. An investment advisor was selected during year. The services will be detailed in a formal contract for services and implemented prior to the end of 2016.

Town Retirement Plan
The Town of Chester Retirement Plan remained stable as a result of asset allocation and relatively flat performance in the stock and bond accounts. Assets as of June 30, 2016 were $1,459,731, after benefit payments of $58,971 and contributions during the year of $166,226, compared to $1,334,825 on June 30, 2015. Investments in this plan are managed by Voya Financial (formerly ING Life Insurance and Annuity Company), and consist of a money market fund, a stock fund, a bond fund and a balanced fund. Investments during the year are generally made in equal parts to each of the three investment funds, not including money market. In this fiscal year the contribution was invested in March 2016, but was invested in only the stock fund, balanced fund and money market fund.

Volunteer Service Award Program (VSAP)
The Volunteer Service Award Program was created to provide a length of service award benefit for qualified Members of Chester Hose Company. Assets as of June 30, 2016 were $607,060 after benefit payments of $13,097 and including deposits during the year of $34,044. This compares to a balance on June 30, 2015, of $562,531. The plan assets are invested in mutual funds of the Vanguard Group.

The Town Meeting approved an amendment to the VSAP plan during the year to increase the maximum potential benefit payment to members by $25 per month for the duration of the maximum payment period of 180 months. The estimated annual actuarial cost of this increase is $5,000, and is included the budget.

Voluntary Deferred Compensation Plan (457)
The Voluntary Deferred Compensation Plan provides Town employees the opportunity to contribute to a personal retirement fund on a tax-favored basis. Voya Financial (formerly ING Life Insurance and Annuity Company) administers the plan. A Roth option was added to this plan in the prior fiscal year.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ESTUARY COUNCIL OF SENIORS, INC.
Paul J. Doyle, Executive Director

The Estuary Council of Seniors, Inc. (ECSI) is a non-profit regional senior center located at 220 Main Street in Old Saybrook with café sites also in Killingworth, Lyme/Old Lyme and Old Saybrook. Since 1974, the ECSI’s mission has been to promote senior’s quality of life, community involvement, and independent living. Last year the ECSI provided over 71,906 nutritious meals including nearly 51,821 home delivered Meals On Wheels, and over 20,085 congregate meals, 366 rides to medical outpatient appointments outside the nine-town Estuary Region. Also, 1,678 individual received free preventative health screenings, and participated in social and exercise programs too numerous to count. Our “Choices” senior counseling position that helps seniors connect with other services available to them in the community as well as navigate the Medicare/Medicaid and Prescription Drug programs has been busier than ever especially at open enrollment time.

In addition to our essential senior service, ECSI is a fun place for mature residents to exercise, dance, play cards, go on trips together, get a massage or facial, hear an interesting lecture, attend an art exhibit, get a haircut, take a painting class, join a book club or writers group, volunteer, shop at the Thrift Shop, use our fitness center, or just sit and enjoy our beautiful view. ECSI has a lovely, large facility that welcomes residents of the Estuary region 50 years old or better. All in all we had over 104,229 visits to our center in the reported timeframe for meals, activities, support and fun.

During the reporting period for the Town of Chester, the Estuary served 22 residents a total of 2,953 home delivered meals and an additional 51 residents joined us for 776 congregate meals. Our Emergency Medical Outpatient Transportation provided 6 individuals with 42 rides to medical appointments. We had a total of 5,182 visits by a total of 464 people overall to the center from residents of Town of Chester

ECSI is funded in part by contributions from the generosity of the nine towns in the Estuary Region, Senior Resources Agency on Aging with Title III funds made available under the Older Americans Act, grants, donations, and fund raising efforts. I would like to thank the Town of Chester for your continued support of our programs. For information and schedules of our services and programs, please call 388-1611 weekdays from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. or visit our website at www.ecsenior.org. If you do not already receive our monthly newsletter, please call us and we'll be happy to add you to our mailing list or send it electronically. The newsletter is also downloadable from our website. We are pleased to continue to serve the residents of Town of Chester and be an integral part of services for seniors in the Estuary Region.
ESTUARY TRANSIT DISTRICT

Leslie Strauss Chairman

The Estuary Transit District (ETD) was formed in 1981 by the nine towns of the Connecticut River Estuary region. The nine towns include Clinton, Chester, Deep River, Essex, Killingworth, Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, and Westbrook. ETD’s mission is to provide local, coordinated public transportation for all residents of the area. To meet this goal, ETD operates public transit via the 9 Town Transit (9TT) service.

The Estuary Transit District is governed by a board of directors. Each member town appoints one representative, each having a weighted vote based on the population of the town he or she represents. Towns receiving contracted services appoint a non-voting member. The directors serve in a voluntary capacity to adopt policy, set budgets and conduct long term planning for the district. Regular board meetings are held on the third Friday of every other month at 9:30 A.M. at the Estuary Transit District. All meetings are open to the public.

9TT’s four deviated fixed routes serve the main corridors of the region and provide connections to public transit providers serving the surrounding regions. The routes include the Old Saybrook to Madison Shoreline Shuttle, the Old Saybrook to Chester Riverside Shuttle, the Old Saybrook to Middletown Mid-Shore Express, and the new Old Saybrook to New London Southeast Shuttle. Free connections are offered onto the New Haven, New London/Norwich, Middletown, and Hartford area bus services.

In addition to the deviated fixed routes, 9TT provides door-to-door service throughout all nine towns of the Estuary region as well as the towns of Durham, East Haddam, and Haddam through its Dial-A-Ride service. As with all of 9TT’s services, the Dial-A-Ride service is open to all persons with no age or disability restrictions.

ETD’s services are subsidized by federal, state and local funding. This allows for inexpensive fares of $1.50 for deviated fixed routes and $3.00 for Dial-A-Ride. ETD also receives a Title III grant through the area agency on aging which allows area senior citizens to ride any ETD service on a donation basis in lieu of the fare. More than 107,000 passenger trips we provided during the fiscal year, more than doubling the annual trips provided just seven years ago. Though ETD has continued to grow senior ridership, 80% of all trips are made by persons below 60 years of age, and over half of all trips are employment related.

ETD was notified that it was successful in obtaining funding for new fixed-route service between Madison and Middletown. The service will begin in the 2016-2017 fiscal year. Funding was also received for a needs assessment and site selection for a new operating and maintenance facility for the district. The study will be completed in the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

ETD’s federal funding sources are changing from rural to urban, which will require new administrative responsibilities and brings new federal requirements. This change will also provide new access to federal funding opportunities.
“No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.”

*Charles Dickens*

The Director of Human Services administers the Town’s emergency assistance programs and is responsible for planning and implementing social services programs for the adult, disabled and senior residents of the town. Disseminating information regarding the programs is the primary responsibility of the director. Information and referral is then made to the federal, state or local social service program for assistance.

Emergency assistance is provided to residents through several town programs. These programs include the Emergency Assistance Fund, the Chester Community / Fuel Fund, and the Salvation Army Emergency Fund. For this fiscal year, 49 individuals and families received help with medical costs (2), gasoline (3), rent (4), clothing (5), emergency food vouchers (17), and oil and electricity bills (18). 67 families qualified for the CT Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) and 17 families qualified for Operation Fuel. For every Operation Fuel application completed, the town receives a $21.00 reimbursement. This fiscal period $357.00 was collected for the Emergency Fuel Fund. The Shoreline Soup Kitchens & Pantries reported 75 Chester families using local food pantries with 123 residents currently receiving SNAP benefits.

As always, the community pulled together throughout the holiday season with generous donations of time, gifts, food, gift certificates and baskets. This year 41 families received Thanksgiving baskets and 40 children received toys for Christmas and free winter clothing from the “Warm the Children” program. The Salvation Army provided 35 children with “Payless” back to school shoe vouchers.

The Food Pantry continues to provide food to many residents and is completely funded by food and monetary donations. A big thank-you to the Chester Community for making the pantry such a big success. A special thank-you to Felise Cressman who has become the pantry’s coordinator and is invaluable in keeping the pantry running.

As Agent for the Elderly, the Director of Human Services continues to serve the growing population of persons over 65 years of age. Services include referral to social service programs, assistance with processing medical forms and Medicare Part D, obtaining alternate forms of housing and applying for home improvement loans and grants. Chester seniors participate in many of the following programs: ConnPACE, SNAP, QMB, Homeowner’s Tax Credit, Renter’s Rebate, Medical Transportation by the Estuary Council or FISH, Energy Assistance, Operation Fuel, Title XIX, Meals on Wheels, and the Department of Social Services Home Care Program for Elders.

In closing, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to all the organizations, residents, businesses and churches for your generous donations and dedicated help for those in need.
The Health Department has the responsibility of ensuring compliance with the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health regulations and to enforce local ordinances. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following: soil testing for land subdivisions, new septic systems and septic system repairs. The Sanitarian reviews all septic system proposed plans before granting approval and issuing a permit to construct the septic system. All septic systems are then inspected to ensure compliance with the State Public Health Code.

All applications for building additions, decks, pools, etc. are also reviewed as required by State Public Health Code Regulations.

All food service establishments and food vendors are licensed as required by town ordinance and all are inspected regularly for compliance with the State Public Health code regulations. This includes the requirement of a certified “Qualified Food Operator” responsible for the food operations.

The Health Department responds to all complaints in a timely manner, including anonymous complaints.

Other Health Department duties and responsibilities include inspection of school cafeterias and daycare facilities, the issuance of water well permits, lead paint investigations, pool inspections, etc. Also, the Sanitarian manages the mandatory septic tank pump out program for the WPCA and assists the WPCA in wastewater issues that affect the Town Municipal Subsurface Sewage Disposal System and water quality.

For the year 2015 -2016 the following were performed by the Health Department:

- New Septic Systems – 1
- Repair of Septic Systems – 12
- Well Permits – 8
- Sub-division – 0
- Food licenses issued – 20 (permanent)
- Food license issued – 28 (temporary)
- Food Service Inspections 75-100
- Permits for building additions, pools, decks, etc. – 21

Office hours for the Sanitarian are Mondays, 7:00 am – 8:00 am, Tuesdays, 4:30 pm – 7:00 pm, Thursdays, 7:00 am – 8:00 am. Other hours are available by appointment if necessary by calling 526-0013 ext. 206 and leaving a message. Residents should know that “free radon kits” are still available in the Sanitarian’s Office. Residents are encouraged to call with any questions if information is needed.
Since Tri-Town Youth Services’ establishment in 1984, the nonprofit has served youth (birth to 18) and their families who reside in Chester, Deep River, and Essex. The agency works with youth to strengthen connections with family, peers, school, and the community, carefully ensuring our services augment, not duplicate other programs. On the community level, Tri-Town convenes the local prevention council and continues to lead community mobilization efforts around asset building through Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth of Chester, Deep River, and Essex.

Counseling and crisis intervention were provided to residents for a wide range of issues through day and evening appointments with 24-hour phone availability. Issues addressed include parenting and relationship concerns, depression, suicide ideation, sexual abuse, and substance abuse, with referrals made in some instances. Our early intervention program, the Tri-Town Juvenile Review Board hears cases of youth in trouble with the law as they are referred.

Much of our work is directed to positive youth development, parent education, and building healthy families and communities. With the school social worker, we trained Peer Advocates at Valley Regional; facilitated two youth advisory boards, organized community service activities, facilitated several mentoring programs, offered supervised teen recreation activities, a youth job bank, babysitter training classes, Homework Hangout, a Summer Co-op for middle school youth, and involvement in Safe Grad. In addition to involvement with the Early Childhood Council, parent programs are offered for parents/caregivers and their one-year-olds or two-year-olds, parent consultations, and courses such as “Getting Ready for Change” and “Open Up”, a series for parents of teens. We sponsored the twenty-sixth annual substance prevention/awareness week, “High on Life”, successful through support from multiple facets of the community.

The Bureau’s Board of Directors is comprised of three to five members from each of the three towns and a youth representative. Our special thanks to: volunteers who have donated time and talent, to local taxpayers who support the bureau by providing the matching funds needed to procure our State Department of Education grant, and to all who have made monetary donations essential for maintaining our operating budget.

WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH COMMITTEE

Jenny Watrous, Chairman

The Town of Chester has in effect a Workplace Safety and Health Committee pursuant to State Law. Representatives from Chester Elementary School, Chester Parks and Recreation Commission, Chester Hose Company, Chester Public Library, the Public Works Department, the Police Department and the Town Hall make up the Committee. Meetings are held quarterly to discuss any safety and health concerns, Workers’ Compensation issues and Prevention and Control measures and conduct Safety and Health Training. All new Worker’s Compensation claims are reviewed to ensure that any corrective measures are immediately acted upon. As a result of the Workplace Safety and Health Committee, the Town has been successful in reducing claim activity and accidents in the workplace.
PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
Jon Lavy, Chairman

During the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the Commission held public hearings and regular monthly meetings to consider Special Exception applications which ultimately contribute to the growth and future of our community.

The Commission worked vigorously on the following as well:

- Adopted new General Principal and Special Principal Uses in both the Research & Light Manufacturing and Controlled Development Zones
- Adopted new Village District Sign Regulations
- Outdoor Dining approvals within the Village District
- Continued the Marijuana Moratorium to allow Commission time to react to the ever-changing landscape regarding the growth and distribution of medicinal marijuana and public comment
- The Commission submitted an application to amend the Regulations regarding the growth and distribution of medicinal marijuana. The Commission withdrew the application and is writing a new submission addressing the concerns expressed by citizens through the public hearing process

The Commission continues to balance the needs and desires of the business community and the Chester quality of life within the framework of the Zoning Regulations and the Chester Plan of Conservation and Development. The Commission appreciates the feedback it has received while reviewing many applications and continues to encourage those with a desire to see change within the Regulations to come forward at its monthly meetings to express their thoughts and ideas.

All those members and citizens who participate and donate their time to this work in progress should be commended for their dedication to the Town of Chester. It takes a community of active volunteers to help plan Chester's future while preserving its past.

INLAND WETLANDS AND WATERCOURSE AGENCY (IWWA)
Al Bisacky, Chairperson

Wetlands perform critical ecological and economic functions. Because of their ability to absorb water, trap sediment and filter pollutants, wetlands protect water quality and property. Wetlands, watercourses and their associated riparian zones provide essential habitat for fish and wildlife. They serve as venues for recreation, education and aesthetic enjoyment. Prior to the passage of the CT Inland wetlands and Watercourses Act of 1972, between a third and half of the State's original wetlands had been destroyed because their value was not understood.
The Chester IWWA implements the State’s Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act through regulations based on the Act. Criteria for the decision-making outlined in the Act direct the agency to consider the short and long term effects of the proposed activities on the wetlands, and to seek alternatives that minimize impact while allowing property owners use of their land.

A wetland permit is generally required for activities in or within 100 feet of a wetlands or watercourse. An activity further than 100 feet away may also be regulated if it is likely to create an impact on the wetlands or watercourse. Some activities are permitted “as of right” and others may require only an administrative permit from the Chester Wetlands Agent. The town wetland map provides a very general location of the wetlands and watercourse, but does not depict all wetlands and should be used only as a guide. The Chester IWWA regulations and permit applications are available online from the Town’s website. Anyone considering activities on their property should contact the Chester Wetlands Agent to determine if a permit is required.

During the 2015-2016 fiscal year, The Chester IWWA issued six regular permits for activities including sheds, a walkway to the Connecticut River and a retaining wall, an addition to a home, a buried water line, a two car garage and a deck. Three administrative permits were granted for outbuildings, bridge replacement, and installation of an outdoor generator and propane tank. There was one permit transfer and two permit modifications. They also continued to monitor a restoration project on a disturbed agricultural property and issued one notice of violation for an unregulated activity.

After the Chester IWWA receives the upcoming DEEP Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Model Municipal Regulations, they will begin the revision process of the Town of Chester Inland Wetland Regulations

BUILDING DEPARTMENT
Ronald Rose, Building Official

From July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 the value of Building Permits totaled $5,963,000.00

Fee charges for permits total: $28,893.12
Residential: 225 $5,535,000.00
Commercial: 20 $428,000.00

Breakdown:
Building Permits 102
Electrical Permits 73
Plumbing Permits 18
Heating Permits 51
Wood Stove Permits 5

State Education Fees submitted to the State of Connecticut during this time period $728.78
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Sandy Prisloe, Chairman

The Conservation Commission consists of seven members appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The commission is required to develop and maintain an inventory of all Chester properties permanently protected as open space; the commission also may inventory and study the town’s natural resources and make recommendations concerning their conservation and best uses to other town boards, commissions and officials. As of this annual report, there are two vacancies on the commission which significantly impedes its work.

During the 2014-2015 fiscal year, the Conservation Commission continued its focus on renewable energy and energy conservation, open space, invasive plants, and outreach. The Chester Energy Team, E-Team, includes three members of the Conservation Commission who keep the commission advised of town efforts to reduce energy use and to promote use of renewable energy. Last year, through E-Team efforts, the town installed a 4 kWh solar PV system at Town Hall. This is the second municipal PV system, the other being located at the Chester Elementary School. The commission initiated an outreach program to provide residents with environmental / conservation ideas. These are called EnviroTips and are distributed through the town’s email list. Commission member Margot Burns, who works at the RiverCOG, was instrumental in getting the Menunketesuck – Cockaponset Regional Greenway adopted. The commission worked with the US Fish & Wildlife Service to produce a permanent sign – placed on the information kiosk at Pelletier Park at Cedar Lake – that explains the value of the Greenway to Chester and surrounding towns that are located in it. The commission had planned to work with the CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to install an eel ladder on Great Brook. Unfortunately DEEP was unable to assist with the project due to budget and staff reductions. We’ll look at this again in the coming year.

All commission meetings are open to the public and residents are invited to attend.

PUBLIC SAFETY

POLICE SERVICES
Resident Trooper Matt Ewing  (860) 526-3605

The following list represents calls for law enforcement in Chester from 07/01/2015 through 06/30/2016:

There were a total of 8,352 calls for service in Chester during this period. Of these calls, the Chester Police Officers, and the Chester Resident Trooper responded to 5,077 of the calls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTOR VEHICLE CALLS</th>
<th>------</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motor Vehicle Accidents</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatal Motor Vehicle Accidents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MV Accidents with DUI Arrest</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DUI Arrests (No Accident) | 11
Motor Vehicle Stops (Ticket issued) | 2,224
Motor Vehicle Stops (Result =Arrest) | 37
Motor Vehicle Stops (Written Warning) | 342
Disabled Motor Vehicles | 257
Parking Violations | 15

**CRIMINAL/OTHER CALLS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime Type</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burglaries</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larcenies (Stolen Property)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narcotics Violations</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons Compliance</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Robbery</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dive Team Response</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Assault</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assaults</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Person</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stolen Vehicles</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Damage</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unattended/suspicious death</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trespass</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Impersonation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglar Alarm investigations</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Violations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist Other Agency</td>
<td>57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assist Agency Calls with Written Report</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist to Citizen</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist to Citizen Calls with Written Report</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disturbance Calls (Breach/Disord)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disturbance Calls with Written Report</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Calls</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Services</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Svcs. with Written Report</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to Appear in Court</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-9 calls for service</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patrol Checks in Chester</td>
<td>4,866</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suspicious Incident Calls</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspicious Incident Calls with Written Rpt</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Chester Fair, The Lobster Festival, Halloween Parade, Memorial Day parade, Chester Road Race, Stuff-a-Cruiser toy drive; Cruise, Blues and Brews, and The Annual Tree lighting Ceremony were among activities that required police resources and planning. During this fiscal
year, new radios were placed into service. These radios complete the installation of the most modern radios that are available for Chester Police Officers.

One bank robbery took place at the First Niagara Bank during this period. The Chester Resident Trooper and CPL Redente solved the case, and the robber was arrested by CPL Redente within 20 minutes of the robbery.

The department consists of one Resident Trooper, one full time police officer, one regular part time police officer (Vacancy), and one special projects/training police officer. DARE continues to be taught to 6th grade students at Chester Elementary by Trooper Ewing and Corporal Redente. TPR Ewing and CPL Redente are currently teaching the program in the fall and winter, rather than in the winter and spring.

The Resident Trooper has begun a “Drug turn in program” for prescription medications in coordination with Chester Village West.

The department will hire a part-time officer to replace OFC Belcourt during this current fiscal year.

CHESTER HOSE COMPANY
Chief James Schaefer

During 2015, The Chester Hose Company Inc. responded to over 600 calls for service. These calls included fires, rescues, medical emergencies, and general public service requests. We also responded when requested, to assist other fire departments and emergency services within Middlesex County, as well as to our neighboring counties. In turn, these departments continued to provide us assistance when we needed them.

The men and women of the Chester Hose Company take great pride each day in serving as volunteers to protect the residents and visitors of Chester. This is evident in the amount of training, fire prevention & community involvement that as a department they have accomplished during 2015. The Hose Company continued its open enrollment membership, where some of the new members they welcomed in carried on generations of families who have served with the department. At present, seventy-five members of the department volunteer freely of their time; giving back to the Town of Chester and providing an unmeasurable savings.

2015 saw change amongst the leadership within the department as Chief James Schaefer took over the department from Past Chief James Grzybowski, who took a step back while still maintaining an officer position. Under the direction of the new Chief, the department was able to be funded from a community letter drive, where the support that came from the townspeople allowed for the purchase of a new Hurst Tool, spreaders and cutters—all which are used for
extrications. Additionally the department was named as a beneficiary of an estate, which funded the purchase of two new drop tanks and the W-Tool (door spreader) to assist with fire scenes.

Throughout town members were seen giving back at the annual 4 on the 4th Road Race, Fire Prevention at the Elementary School, and through the time-honored tradition of providing Emergency Services at the annual Chester Fair. Due to reconstruction downtown, the department did see a break from community involvement at the Annual Winter Carnivale and Chili Cook-off. With much anticipation, members await its return in February 2017!

Expanding our communication venues and increasing department public relations, The Chester Hose Company continued maintaining our website, www.chesterhoseco.org, and frequently submitted to the town wide emails.

On behalf of our volunteer department, we continue to stand by; proud and committed with highly trained personnel willing to help you in your time of need.

CITATION REVIEW BOARD

Bettie Perreault

The Citation Review Board is appointed by the Board of Selectmen; its members serve a two-year term. The Board receives requests for review or relief from citations issued in connection with traffic, parking, and other Town regulations. While meetings are scheduled monthly, there has been little activity for this Board during the past fiscal year. Members appointed following the November 2015 election met with the newly-elected Board of Selectmen to review duties, responsibilities, procedures and history. Members currently serving are Bettie Perreault, Richard Schreiber and Whitelaw Wilson.

ANIMAL CONTROL

Jae Wolf, Animal Control Officer

In the Town of Chester from July 2015 to June 2016, there were a total of 133 complaints investigated, 8 of which were dog bite incidents.

There were numerous bear sightings between the months of July and September 2015. A total of 29 sightings were in the Chester/Deep River/Essex area. It is recommended to keep pots and pans handy in order to scare off unwanted wild life and keep garbage cans covered and in a secure location. For your own safety, please do not attempt to approach any wild animals as their behavior can be unpredictable.

A few reminders, if you are experiencing a problem caused by wildlife please call DEEP at 860-424-3333. Relocation of rabies vector species (raccoon, skunk, fox) is prohibited under CT general statutes section 26-47(b) and 26-57.

I continue to promote responsible dog ownership throughout the 3 towns by encouraging people to license as well as vaccinate their dogs and use of a leash outside of the home to avoid an infraction. Infractions are as follows:

- Failure to License a dog = $75.00
- Nuisance dog = $75.00
- Roaming dog = $92.00
- Failure to vaccinate = $136.00
- Failure to Redeem = $75.00

To report a lost or roaming dog, a dog or cat bite incident, to file a complaint, or for any other concerns I can be reached 24/7 at 860-388-7082. Or feel free to email me at jwolf@essexct.gov

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**HARBOR MANAGEMENT COMMISSION**  
*Joel Severance, Chairman*

This has been another quiet year for structure applications in the waters of Chester. We were not offered an opportunity to follow the new (2016) General Permit Grant Application.

Our accomplishments included:

- Working with Valley Regional High School in arranging for two students, under their Community Services obligation, to measure our waterways; particularly Chester Creek, Lower Section. This would have been an aid in a missing person search by the Fire Department earlier this year.
- We were successful in having bird prevention “spikes” installed under the new Main Street Bridge. During our Chester Creek Water Testing Program the testing engineer discovered roosting pigeon droppings were contaminating the brook running under the bridge. To quote the DOT Project Manager in his final report to us: the bridge has been “spikified”.
- We manage, with some assistance from the Essex Harbor Management Commission, the Lower Connecticut River Pumpout Boat Program. This is a free service to boat owners for their holding tanks to be pumped out with subsequent offloading to sewer treatment plants. The 2016 Boating Season was a record year with an estimated 100,000 gallons of material kept from entering the River and its tributaries. Chester has the most pumpouts of the seven municipalities we service.

The Governor has appointed Cy Libby as our new Harbormaster. Cy brings extensive experience and knowledge to us; including coming to us from Essex where he was its Deputy Harbormaster.

The Chester Harbor Management Plan is available online at Chesterct.org. Mooring regulations can also be found there.
Again this year our mooring revenues are way down. As a result we will only have two tests of a limited number of sites this year.

TREE WARDEN
Scot Mills, Tree Warden

Tree wardens are appointed public officials responsible for trees alongside public roads and in public spaces, other than those on state properties or under the jurisdiction of a park commission. Each municipality is required to have a tree warden. As of 2014 the Chester Parks Commission in writing relinquished all duties of care and control of all town park trees over to the Tree Warden of the Town of Chester.

Sec. 23-59. Powers and duties of wardens. The town or borough tree warden shall have the care and control of all trees and shrubs in whole or in part within the limits of any public road or grounds and within the limits of his town or borough, except those along state highways under the control of the Commissioner of Transportation and except those in public parks or grounds which are under the jurisdiction of park commissioners, and of these the tree warden shall take the care and control if so requested in writing by the park commissioners. Such care and control shall extend to such limbs, roots or parts of trees and shrubs as extend or overhang the limits of any such public road or grounds. The tree warden shall expend all funds appropriated for the setting out, care and maintenance of such trees and shrubs. The tree warden shall enforce all provisions of law for the preservation of such trees and shrubs and of roadside beauty. The tree warden shall remove or cause to be removed all illegally erected signs or advertisements, placed upon poles, trees or other objects within any public road or place under the tree warden’s jurisdiction. The tree warden may prescribe such regulations for the care and preservation of such trees and shrubs as the tree warden deems expedient and may provide therein for a the opinion of the tree warden, the public safety demands the removal or pruning of any tree or shrub under the tree warden’s control, the tree warden may cause such tree or shrub to be removed or pruned at the expense of the town or borough and the selectmen or borough reasonable fine for the violation of such regulations; and such regulations, when approved by the selectmen or borough warden and posted on a public signpost in the town or borough, if any, or at some other exterior place near the office of the town or borough clerk, shall have the force and effect of town or borough ordinances. Whenever, in warden shall order paid to the person performing such work such reasonable compensation therefor as may be determined and approved in writing by the tree warden. Unless the condition of such tree or shrub constitutes an immediate public hazard, the tree warden shall, at least ten days before such removal or pruning, post thereon a suitable notice stating the tree warden’s intention to remove or prune such tree or shrub. If any person, firm or corporation objects to such removal or pruning, such person, firm or corporation may appeal to the tree warden in writing, who shall hold a public hearing at some suitable time and place after giving reasonable notice of such hearing to all persons known to be interested therein and posting a notice thereof on such tree or shrub. Within three days after such hearing, the tree warden shall render a decision granting or denying the application, and the party aggrieved by such decision may, within ten days, appeal therefrom to the superior court for the judicial district within which such town or borough is located. The tree warden may, with the approval of the selectmen or borough warden, remove
any trees or other plants within the limits of public highways or grounds under the tree warden’s jurisdiction that are particularly obnoxious as hosts of insect or fungus pests.

2015-2016 Field Report

This year has presented itself to be more challenging than in past years. We had several wind and heavy wet snow events that did a considerable amount of damage to our roadside conifers over the winter and early spring months. Late spring and into the summer the town trees saw an even bigger challenge with the outbreak of the Gypsy Mouth Caterpillar and drought conditions that we had not seen in over 100 years. By July many of towns oak trees were nearly striped of all their foliage due to the Gypsy Mouth Caterpillars.

Calls Fielded Fiscal Year 2016

1. 23 tree calls have been answered and or fielded as of 12/1/2016

Trees Removed and pruned Fiscal Year 2016

1. Removed dead wood on large Maple opposite 21 Prospect
2. Removed leaning Oak tree opposite 21 Prospect
3. Removed large Maple 21 Prospect
4. Removed 2 large Norway Spruce trees 66 Goose Hill
5. Removed large White Pine 7 Gorham
6. Removed large dead White Pine 56 Maple
7. Removed 3 large Sugar Maples 10 Old Depot
8. Removed Spruce 22 High
9. Removed Dead Wood on Sugar Maple Chester Library
10. Removed large Sugar Maple corner of Cedar Lake and David
11. Public Works Department felled several hazardous trees in North Quarter Park

Goals

1. Continue to work with town residents, Eversource, contractors for Eversource, and outside contractors that do work for the Town of Chester.
2. To start planning and funding for planting projects for around town.
3. Continue on a forest management plan and vegetation plan for the Town of Chester
4. Continue monitoring of roadside, town properties, and parks trees for disease, insects, and decay.

Overview

Our town trees over the next year will be dealing with challenges from drought, Gypsy Mouths, and the onset of the Emerald Ash Borer that is at our western border. The effects from these invasive species and drought may not be seen for two or three years. As trees start to experience these stresses, they become more susceptible to tree diseases, which can lead to crown dieback, structural failure and ultimately tree death. The use of insecticide on certain
trees and certain areas may be effective, but the effects of large area spraying of insecticides would be more costly and have an even larger environmental impact on other insects, amphibians and wetlands. I will continually work with the DEEP, Connecticut Agricultural Department and Middlesex County Extension Center to come up with better ways to handle these challenges.

FIRE MARSHAL’S OFFICE
Richard “Dick” E. Leighton, Fire Marshal
David Roberge, Fire Investigator

The Fire Marshal’s Office is being covered by Richard E. Leighton and David Roberge, on a part time, on an “as needed” basis. Through the Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 541, Section 29-291 gives the statutory authority to the Office of the State Fire Marshal as well as to the local Fire Marshals, Deputy Fire Marshals, and/or Fire Investigators. The State of Connecticut State Fire Safety Code, with its referenced standards provides the Fire Marshal’s Office the life safety requirements for all new and existing commercial occupancies except one and two family dwellings.

In accordance with Section 29-292-7e of the Connecticut General Statutes, the local fire marshal and/or their respective designees are responsible for conducting inspections as prescribed within Sections 29-292 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies within their jurisdiction. Such inspections include most commercial and business occupancies including residential (except one-two family dwellings), assemblies, restaurants, theaters, taverns / bars, churches, educational including primary, secondary, private & public, including daycares, institutional, mercantile, storage groups, high hazard groups, and factory/industrials, to name a few. Such inspection frequencies are so prescribed within Connecticut General Statutes Section 29-292-7e(c). In addition, the Fire Marshal’s Office is responsible for issuance of blasting permits, burning permits, and also the investigation of any fire or any hazardous materials incident, for determining origin and cause. The Fire Marshal’s Office issues a report to the Board of Fire Commissioners, as the appointing authority, monthly detailing the various activities of the Office as mandated by the Connecticut General Statutes.

Statistics: Labor Analysis of the time expended as it relates to Liquor Licensing 43.0 hrs.; Mandated Training 39.5 hrs.; Commercial Inspections 268.5 hrs.; Blasting Permits 1.5 hrs.; Burning Permits 3.5 hrs.; Administrative 29.5 hrs.; Fire / Hazardous Material / Emergency Investigations 91.5 hrs.

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
Joel Severance, Chairman

This fiscal year the volume of calls continued to increase over previous years, testing (successfully) the management skills of the new Fire Chief, James Schaefer. The Fire Department put a second ambulance into service to help with the increased number of requests for EMS assistance. The Fire Department also had two challenging marine rescue calls for missing persons, with the able assistance of mutual aid responders from other towns and agencies.
Our fire marshals continued with their inspections and response to fire calls. Inspection of local businesses is an ongoing activity, ensuring the safety of both the properties and their patrons. We also welcome as a Deputy Fire Marshal, Peter Terenzi, to assist the other two Marshals as needed.

Commission Members:
- John Divis
- Bettie Perreault
- Rick Schreiber
- Joel Severance. Chairman
- Peter Zanardi

Ex-officio Members
- Fire Chief, James Schaefer
- Fire Marshal, Permitting: Dick Leighton
- Fire Marshal, Investigations: Dave Roberge
- Deputy Fire Marshal: Peter Terenzi
- Representing the Board of Selectmen: Charlene Janecek

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
Joel Severance, Emergency Management Director

The Chester Emergency Management Directors are not only directly involved with emergency planning and grant sourcing locally; but are also engaged in state and region emergency planning.

We are the leadership on the Chester LEPC* (a state mandated “Local Emergency Planning Committee”) When a storm is forecasted; we activate and “prepare for the worst, with the best” We practice by drilling and exercising** specific elements of our Emergency Operations Plan, We have paid particular attention to planning for residents with functional needs during an emergency or disaster.

This year we undertook a major overhaul of our EOP by converting its format from the 2000 format to a current, called Emergency Support Function (ESF) format. Late this year, the State came out with a NEW format for us to follow. The good news is it’s following the same ESF format.

Looking forward, from a Department of Homeland Security, via the State Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection grant, we will be funding the purchase of a UAS (a.k.a Drone) for use by public safety in search, rescue and recovery operations.

* Our LEPC is made up of: administration, fire, law enforcement, emergency medical service (EMS) and public health

** In the fiscal year 2016 we participated in eight local, statewide and nationwide exercises.
PUBLIC WORKS

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
John Divis, Foreman

The Public Works Department is staffed by two full time maintenance employees and John Divis, Foreman. The First Selectman is the Director of Public Works in title only. Outside contractors are utilized throughout the year to supplement our limited staff. Even though staff is limited the list of functions handled by Public Works is extensive. The Public Works Department performs outstanding service during major storm events. Working in collaboration with Chester Hose Company and CL&P they clear trees and make Town roads safe for utility restoration. Public Works is perhaps the most visible service to the majority of Chester residents.

Department functions include:

- road and drainage repairs
- building maintenance - Meeting House, Public Library, Public Works Garage, Town Hall
- vehicles and heavy equipment maintenance
- monthly brush pick up
- mowing and trimming of Town properties, parks and roadside rights of way
- park maintenance
- catch basin cleaning in spring and fall
- leaf removal from town properties
- winter road maintenance
- roadside tree trimming
- street sweeping
- maintenance of municipal parking lots at Maple Street, Water Street and Laurel Hill
- refuse collection of Town Center street receptacles.

DEEP RIVER TRANSFER STATION BULKY WASTE AND RECYCLING INFORMATION

Chester residents may dispose of certain materials at the Deep River Transfer Station on Route 80 in Deep River, subject to the following regulations:

**No household garbage will be accepted.** By Town Ordinance residents are required to have a private hauler. Private haulers will also pick up recyclables. Any violation of this provision shall immediately terminate privileges afforded by the permit.

**Recyclables:** By Town Ordinance residents are required to have a private hauler. Any violation of this provision shall immediately terminate privileges afforded by the permit.

**Permit Required:** Chester residents must display a “Town of Chester Access To Public Services” permit on the windshield of their vehicle to gain access to these facilities. These stickers must be placed on the passenger side of the front windshield and may be obtained at the Selectman’s Office with proof of residence and vehicle license plate number.

**Hours of Operation:** Deep River Transfer Station
Wednesday & Friday 8:00 AM through 4:00 PM
Saturday & Sunday 8:00 AM through 4:00 PM

**Regulations:**

1) All users shall separate loads and place in proper containers under direction of attendant(s), who will be on duty during regularly scheduled hours.

2) Attendant(s) has the right to refuse entry to anyone not having proper identification or whose load does not comply with these regulations.

3) As provided in current Chester bulky waste regulations, the Town of Deep River will accept only household bulky waste under this contract; waste originating from business or commercial sources or from households under construction, demolition or landscaping contracts will not be accepted.

4) Residents may use passenger cars, small trailers and pick-up trucks, each of which must display the required permit.

5) All items and material must be transported in containers.

6) No hazardous materials, paper goods or commercial waste will be permitted.

7) Do not combine materials in containers meant for specific items.

**ESTUARY REGION HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE FACILITY**

The Estuary Region Household Hazardous Waste Facility opened on selected Saturdays between May through October. The Estuary Region HHW facility will be closed November-April. The facility is located off Route 9, exit 4. Go straight off exit ramp, cross over RR tracks and pass CRRA Transfer Station, and the HHW facility is on the left. For more information contact 860-388-3497.

**Acceptable Materials:**

**Household:**

- Drain cleaners
- Metal polish
- Oven cleaners
- Floor cleaners
- Mothballs
- Photo chemicals
- Full/partially-full aerosols
- Arts & crafts supplies
- Household batteries
- Asbestos-containing floor tiles
- Water-reactive materials (such as peroxides and metallic sodium)
- Mercury Thermometers (A free digital thermometer will be given in exchange.)
Garage:
Fire starters including hand-held propane torch cylinders
Old chemistry kits
Transmission fluid, gasoline, kerosene
Waxes and polishes
Brake fluid
Rust preventatives

Workshop:
Rust preventatives
Wood preservatives
Wood strippers
Oil-based paint
Lead-based paint
Paint thinner and degreasers
Solvents and sealants

Yard/Garden:
Weed killer
Insect sprays
Rodent poison
Muriatic acid/pool chemicals
Cesspool cleaners

Unacceptable Materials:
Latex paint (This can be air-dried or dried with sawdust or kitty litter and disposed in the garbage.)
Explosives, fireworks, ammunition
BBQ propane tanks
Fire extinguishers
Empty aerosol cans
Radioactive material
Medications
Infectious or biologically active materials
Dioxin and unknown materials
Waste oil
Vehicle batteries
Any commercial hazardous waste
WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY
Albert A. Armington, Chairman

This past year provided several challenges to the Chester sewer system. The good news is that we survived two major construction projects with no interruption of service and, thanks to a Connecticut state grant, only minimal fiscal impact. Several lateral connections within the Main Street bridge area were replaced, as well as one manhole at the intersection of Main Street and Route 148.

WPCA replaced several aging pieces of equipment during the past fiscal year as well. One of two pumps failed due to age, and was replaced. Fortunately, we had planned ahead, and a spare pump was on hand. A second pump was purchased as a backup, and we plan to rebuild and recycle the older of the two aging units.

Now that the construction expenses of 2015 are behind us and our equipment is in good shape for the near future, WPCA has been able to reduce the EDU rate that is the amount most residential users pay by $100 for the fiscal year 2016-2017.

As we do every year, WPCA wants to remind everybody that the success or failure of our sanitary sewer system depends on the diligence of those connected to it. Each individual and each business needs to protect our mutual investment in this project by being attentive to what goes down the drains. Our system is sensitive to small amounts of grease, chemicals and objects such as “flushable” wipes, paper towels and diapers. Each time these elements are inadvertently introduced into our sewer, they need to be removed at a significant cost to you, the user.

If you become aware that a sump pump or diverted ground water or roof drains are connected to the sewer lines, please remove them. These connections are in violation of Chester Town regulations and CT state statute and subject to significant fines of up to $500 per day. As the Town of Chester is charged for every gallon of water processed through our system, such connections add considerable unnecessary costs, which have to be passed on to users.

Our WPCA meetings are posted on the Town of Chester website, and are open to the public. Should you have any concerns, you are always welcome to attend or you may contact us at WPCA@Chesterct.org.

CHESTER CEMETERY ASSOCIATION, INC.

The Chester Cemetery Association looks after the general maintenance of the town’s cemeteries at Cedar Lake, Laurel Hill and the two old cemeteries on Cemetery Hill near the Town Green. The headstones and markers at Cedar Lake (west) Cemetery and the upper and lower cemeteries on Goose Hill are to be inventoried thanks to a project of young workers under the guidance of the Chester Historical Society and the funding by a state grant. There is a map in the Town Clerk’s Office which shows all the lots in the Laurel Hill Cemetery.

Our cemeteries are open sun up to sun down and visitors are welcome to enjoy the settings. Each cemetery has a trustee who inspects it. We do not have any full plots in our inventory.
However, there are cremation plots at Laurel Hill currently priced at $250. As always, we need officers and we would welcome new members and volunteers for the board. (860) 526-4004

RECREATIONAL / CULTURAL / HISTORICAL

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Elizabeth A. Netsch, Director

Members of the Chester Park and Recreation Commission seek to promote healthy lifestyles through recreation, by providing parks and programs that meet the needs of all town residents, while maintaining a fiscally responsible operation. Most of the budget, net expenditures, is for park maintenance, while programs are self-funded. In addition, contributions from groups and individuals in the community have helped finance various activities.

The Commission is responsible for the maintenance and renovation of 7 facilities in Chester. They are North Quarter Park, the Chester Creek Overlook at the Town Dock, Pelletier Park on Cedar Lake, Lake View Park on Cedar Lake Road, Parkers Point Boat Launch on the Connecticut River, L’hommeau Park on the Pattaconk Brook, and the baseball fields at Chester Elementary School. The Chester Public Works Department is instrumental in maintaining our parks. In addition, the Boy Scouts of Troop 13 performed renovations to Pelletier Park under the leadership of Eagle Scout Jacob Beaulieu and at Chester Creek Overlook guided by Eagle Scout Alexander Maxwell, VI.

The department sold 142 non-resident park passes during the summer of 2015. Income to the Town’s General Fund from the sale of non-resident park passes and group use for fiscal year 2015/2016 was $12,561, exceeding the budgeted amount by 20% and by 42% over the prior year. Fees collected for the Children’s Summer Program and cancellation fees contributed $28,965 to the General Fund, 21% higher than 2014/2015. The balance of Camp fees collected was used to operate the Summer Camp Program. Scholarship funds, determined by the Human Services Director and the Chester Elementary School Counselor, donated by the Chester Rotary Club and many individuals, helped fund expenses for those who would not otherwise be able to participate in Camp and other self-funded programs.

Self-funded programs included 143 participants in the Children’s Summer Camp Program, filling 412 spaces. Academic year self-funded programs registrations were 73 youth basketball players, 14 adult basketball members, and 55 students in American Red Cross courses including two classes each of Community CPR/AED, First Aid, and Babysitter’s Training. The department ran sports clinics and camp programs at Chester Elementary School for 182 children on days with early school dismissals. There were 25 participants in Chester’s local HOTSHOT contest with Jason Malli, Jacob McKenna, Samara Shankar, and Campbell Toth qualifying to compete in the State finals. The Commission also sponsored three sessions of Yoga, a Field Hockey Clinic, and Pet Awareness Day in support of Homeward Bound CT. In conjunction with Deep River Parks and Recreation, the department held a Basketball clinic with Olympic Gold Medalist and former Championship University of Connecticut player Kara Wolters. These programs provided recreation for over 100 participants. In addition, over 200 family members attended Chester Youth Basketball “March Madness” where children challenged their parents to a game of basketball.
Chester Parks and Recreation ended the fiscal year in 2016 by enrolling 100 different children, 80% of which were Chester residents, in 396 camp spaces. Summer Camp 2016 began on June 27th and all 8 weeks of camp were full. Camp and Lifeguarding positions provided summer employment to 20 local residents. We are fortunate to have the resources of several beautiful park facilities and over 50 exceptional employees and volunteers. They help fulfill the purpose of the Chester Park and Recreation Commission by improving the quality of life for all citizens by “Celebrating Community through People, Parks, and Programs”.

CHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY

Stephanie Romano, Library Director

This past year the Chester Public Library has continued to honor its mission to provide information, selected cultural events and intellectual recreation to all the citizens of Chester by staying in touch through the library’s website, e-newsletter and Facebook.

A look at the year’s statistics reveals:

- Total circulation: 24,810 items
- Items borrowed from other libraries: 598
- Items loaned to other libraries: 381
  - These numbers have declined due to the State Library shutting down Request
- Items checked out to out-of-town visitors: 2897
- Items borrowed on Chester Library cards at other libraries: 20,109
- Reference queries: 1528
- New library cards issued: 191
- Attendance at programs: 1766
- Programs offered: 147
- Hours open weekly: 40
- Visits to the library: 14,807
- Staff: 1 full-time and 4 part-time librarians
- Volunteer hours: 275
- Fines collected: $1452.02 (turned over to the town’s general fund)

The Chester Public Library was a boom of activity again this past year providing over one hundred programs, from children’s story time and crafts, kids knit and game night to our ever popular summer reading program for adults. One lucky adult summer reader won the “lobster basket” filled with everything they needed to enjoy the perfect evening as well as two tickets to the Rotary Club Lobster Festival.

This was also the year of change at the Chester Library. The library added two public computers thanks to Community Foundation of Middlesex County grant as well as an anonymous donation for a “computer bar” that houses the two computers. The library’s computer usage doubled for the month of March and continues to grow, validating what a wonderful asset this addition is.
The library welcomed two new members to its staff, Kaylee Moen as part-time Circulation Assistant and Anne Nord as part-time Children’s Librarian. Patty Petrus, the library’s Children’s Librarian of over thirty years, moved into a new role as Circulation Assistant. However, the biggest change came when Library Director Linda Fox announced her retirement. After 13 years at Chester Library, Linda left to “create space in her life for new adventures” and to spend more time with her husband. As we said goodbye to Linda, Chester welcomed new Library Director - Stephanie Romano. Stephanie was previously at the Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library in Old Lyme for over nine years and is excited about this opportunity.

The Friends of the Library were also very busy. Their fundraising efforts such as the annual Chester Artists for Chester Library Raffle, four books sales (including a holiday sale of ‘giftable’ books), a plant sale in conjunction with the Chester Land Trust, plus the grant Cary Hull wrote that got the library the new computers, provide resources such as magazines and movies including our Netflix subscription as well as many other services not included in the town budget. Along with the Friends of the Library are the tireless energies of many individuals who donate their time and talent to make all this possible. Leading the Friends were its Board members: Cary Hull, President; Susan D. Murphy, Treasurer; Mary Harrall, Corresponding Secretary; Lisa Tollefson, Recording Secretary; and Diane Lindsay, Book Sales.

The Library Building committee chaired by Board member Denny Tovey continued to refine a new library design that will be incorporated into the North Quarter Park project. The committee expanded its goal beyond building a new library to open up the use of 22 acres of the town-owned North Quarter Park for recreation, learning and entertainment. The building has space for collections, study and reading areas for all ages, as well as staff work space and a large community meeting room. The budget for the project is being refined and the committee hopes to have a referendum on the project early in 2017.

The Library Board of Trustees includes Terry Schreiber, Chair; Sandy Senior-Dauer, Vice-Chair; Deedee Prisloe, Treasurer; Peggy Carter-Ward; Bob Gorman, who left the board November when his term expired; Karin Badger who was elected November 1; and Denny Tovey. The Board continues to set the long-term goals and policies that guide all library services.

CHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY/MUSEUM
Skip Hubbard, President

It was yet another successful 12 months as we closed the 46th year of the Society on May 30, 2016. Over the 2015 Thanksgiving weekend we completed our 6th season welcoming visitors to Chester Museum at The Mill. With new exhibits each year, the museum is now creating a history of its own!

Members, visitors and guests continue to be attracted to our museum, programs and events. In the 12 months ending June 2015, we welcomed 2,050 people to Society-sponsored activities. Almost 900 visited our museum during the season, including scout troops, school children and community groups.

Our non-museum event schedule was full, varied and attractive. In September we held vintage baseball games played at Devitts Field in Deep River using 1857 rules. The round-robin, three-
A game event was co-hosted with the historical societies of Essex and Deep River. Many of the 350 attendees should be fans again when the three town teams meet again this September.

Other free public offerings included programs featuring: music and prose from the State Historian, memories during the *It Happened to Jane* filming and recollections of the Yenowich sisters on growing up in Chester. Two fundraisers, our annual November Antiques & Jewelry Appraisal Day and most recent Creative Challenge, a silent auction of art created from wooden manicure sticks manufactured by the former Bishop & Watrous Novelty Works, provided significant income to our annual operating budget.

A new first-floor exhibit debuted last May. *Pastimes in Past Times: Chester at Play* featured the toys, games and dolls of yesteryear.

In addition to superb media publicity, we continue to find success with low-cost, person-to-person marketing initiatives. We had a booth presence four times at the Chester Sunday Market, selling Society products and pointing people to our museum around the corner. Each August nearly 600 visitors pass through our building at the annual Chester Fair.

With an updated Strategic Plan in place, we were able to focus on a number of fronts.

This past year the Society established a Development Committee, chaired by Jenny Kitsen and including members from the Chester community and board members. The task of the committee is to identify potential sources of income from individuals or corporations, increase annual giving to CHS, seek grants or foundations and identify investment opportunities to increase financial stability and expansion of resources.

We placed inactive reserve funds with a local investment firm. Thanks to a grant from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County, we were able to replace aging computer equipment for our archiving operations.

Trustee Joel Severance completed an Emergency Response Plan and we installed new exterior signage to improve our roadside visibility. New initiatives to increase membership began with special inserts in our May 2016 community-wide newsletter.

We invite all community members to visit the museum and to share in our vision of preserving and sharing the history of Chester. Consider supporting our activities with a membership. Tell your friends, invite them to stop by the museum. See you soon at the Chester Museum at The Mill.

**CHESTER WAR MEMORIAL**

Years ago, a group of veterans had a vision to expand upon the existing war memorial to honor the service men and women of Chester who served in the military. Through their efforts and the generous support of local residents and businesses, their dreams have been realized and the Bronze Eagle has been installed and the lighting has been updated.

Wikipedia defines a war memorial as a building, monument, statue or other edifice to celebrate a war or victory, or (predominating in modern times) to commemorate those who died or were injured in war. The Chester War Memorial is indeed these things, but it also is a place where one can take time out to quietly
sit and reflect upon the sacrifice that military men and women make and about the freedoms that they set out to protect.

The memorial is funded by private donations from individuals, companies and corporations. The committee would like to thank everyone for their support and thank Chester’s military heroes for their patriotism, valor and commitment to defending freedom.

CHESTER LAND TRUST
Richard Harrall

The Chester Land Trust continues its mission to preserve open space and be responsible stewards of properties owned by the Trust. In 2016, we initiated one of the most exciting projects ever undertaken by the Trust. This project is the acquisition of a 6.5 acre parcel on Cedar Lake Road. The parcel is owned by the estate of Judge Constance Baker Motley. Judge Motley and her family resided in an historic house located directly across the street from the parcel to be acquired. The house and property were occupied on a seasonal basis for over 40 years. During that time period, the Motley family became part of community life in Chester.

On a professional note, Judge Motley was a leader in the civil rights movement of the 50’s and 60’s as a lead attorney for the NAACP. She was also the first African American woman elected to the New York State Senate. The pinnacle of her career was her appointment by President Lyndon Johnson as the first African American woman on the federal court.

The subject property is the first ever acquired by the Trust. All other properties were donated with no funding necessary. In order to acquire the property, the Trust completed a successful community based funding campaign. As a result, the property was acquired. It should be noted that in addition to its value as an open space resource, an agreement was entered into with the Boy Scout Troop for use of the property. This will be an important part of their activities since the troop’s clubhouse is located on Cedar Lake Rd less than 400 yards from the parcel.

In 2015, the Trust initiated two programs with the goal of getting people outside as well as to our preserves. One activity was a Women’s Walk which departed from Carini Preserve on routes of varying distances. The second program was Huckleberry Adventures targeted towards young people. These programs were continued in 2016.

Activities in 2016 continued to focus on stewardship, education and increasing visitation to our preserves. In 2017, the Trust will continue to pursue our mission to preserve and conserve open space. As in the past, success will be supported with the help of our members and the Chester community.

ROBBIE COLLOMORE MUSIC SERIES

The Robbie Collomore Music Series features world class musicians in four live concerts per season. The concerts cover music in the classical, jazz, folk, bluegrass, and world music genres. The performances
take place at the beautiful and intimate Chester Meeting House on Sunday afternoons in the fall and spring. Season subscriptions are available as well as individual tickets.

AUDIT

A copy of the Town of Chester Financial Statements, Internal Control Reports and Compliance Reports for the Year Ending June 30, 2016 can be obtained at the Town Clerk’s Office or on the Town of Chester website – www.chesterct.org under the Board of Finance page.

TOWN PROFILE

The 2015 Town of Chester’s Profile, provided by CERC, is available on the following link:

http://profiles.ctdata.org/profiles/