Dedication

This year’s Annual Report is dedicated to Robert Blair Sr., Chester’s First Selectman for 22 years, serving from 1967-1989. During those early years, Chester was busy transforming itself from a quiet and sleepy mill town through a period of historic preservation and economic development that set the stage for where we are today: a town that prides itself on its exceptional quality of life, the quality of education and the overall spirit of our dedicated and involved community. The First Selectman, as both the leader of the Town and supporter of its vision, helped the Town through this transition while maintaining its character and charm. During Bob’s tenure, Chester benefited from the establishment of the Chester Historical Society, material restoration of the Chester Meeting House and a new sense of vibrancy and activity in Chester Center.

In addition to serving as the Town’s First Selectman, Bob also managed the Town Crew and he was the Chief of our Chester Police Department. He was ever-present at the Town Office Building, Town Garage or on a work crew along the street. During his 11 terms in office, Bob was always there to address concerns, no matter how small. He did so with respect and a true admiration for a Town that he clearly loves and one that appreciates his many years of leadership.

His stewardship over the community extended to its finances where the Fund Balance/Surplus at the time of his departure, represented 18% of the budget, well above state standards for fiscal appropriateness. We are pleased to recognize Bob for how he and his administration ushered in the relevant, vibrant and fiscally strong foundation of the growth and prosperity our community enjoys today.

Thank you Bob!
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 860-767-4340 ext 160
Assessor extension 512 loretazdanys@chesterct.org
Development Office
Building extension 207 bldgofficial@chesterct.org
Fire Marshal extension 212 firemarshal@chesterct.org
Inland Wetlands Officer extension 210 inlandwetlands@chesterct.org
Planning and Zoning extension 208 zoningofficial@chesterct.org
Sanitarian extension 206 sanitarian@chesterct.org
Finance extension 215 finance@chesterct.org
First Selectman extension 202 firstselectman@chesterct.org
Administrative Assistant extension 202 adminasst@chesterct.org
Human Services extension 213 humanservices@chesterct.org
Information extension 202 info@chesterct.org
Parks and Recreation extension 223 parkrec@chesterct.org
Police Services
Resident Trooper 860-526-3605 policeservices@chesterct.org
Emergency 911
Registrars of Voters extension 211 registrar@chesterct.org
Tax Collector extension 513 taxcollector@chesterct.org
Town Clerk extension 510 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, 2018 – June 30, 2019)

Board of Selectmen
Lauren S. Gister  11/19/19
Charlene Janecek  11/19/19
James Grzybowski  11/19/19

Inland Wetland Commission
Eric Davidson  11/16/21
Eleanor Wahlberg  11/16/21
William Bernhart  11/19/19
Albert Bisacky, Chmn.  11/19/19
Robert Blair  11/19/19
Sally Sanders  11/19/19
Kim Senay  11/19/19

Town Clerk & Registrar of Vital Statistics
Debra Germini Calamari  01/03/22
Asst.: Sharon S. Echtman

Planning & Zoning Commission
Seth A. Fidel  11/21/23
Jon M. Lavy, Chmn.  11/21/23
Peter Zanardi  11/21/23
Elaine M. Fitzgibbons  11/16/21
Steven Merola  11/16/21
Keith Scherber  11/16/21
Henry Krempel  11/19/19
Elizabeth Perrault  11/19/19
Michaela Sanders  11/19/19

Town Treasurer
Elizabeth A. Netsch  11/16/21
Julie Netsch, Deputy  11/16/21
Randy Netsch, Deputy  11/16/21

Planning & Zoning Commission Alt.
Vacancy  11/21/23
Patricia P. Bisacky  11/16/21
Andrew Paul Landsman  11/19/19

Tax Collector
Madaline A. Meyer  11/16/21

Library Trustees
Margaret Carter-Ward  11/21/23
Abigail J. Rice  11/21/23
Karin Badger  11/16/21
Sandra Senior-Dauer  11/16/21
Teresa C. Schreiber  11/19/19
Dennis Tovey, Chmn.  11/19/19

Board of Finance
Virginia Carmany, Chmn.  11/21/23
Richard Nygard  11/21/23
Jennifer Hummel-Rannestad  11/16/21
Jon Joslow  11/16/21
David W. Cohen  11/19/19
Charles T. Park  11/19/19

Regional Board of Education
Trisha Brookhart  11/07/23
Lori Ann Clymas  11/02/21
Mario S. Gioco  11/05/19

Board of Finance Alternates
Michael Joplin  11/21/23
John P. O’Hare  11/16/21
Richard Strauss  11/19/19

Registrar of Voters
Leslie Ann Holbrook  01/04/23
Tracey Ohaus  01/04/23

Board of Education
Robert Bibbiani  11/02/21
Tom Englert  11/02/21
Rebecca Greenberg-Ellis  11/02/21
Theresa Ann Myers  11/02/21
Maria Scherber  11/02/21
Vacancy  11/02/21
Charlene Fearn  11/05/19
David Fitzgibbons, Chmn.  11/05/19
John Stack  11/05/19

Board of Assessment Appeals
Dudley W. Clark  11/16/21
Kristina Pollock  11/16/21
Bruce H. Watrous, Chmn.  11/19/19

Library Trustees
Margaret Carter-Ward  11/21/23
Abigail J. Rice  11/21/23
Karin Badger  11/16/21
Sandra Senior-Dauer  11/16/21
Teresa C. Schreiber  11/19/19
Dennis Tovey, Chmn.  11/19/19

Regional Board of Education
Trisha Brookhart  11/07/23
Lori Ann Clymas  11/02/21
Mario S. Gioco  11/05/19

Registrar of Voters
Leslie Ann Holbrook  01/04/23
Tracey Ohaus  01/04/23
Water Pollution Control Authority
Samuel H. Chorches  11/16/21
Edmund Meehan  11/16/21
Edward Ward III  11/16/21
C. Ian McLachlan  11/19/19
Mark D. Riggio  11/19/19

Zoning Board of Appeals
John J. DeLaura, Jr.  12/31/21
Errol F. Horner  12/31/21
Erik P. Anderson  12/31/19
Robert Blair  12/31/19
Mark C. Borton, Chmn.  12/31/19

Zoning Board of Appeals Alternates
Vacancy  12/31/21
Alexander C. Stein  12/31/19
Vacancy  12/31/19

Justices of the Peace
Patricia C. Bandzes  01/04/21
Thomas W. Brelsford  01/04/21
Keith N. Dauer  01/04/21
Mario S. Gioco  01/04/21
Emily S. Masters  01/04/21
Elizabeth A. Perreault  01/04/21
Alexander Francis Strekel  01/04/21
Anna Shubik Sweeney  01/04/21
Jerry A. Walden  01/04/21
Bruce H. Watrous  01/04/21
Whitelaw Wilson  01/04/21

Judge of Probate
Jeannine M. Lewis  01/04/23

U.S. Representative-2nd Congressional District
Joe Courtney  01/03/21

U.S. Senators
Christopher S. Murphy  01/03/25
Richard Blumenthal  01/03/23

State Senator-33rd Senatorial District
Norman Needleman  01/06/21

State Representative-36th Assembly District
Christine Palm  01/06/21
APPOINTED OFFICIALS (Served Fiscal Year: July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019)

**Accounting Manager**
Peter Evankow

**Accounts Clerk**
Sharon S. Echtman

**Administrative Assistant**
Jenny Watrous

**Animal Control Officer**
Caitlyn Sikora

**Assessor**
Loreta Zdanys
Asst.: Darlene Pollock

**Auditors**
O’Connor Davies, LLP

**Board of Fire Commissioners**
John M. Divis  11/16/21
Bettie Perreault, Chmn.  11/16/21
Peter J. Zanardi  11/16/21
Robert C. Bandzes  11/19/19
Richard Schreiber  11/19/19

**Ex-officio Members**
John Brainard, Chief
Richard Leighton, Fire Marshal
Lauren S. Gister, First Selectwoman

**Building Official**
Ronald Rose  08/14/20

**Building Clerk**
Jenny Watrous

**Cable Television Advisory Council**
Vacancy (Town)  07/30/19
Vacancy (School)  07/30/19

**Cedar Lake Watershed Commission**
Thomas Brelsford  7/01/20
Nancy Byrne  7/01/20
Christopher Fryxell  7/01/20
William T. Bernhart  7/01/19
Christopher Hayward  7/01/19
Rick Holloway  7/01/19
Denise Learned  7/01/19

**Chester Housing Partnership**
David Mesite
Vacancy
Vacancy
Vacancy
Vacancy

**Citation Hearing Officers**
Kathryn M. Merola  11/19/19
Elizabeth Perrault, Chmn.  11/19/19
Richard Schreiber  11/19/19
Whitelaw Wilson  11/19/19

**Community Decommissioning Advisory Com.**
Vacancy  11/19/19
Vacancy, Alternate  11/19/19

**Compliance Officer**
John S. Bennet  11/30/19

**Connecticut River Estuary Transit District**
Leslie B. Strauss  02/21/21

**Connecticut River Gateway Commission**
Margaret Wilson  07/01/20
Jenny A. Kitsen, Alt.  07/01/20

**Conservation Commission**
Richard P. Holloway  11/01/22
Lisa Catherine Wahle  11/01/22
Margot D. Burns  11/01/20
Michael P. Prisloe, Jr. Chmn.  11/01/20
Theodore Taigen  11/01/19
Margaret Wilson  11/01/19
Patrick Woomer  11/01/19
Emergency Management
Joel P. Severance, Director
Thomas B. Layton, Deputy
Cy Libby, Deputy
Bruce H. Watrous, Deputy

Energy Task Force
Peter Harding
Rick Holloway
Ed Meehan
Sandy Prisloe
Pat Woomer, Chmn.

Engineer
Nathan L. Jacobson and Associates  11/19/19

Fire Investigator
David Roberge

Fire Marshall
Richard Leighton

Grounds & Buildings Maintenance & Oversight Committee
Charles Greeney  11/19/19
Vacancy  11/19/19

Harbor Management Commission
James Barrington  10/03/23
Leroy Edward Ward III  10/03/23
Carolyn S. Kane  10/03/19
Joel P. Severance, Chmn.  10/03/19
Gordon W. Van Nes  10/03/19

Harbor Management Commission Alternates
Thomas Brelsford  10/03/23
Vacancy  10/03/21

Harbor Master
Everett (Cy) Libby – Apptd. By Governor 06/30/21
Michael S. Adams, Deputy "  "  "  06/30/21

Historian
Robert Miceli

Human Services Director
Rosemary Bininger
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Lauren S. Gister, First Selectman
Charlene Janecek, Selectman
James Grzybowski, Selectman

The Board of Selectmen administratively oversees town operations. The First Selectman is responsible for managing Chester’s day to day operations. The New England Town Meeting remains the method of decision making, with the voters and residents acting as legislators.

Starting the year with an overall budget of $13,722,002, town operations ran smoothly, and several large projects were accomplished or had ongoing planning. Chester became a member of the Connecticut River Area Health District on July 1, which fulfilled not only the statutory requirements but also vastly improved access to public health services and greater availability of town sanitarians. Chester replaced the obsolete telephone system at Town Hall, the municipal building at 20 Water Street was renovated and leased for a pediatrician’s office and we hired both a new Resident State Trooper and Animal Control Officer.

One important goal for the year was to provide greater accessibility and make it easier for all residents to participate in town government. To that end, changes were made to the Chester municipal ballot that made both the Inland Wetlands Commission and Water Pollution Control Authority appointed boards. The Selectman’s office continued to communicate with the public via a weekly townwide email sent to more than 750 individuals, the First Selectman’s weekly “Town Talks” at locations around town and by posting updates and events on our website and on social media.

The third phase of the Main Street Capital Improvement Project continued to move forward in design with a parallel effort to secure Department of Transportation commitment for funding this $2.3 million dollar infrastructure improvement project. A Commitment to Fund letter was issued in January of 2019, and the Main Street Committee and Town Engineer continued to garner public input and work toward final design of this middle section of Main Street in downtown Chester, looking for construction to begin in spring of 2020.

Chester was happy to sponsor two local grant applications for improvements to properties in town. The first, an $800,000 Small Cities Block Grant to benefit Cherry Hill apartments, will provide new siding, windows, heat and air conditioning, sidewalks and parking for this 23 unit low income senior housing complex. The second, a Neighborhood Assistance Act Tax Credit Grant to the Goodspeed at Chester, will enable the upgrade of the air conditioning system and other energy efficiency projects for the theater. Both applications were successful.

In September of 2018, Chester was subject to extensive flash flooding during a storm. This flooding caused major damage to homes, roads, streams, trees and culverts, and resulted in the loss of the roadway on the Liberty Street Bridge and part of Goose Hill Road. Many months have been spent on damage assessment, and repairs and financial claims have been made based on a disaster declaration to FEMA, the Federal Highway Administration, and Natural Resources Conservation Service.
Corporation was hired and rebuilt the Liberty Street Bridge to enable the road to be re-opened before winter.

The Town of Chester is fortunate to have the participation of many volunteers, staff and elected officials who dedicate their time and expertise to keep our town a wonderful place to live, work and play. The Board of Selectmen will continue to collaborate with them on projects and initiatives that enhance the quality of life in our beautiful home.

CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION

History
The Lower Connecticut River Valley was recognized by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1973 as one of the State’s most important natural, recreational and scenic areas. In 1974, the Commission was established and became operational with membership from eight towns, two regional agencies and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. The Gateway Conservation Zone is 30 miles long and includes 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. The Nature Conservancy has designated the lower Connecticut River as one of its “Last Great Places”; the river’s tidal lands 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.

The Gateway Commission concentrates much of its attention on the protection of the valley’s scenic qualities. Since its inception, the Commission has worked with others to acquire over 1,000 acres of land through purchase or donation of scenic easements, development rights and fee simple titles.

The Commission is also empowered to adopt common zoning standards for height, setback and lot coverage, which member towns adopt and enforce within the Gateway Conservation Zone. 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.

Members as of June 30, 2018 included: Margaret Wilson and Errol Horner of Chester; Nancy Fischbach and Kate Cotton of Deep River; Harvey Thomas and Crary Brownell of East Haddam; Claire Matthews and Mary Ann Pleva of Essex; Susan R. Bement of Haddam, J. Melvin Woody and Wendy Hill of Lyme; Peter Cable and Suzanne Thompson of Old Lyme; Bill Webb of Old Saybrook; Raul de Brigard of RiverCOG; and David Blatt of the Connecticut DEEP (Commissioner’s Representative). Fenwick Borough has been designated an ad hoc member and is periodically represented by Borough Warden Fran Adams.

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

RiverCOG, one of Connecticut’s nine Councils of Governments, is governed by the chief elected / executive 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 Anthony Salvatore (Cromwell), serving as Chairperson, Lauren Gister (Chester) as Vice-Chairperson, Ed Bailey (Middlefield) as Secretary, and Noel Bishop (Westbrook) as Treasurer. First Selectwomen Cathy Iino (Killingworth) and Bonnie Reemsnyder (Old Lyme) join the RiverCOG officers on the Executive Committee.

Fiscal year 2019 was an eventful year for RiverCOG staff. In addition to their regular duties, Deputy Director Torrance Downes and GIS Coordinator Dan Bourret provided interim land use and zoning services to Westbrook and Clinton. Environmental Planner Margot Burns was instrumental in initiating an Environmental Review Team, partnering with the Connecticut Resource Development & Conservation Area, to help combat invasive aquatic species in the Connecticut River. Executive Director Sam Gold was named Chairman of the Connecticut Association of COGs, received the Friend of Transportation award from the CT Association of Community Transportation, and continued to sit on multiple boards (Sustainable CT) and steering committees (Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations). We were also pleased to host four interns this year, two of whom were Sustainable CT Fellows. In fiscal year 2019 twelve of the seventeen towns in the region have initiated the process of becoming Sustainable CT communities.

RiverCOG continued a legacy of legislative engagement with the state and federal governments on the behalf of our member municipalities. In January 2019 we held our annual legislative COG/MPQ meeting at the Capitol in Hartford with the region’s legislators. RiverCOG staff attended a number of hearings on proposed legislation and provided testimony on bills regarding tolling, transportation, changes to tax structure, implementation of statewide GIS, trail connectivity, and regionalization of assessor services.

Under state statute RiverCOG, through its Regional Planning Committee (RPC), or its delegated staff, 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. This year, the RPC provided reviews throughout the region and continued work on the Regional Plan of Conservation & Development.

RiverCOG continued to host the non-profit Gateway Commission which, for 45 years has served the towns of Chester, Deep River, East Haddam, Essex, Haddam, Lyme, Old Lyme and Old Saybrook as the guardian of the ecological and visual values of the Lower Connecticut River region. Working with the eight town Planning & Zoning Commissions, Zoning Boards of Appeal, and town staff, Gateway oversees a scenic protection program comprised of acquisition of scenic and conservation easements and land and the administration of a program of development management within the Gateway Conservation
Zone, located from the banks of the river up to the first ridge of river hillsides. In addition to partnering with Gateway, RiverCOG staff supported the health of the Connecticut River by educating communities about invasive species and monitoring and removing Hydrilla and other harmful plants.

RiverCOG continued to act as the fiduciary agent for Region 2 of the state’s emergency planning efforts through grants provided by the federal government through the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. The Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) is charged with developing, administering, and coordinating a comprehensive and integrated statewide program that encompasses all human-made and natural hazards and includes prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery components to ensure the safety and well-being of the citizens of Connecticut. Fiduciary duties include substantial financial record organization, certification of vendors and service providers, review of vendor quotes, payment of vendor invoices, attendance at monthly REPT meetings, administration and collection of Memorandums of Agreement from the 30 member towns for each of numerous overlapping grants, and preparing specific deliverables that are required by DEMHS in order to receive RiverCOG’s funding allocation for the fiduciary responsibilities. When requested, staff of the agency will also provide ancillary mapping services.

RiverCOG had a successful year with our continued household hazardous waste collections. In July, we added a successful new satellite collection in Cromwell with 4,840 pounds of household hazardous waste collected. During the 2018 season (April – October), 100,735 pounds of waste were collected. Due to Connecticut’s participation in the PaintCare program, towns saw significant savings as they are no longer charged for paint waste. 65,300 pounds of latex and oil-based paint were collected. Prior to implementation of the PaintCare program, the charge for disposal of the oil-based paint collected would have been $32,287. RiverCOG also continued holding paper shredding events with 34,200 pounds of paper collected and partnering with the state on recycling efforts on plastic film, mattresses, mercury switches, and textiles.

Other regional planning projects from fiscal year 2019 include:

Began a regional transit study looking at ways of better integrating operations of 9 Town Transit and MAT

Continued corridor studies along Routes 81 & 66

Aided Haddam and East Haddam with a Federal BUILD grant application for a walkway on the Swing Bridge

Initiated an update to our website, rivercog.org

Began hosting and staffing of the non-profit Lower Connecticut River Land Trust

Preliminary work on Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan update

Hosted inaugural Repair Café and Compost Bin/Rain Barrel sales

LOTcip projects

Millbrook Road, Middletown, construction, $2.4 million
Higganum Road, Durham, construction, $2.6 million
Coles Road, Cromwell, final design, 2.4 million
Candlewood Hill Road Haddam, committed, $2.9 million
Main Street, Chester, committed, $2.4 million

Other projects
Main Street Middletown intersections, construction, $3.9 million
Arrigoni Bridge approach spans, design, $52.5 million
Route 9 closed circuit tv, design, $9.2 million

Completed a new regional Metropolitan Transportation Plan

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 Registrars 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 2018/2019 the registrars administered Democratic and Republican Primaries, a State Election and a Region 4 Budget Referendum. Voter turn out for the elections were as follows: Democratic Primary 39%, Republican Primary 36%, State Election 79% and Region 4 Budget Referendum 13%.

On June 30 Chester had 2680 active registered voters: 1040 Democrats, 562 Republicans, 1040 Unaffiliated and 38 enrolled with minor parties. This is a total increase of 74 registered voters from June, 2018.

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 are and 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
December 27, 2018
Cancelled meeting due to purchase of 33 Liberty Street by a third party.

February 7, 2019
VOTED: To amend the ordinance entitled “Water Pollution Control Authority” adopted April 1, 1980 and amended on May 18, 2005 to change the membership from elected to appointed. All policies for a balance of party representation shall remain in effect.

The Ordinance will read as follows:
Water Pollution Control Authority

1. RESOLVED: That the ordinance entitled Water Pollution Control Authority adopted April 1, 1980 and amended on May 18, 2005, is hereby amended as follows:

   Section 1 Subsection 1b is hereby deleted and the following inserted in its place:

   The members of the Water Pollution Control Authority shall consist of five (5) electors of the Town of Chester. As the term of office of each member ends, such office shall be filled by appointment of the Board of Selectmen for a term of four years. In the event of death or resignation of a member, the vacancy shall be filled by the Board of Selectmen for the balance
of the unexpired term. All policies for a balance of party representation on the Board shall remain in effect.

DENIED: Amending the ordinance entitled “Ordinance Amending Zoning Board of Appeals” adopted December 3, 2002 to change the membership from elected to appointed. All policies for a balance of party representation shall remain in effect.

VOTED: To repeal and restate the ordinance entitled “Ordinance Amending Conservation Commission Ordinance and Renaming Commission” adopted March 13, 2001 as the “Ordinance Regarding the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission” and to change the membership from elected to appointed. All policies for a balance of party representation shall remain in effect.

The Ordinance will read as follows:

Ordinance Regarding the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission

1. The Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission shall consist of seven (7) members, all of whom shall be electors of the Town of Chester. The Commission is designated and authorized, under the provisions of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act set forth in Connecticut General Statutes 22a-36 to 22a-45, as amended:

(a) To act, promulgate and to enforce such regulations as may be necessary to conform and in conformity with the regulations promulgated by the Commissioner of Environmental Protection, State of Connecticut;

(b) To take any authorized action, to enforce any such provisions, and to license any such regulated activities, as set forth in said Act;

(c) To act as sole agent for the licensing of regulated activities under the provisions of said Act;

(d) To join with any other municipalities in the formation of a district for the regulation of activities affecting the wetlands and watercourses within such district, all in accordance with the provisions of said Act; and

(e) To act as the sole agent in advising and recommending to the Town of Chester, acting by and through a duly called Town Meeting of the electors of said town, as to whether such town shall or should acquire wetlands and/or watercourses within its territorial limits by gift or purchase in fee or lesser interest including, but not limited to, lease, easements or covenants, such to such reservations and exceptions as it, the Commission, deems advisable. For the purpose of acting upon the advice and recommendation of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission as set forth in this subsection of the Ordinance, the Board of Selectmen of said Town shall call a Special Town Meeting on application of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission, which such meeting shall be held within 21 days after the receipt of such application.

As the term of each regular or alternate current board member ends, such office shall be filled by appointment of the Board of Selectmen for a term of four years. In the event of death or resignation of a member, the vacancy shall be filled by the Board of Selectmen for the balance of the unexpired term. All policies for a balance of party representation on such Board shall remain in effect.
VOTED: To adopt an ordinance entitled “Stormwater Ordinance” to regulate discharges to the town storm drainage system. The ordinance establishes methods for controlling the introduction of pollutants into the storm drainage system in order to comply with requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit process and is required to be enacted in order to comply with state law. (See full Ordinance in Town Acts Volume 5 Pages 165 – 177, which is in Town Clerk’s office.)

VOTED: To repeal and restate the amended “Ordinance Regarding Hearing Procedure for Citations and Other Fines” adopted December 2, 1997 and amended October 10, 2006. The purpose of this restatement is to provide detailed and clear information to the public regarding the citation and hearing process rather than just a reference to the State Statute provisions. (See full Ordinance in Town Acts Vol 5 Pages 178 – 181, which is in Town Clerk’s office.)

May 7, 2019
VOTED BY REFERENDUM: To approve the Regional School District No. 4 budget of $20,572,675 for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019.
Yes: 129  No: 215
The total vote from Chester, Deep River and Essex was:
Yes: 460  No: 354

May 29, 2019
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, 2019 and the second half due January 1, 2020.
   b. All motor vehicle bills due in one payment on July 1, 2019.
   c. All motor vehicle supplement bills due in one payment on January 1, 2020.
   d. Minimum interest charge of $2.00.
   e. Negate all bills under $5.00.

VOTED BY PAPER BALLOT: To adopt a budget for the Town of Chester for fiscal year July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020 an amount totaling $14,379,720 as recommended by the Board of Finance. The results of the paper ballot were 120 Yes and 79 No.

VOTED: To adopt a five year Capital Budget 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, 2020.

VOTED: To authorize the following Capital transfer as recommended by the Board of Finance:
From 20-00-01-0000-007 Board of Selectmen – Assigned $10,000
To 20-00-36-0000-065 Buildings-Town Bldgs-Repairs/Code Compliance $10,000

VOTED: To authorize the expenditure of $67,419 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 $20,000 from the Capital Fund – Main Street Project – Phase III line item #20-00-31-0000-048 as recommended by the Board of Finance.

VOTED: To authorize the expenditure of $420,673 from the Capital Fund – Road/Sidewalk/Bridge Repairs line item #20-00-31-0000-446 as recommended by the Board of Finance.

VOTED: To authorize the expenditure of $30,000 from the Capital Fund – Maple Street Parking Lot & Walkway line item #20-00-31-0000-448 as recommended by the Board of Finance.

VOTED: To authorize the expenditure of $80,000 from the Capital Fund – Tree Removal line item #20-00-31-0000-456 as recommended by the Board of Finance.

VOTED: To authorize the expenditure of $23,000 from the Capital Fund – North Quarter Park/Playground line item #20-00-31-0000-454 as recommended by the Board of Finance.

VOTED: To authorize the expenditure of $92,500 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 $15,000 from the Capital Fund – Ambulance Replacement line item #20-00-42-0000-060 as recommended by the Board of Finance.

VOTED: To authorize the expenditure of $64,554 from the Capital Fund – Fire – Equipment Replacement line item #20-00-42-0000-235 as recommended by the Board of Finance.

VOTED: To authorize the expenditure of $10,000 from the Capital Fund – School – Project Adventure line item #20-00-90-0000-058 as recommended by the Board of Finance.

VOTED: To authorize the expenditure of $45,000 from the Capital Fund – School – Oil Tank Replacement line item #20-00-90-0000-062 as recommended by the Board of Finance.

June 26, 2019
VOTED: To approve, as a qualifying community program pursuant to the Neighborhood Assistance Tax Credit program, a proposed energy conservation project to be undertaken by the Goodspeed Opera House, as set forth in its form NAQA-1.

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 2018 grand list prior to the actions of the Board of Assessment Appeals is $441,137,583. The 2018 grand list generates the taxes that provide the primary amount of revenue that is utilized in running the town for the 2019/2020 fiscal year.

BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS

Bruce A. Watrous, 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.

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 Netsch, Treasurer

The Treasurer manages the cash flow, investment, and borrowing of Town funds in the most profitable and secure 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 13 separate additional funds for specified programs and retirement plans maintained outside the annual budgeted General Fund. The 14 funds are deposited in 24 different accounts at 6 different institutions. The Town reports all funds on a general ledger system.

With vigilant cash management and monitoring of income opportunities interest earned on the General Fund, for the fiscal year 2018/2019, totaled $66,698. This amount exceeded last year’s General Fund interest revenue by 127%. Earnings on other Town accounts were $5,736, excluding retirement funds. This interest and dividend income accumulated from the Treasurer’s office between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019 is income available to off-set future taxes or purchase goods and services for each fund.
The Town currently has a 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 COLLECTOR’S REPORT**
_Madaline A Meyer, Tax Collector_

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 6271 individual bills and an additional 711 supplemental MV bills for a grand total of 6982 bills, for the 2017 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 helpers from town, right in our office, who carefully combine bills & the last day, seal them.

Our collections for the fiscal year from July 1st, 2018 thru June 30th, 2019 on the recent 2017 grand list with the overall expected budget at $11,865,566.00 are as follows:

- Current taxes collected = $11,993,808.06 = 101.08% of budgeted $11,865,566.00
- Back taxes collected = $116,926.15 = 129.92% of budgeted $90,000.00
- Interest/fees collected = $68,651.56 = 137.30% of budgeted $50,000.00
- Grand total collected = $12,179,385.77 = 101.45% of budgeted $12,005,566.00

The current collection rate was up for all line items! However, I still believe the economy and the mill rate still affects our Town. I certainly hear about a lot of people, both young & old, who are having a hard time paying their taxes & their bills. We have approximately 24 different accounts that are on an unofficial payment plan type schedule. But most of them, luckily, keep to the payment plan. The Town of Chester took over a building near the airport at 59 Winthrop Rd this past year since many years of taxes were owed & there were no bidders at the different tax sales for it that were held over the years.

We also are responsible for collecting 48 usage bills for the WPCA and this past year, our WPCA collections had 47 out of the 49 bills paid in full with two accounts delinquent. The Benefit Assessment collection rate was again this year at 100% with only 33 left out of the original 80 to be paid in the future. The other 47 bills have been paid in full and liens have been released and those bills 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 only 104 different aircraft, which means we recorded the owner of the aircraft, type of aircraft, weight of the aircraft, FAA registration number & decal number that we issued, & collect the fee per type of aircraft, weight, age, etc. Three of these were exempt because of age of plane or because plane is the type that is leased out. We register on the average of between 103 & 125 aircraft over the most recent 10 years. Again this year, the CT department that is in charge of aircraft registrations, CAA, has stricter rules & all information had to match exactly 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 & then continue to provide us with their current updated information. Extra time was spent cross referencing this information on the FAA website with the information given to us by the aircraft owner to be sure all info matches. Some-times one piece of information has the owner’s personal name & other times, it has the business name of ownership. In each case the info must match the FAA registration papers which is why the cross referencing is so necessary & time consuming. 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 & November, with final reports going to the state in both January & the following October. We also have the added 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, & appreciate Chester, just like us!

RETIREEMENT BOARD
Van C. Standke, Acting Chairman

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, Richard Nyygard, Francine Cornaglia and Benjamin Belisle. There is one vacancy. 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 the last fiscal year, and that firm, Essex Financial Services, is currently managing the VSAP plan assets. The pension plan will also come under the management agreement during the coming fiscal year.

Town Retirement Plan
The Town of Chester Retirement Plan experienced good investment performance as a result of asset allocation and good performance in the stock and bond markets. The fiscal year end account value increased as a result of good investment performance and lower benefit payments. Assets as of June 30, 2019 were $1,766,535 after benefit payments of $34,438 and contributions during the year of $142,865, compared to an aggregate year-end value of $1,543,967 on June 30, 2018. Investments in this plan are managed by Voya Financial, and consist of a stock fund, a bond fund and a balanced fund. Investments during the year are generally allocated in equal parts to each of the three investment funds, not including money market. In this fiscal year the Town contribution was invested in May 2019 and was allocated to the 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, 2019 were $790,834 after benefit payments of $20,282 and including deposits during the year of $30,187. This compares to a balance on June 30, 2018, of $703,259. The plan assets are invested in mutual funds selected by Essex Financial Services, a Registered Investment Adviser.

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 administers the plan. The plan offers both traditional and Roth investment options.

REGION 4

We are proud to offer a wide range of learning experiences for the students of Chester, Deep River, Essex, and Region 4 Schools. It is our purpose to ensure that at the culmination of their K-12 education, every Region 4 graduate is college and career ready, and well prepared to successfully embrace the opportunities and challenges that await them in our ever-changing world.

Across Chester, Deep River, Essex, and the Region 4 Schools, the 2018-19 school year was very exciting, bringing with it a number of initiatives and recognitions. The Chester, Deep River, Essex, and Region 4 Schools engaged in the second year of our strategic plan, which primarily focused on Critical and Creative Problem Solving, as well as developing systemic coherence. All Boards of Education voted to focus on these goals, along with administration and staff members. This alignment has moved our districts forward to provide excellence for all of our students pre-kindergarten through graduation.

Valley Regional High School enjoyed many awards and recognitions in academics, the arts, sports, and citizenship. Our high school was very proud to report a 100% graduation rate for students attending all four years at VRHS. This year our high school successfully met the criteria to begin offering IB Programme Diploma courses beginning in the fall of 2019. We are very excited about the opportunities this program will offer our students in the years ahead.

The elementary schools have continued their focus on the development of curriculum and instructional practices that match the new national and state standards across content areas, with a particular focus on the new Next Generation Science Standards. Our elementary schools entered into their second year of implementing Bridges, our new elementary mathematics program. Instructional coaches played an integral role in working with staff and students in each of our schools to build staff capacity in the instructional methods required by the Bridges program, as well as to develop effective approaches to developing the new mathematics curriculum.

We recognize that our excellent schools are part of the fabric of our communities, and attract families to our region. We continue to develop strong productive relationships with the towns we serve, and partner with those towns to provide innovative educational programming that ultimately has a positive impact on the regional economy. On behalf of our schools, administration, staff, and students, we thank you for your support and partnership in developing our students to become the citizens of tomorrow.
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ESTUARY COUNCIL OF SENIORS, INC.
Stan Mingione, 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 80,000 nutritious meals including nearly 50,000 home delivered Meals On Wheels, and over 17,000 congregate meals, 366 rides to medical outpatient appointments outside the nine-town Estuary Region. Also, 1,200 individuals 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 111,000 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 30 residents a total of 5,180 home delivered meals and an additional 41 residents joined us for 680 congregate meals. Our Emergency Medical Outpatient Transportation provided 6 individuals with 11 rides to medical appointments. We had a total of 7571 visits by a total of 431 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
Joseph Comerford, Executive Director

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 under the name 9 Town Transit (9TT) and XtraMile.

The Estuary Transit District is governed by a board of directors. Each member town appoints one representative who serves 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.

ETD’s five deviated fixed routes serve the main corridors of the region and provide connections to public transit providers serving the surrounding regions. In addition, ETD 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. All ETD services are 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 $1.75 for deviated fixed routes, $.85 for people with disabilities, and $3.50 for Dial-A-Ride. Students of participating state colleges and universities may ride any deviated fixed route for free with a UPass. 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. Nearly 100,000 passenger trips were provided during the fiscal year.

During the fiscal year, ETD began new deviated fixed-route service between Madison and Middletown along Route 81. This includes the towns of Clinton, Killingworth and Higganum and Middlesex Community College and connections to CT Transit New Haven, CT Transit Hartford and Middletown Area Transit.

ETD also began a taxi voucher program for seniors and people with disabilities. The program allows participants half priced taxi trips to anywhere in Connecticut. Wheelchair accessible taxis are also available as part of this program.

In January, ETD received the district’s first large transit buses. These buses will provide additional capacity on the Old Saybrook to Madison bus route and improve on-time performance. To accommodate these vehicles, ETD will begin providing ADA paratransit service in FY 2019-2020, which will provide door-to-door transportation along this route to those unable to use the route due to a disability.

Beginning in May of 2019, ETD began a pilot Microtransit service in Old Saybrook, Westbrook and Essex under the XtraMile brand. XtraMile provides on-demand service within the service area to passenger who schedule the bus through a smartphone app or by phone, with no advance scheduling required. The service area was designed to connect the Westbrook and Old Saybrook train stations to residential areas and employers in the region. The pilot will run free of charge through November 2, 2019.

After completing a needs assessment and site selection for a new operating and maintenance facility in FY 2017-2018, plans were put on hold. ETD is now working with the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments on a study of the countywide transit needs and determine the best model for providing public transit in the 17 town region going forward. This study began in early 2019 and is expected to be completed in April 2020. As part of this study, there will be multiple public outreach events occurring during FY 2019-2020 to assist in formulating a plan for the future of public transit in the region.
Board of Directors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Town</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noel Bishop</td>
<td>Westbrook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joan Gay</td>
<td>Killingworth</td>
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<td>Susan Tyler</td>
<td>Lyme</td>
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<td>John Forbis</td>
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<td>Charlie Norz</td>
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<td>Peter Bierrie</td>
<td>Essex</td>
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<td>Angus McDonald</td>
<td>Deep River</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leslie Strauss</td>
<td>Chester</td>
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<td>Virginia Zawoy</td>
<td>Clinton</td>
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<td>Halyna Famiglietti</td>
<td>Finance Manager</td>
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Administrative Staff

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Human Services

Rosie Bininger, Director

“You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream”
C.S.Lewis

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, 38 individuals and families received help with medical costs (2), gasoline (3), clothing (3), emergency food vouchers (19), and oil and electricity bills (11). 52 families qualified for the CT Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) and 15 families qualified for Operation Fuel. For every Operation Fuel application completed, the town receives a $21.00 reimbursement. This fiscal period $315.00 was collected for the Emergency Fuel Fund. The Shoreline Soup Kitchens & Pantries reported 55 Chester families using local food pantries with 106 residents currently receiving SNAP benefits. The Emergency Assistance Fund which is funded by community donations paid out $8256.48 in expenditures for helping Chester residents.

As always, the community pulled together throughout the holiday season with generous donations of time, gifts, food, gift certificates and baskets. This year 38 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 25 children with “Famous Footwear” back to school shoe vouchers.

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: 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 Human Services Director can be reached on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings 9:00-12:00 or by calling 526-0013 x213 to set up an appointment.

CONNECTICUT RIVER AREA HEALTH DISTRICT
Scott Martinson, Director

The Connecticut River Area Health District (CRAHD) is a five-town local health district. CRAHD continues to provide core public health services to the towns of Clinton, Old Saybrook, Deep River, Haddam and Chester. The district is responsible for implementing programs and supporting policies that improve the health of its residents. The district provides a strong environmental health and code compliance program, targeted public health nursing services, health education and promotion activities, disease tracking and prevention, and public health preparedness planning. The district is dedicated to carrying out its mission to maximize the highest quality local public health services possible given its current resource level.

Environmental Health:

This fiscal year proved to be another busy one for the environmental health section. Our licensed Sanitarians performed a variety of environmental health functions and conducted a wide variety of inspections. In addition, Sanitarians offered advice to residents and the business community, and educated the public and targeted audiences on a variety of environmental health issues, code enforcement and code guidance. Inspection programs include state-mandated inspections for compliance with the Connecticut Public Health Code and local ordinances.

Inspections, permitting/licensing activities and targeted education are conducted in the following areas:

On-site sewage disposal: soil site evaluations, installer and engineered plan reviews, permitting for new, upgraded, altered and repaired systems, installation inspections, as-built drawing review, issuance of permits to discharge.
**Food service establishments:** restaurants, caterers, food stores, school cafeterias, nursing homes, churches, vendors, temporary events and farmer’s markets

**Body care establishments:** cosmetology shops, nail and beauty salons, barber shops, and tanning salons.

**Child day care centers** and group day care homes

**Overnight-stay facilities** such as hotels, motels, inns, bed & breakfasts

**Public swimming pools**, including spas and condominium pools

**Public bathing areas** including freshwater bathing and marine water beaches

**General Nuisance/Other Complaints:** CRAHD Sanitarians respond to a variety of citizens’ complaints such as: housing, rodent infestation, garbage and odors, septic overflows, general nuisance, well and water supply issues, poor sanitary conditions, etc.

**Private water supplies** permitting, location approvals, testing, lab report reviews, advice on treatment and maintenance.

**Campgrounds:** Inspections to ensure minimum sanitary standards are met.

**Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention:** Lead Paint hazard reduction, abatement orders, education to homeowners, tenants and landlords, RRP awareness and case follow up of childhood elevated blood lead levels.

**Housing:** landlord-tenant issues related to minimum housing standards

**Inspection activity during the 2018-2019 fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) included:**

- 233 Properties tested for suitability for a septic system
- 221 Permits issued to repair existing septic systems
- 40 Permits issued for new septic systems
- 69 Engineer-designed septic system plans reviewed and approved
- 349 Applications reviewed for health code compliance for proposed building activities including, building expansions, additions to homes, in-ground and above-ground pools, accessory apartments, garages, decks, etc. (commonly referred to as B100a reviews)
442 Food establishment inspections
62 Body Care/Cosmetology inspections
7 Childhood Day care inspections
14 Overnight-stay facility inspections
21 Public pool inspections
150 Beach/bathing water samples taken and tested
60 Complaints: including general nuisances, animals, housing, sewage, etc.
34 New well permits issued
3 Family campground inspections

Community Health:

The Public Health Nurse (PHN) works closely with all our school districts conducting surveillance for flu-like illness, to assist in control of illness in the schools, and to support health education and promotion activities.

During 2018-19, the public health nurse is the lead staff person in the planning and execution of public health preparedness, and the PHN serves the district in the capacity of public health preparedness coordinator.

The PHN is responsible for tuberculosis case management, surveillance for reportable diseases, and follow-up of all reportable communicable diseases within the district towns.

The PHN manages the district’s efforts to control childhood lead poisoning, both in prevention and response to elevated blood lead levels.

Distribution of articles on public health topics to local newspapers and the local EVENTS publications, many of the articles recognizing observances of days/months with public health importance.

Through its Preventative Health Block Grant, CRAHD continues to offer educational programs focused on the prevention of skin cancer. Presentations were conducted to municipal and park and recreation staff, the elderly, as well as middle school students on the dangers of sun exposure, including tanning beds. The program uses elements of the EPA’s Sun Wise curriculum guide. These education sessions are available to small community groups at no cost.

Sanitarians also provided food safety workshops for foodservice workers in the local school district(s).

CRAHD is the lead health department in Mass Dispensing Area #39, which includes the five health district towns as well as Westbrook, Essex, and Killingworth. We are in the process of updating and better
operationalizing our mass dispensing plan, pandemic influenza plan, and PH preparedness plan. CRAHD continues to meet with its Emergency Support Function (ESF) 8; Medical and Public Health partners in DEMHS region 2 and statewide to enhance regional capacity and to develop regional health care coalitions. CRAHD conducts local communications exercises on a quarterly basis and participates in regional and statewide drills and exercises.

CRAHD continued its efforts in volunteer management and closed points of dispensing (PODs) efforts.

CRAHD continues to improve its Health Alert Network (HAN) capacity and usefulness.

CRAHD conducted community and school-based flu vaccination clinics for the 5th year, and this continues to grow. Clinics were held at public locations including libraries, town halls, schools and the district office.

Our PHN, under the guidance of the director of health, conducts active surveillance of all laboratory and physician reported diseases identified by the CT DPH. The PHN also conducts follow-up investigations of selected illnesses reported to control the spread of these diseases in the community.

Outreach and education are continuously provided for diseases of importance such as hepatitis A, B, and C, elevated childhood lead levels, Lyme disease, West Nile virus, Zika, and other vector borne diseases. The district monitors for mosquito borne diseases and also manages the mosquito control activities in the towns that participate in control. Chronic disease control and prevention such as skin cancer prevention education and radon and lung cancer information are provided by the district.

CRAHD Staff List and Board of Directors 2018-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director of Health</td>
<td>Scott Martinson, MPH, MS, RS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registered Sanitarian</td>
<td>Steve Yenco, RS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Sanitarian</td>
<td>Ryan Grenon, MPA, RS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Sanitarian</td>
<td>Zach Faiella, MPH, RS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health Nurse</td>
<td>Sherry Carlson, RN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Manager</td>
<td>Chris Collier</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board Position</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Town</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>Michael Dunne, M.D.</td>
<td>Old Saybrook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-Chairman</td>
<td>Angus McDonald</td>
<td>Deep River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Alan Schwarz, M.D.</td>
<td>Old Saybrook</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Director   Rita Foster, RN, MSN    Clinton
Director   Christine Goupil    Clinton
Director   Lizz Milardo    Haddam
Director   Lauren Gister    Chester

TRI-TOWN YOUTH SERVICES
Allison Abramson, Executive Director

Tri-Town Youth Services provided Direct Services to 154 youth this year, which included facilitation of two youth advisory boards (41); training of Peer Advocates (25); connecting Valley mentors with elementary students (9 pairs); hosting a summer program for middle school students (31) and providing babysitter training or employment assistance (32). Tri-Town hired a part-time (18 hour) Youth Program Coordinator to run Youth in Action, a service-learning club at JWMS and Reach Out teen mentoring at the local elementary schools. Tri-Town’s Clinical Director continued to provide case management to youth referred to the Juvenile Review Board (15) and counseling services that addressed residents’ parenting and relationship concerns (14). Local youth sought help to manage anxiety, depression, grief, bullying and trauma from abuse. We referred youth to outside agencies to address substance abuse. In all cases, Tri-Town’s professional staff worked with clients to identify underlying problems and provide tools to build resiliency, restore relationships and reach personal goals at school and in life.

Tri-Town’s Prevention Coordinator and AmeriCorp Prevention Corp Member offered 12 programs to community members this year, including presentations at Drivers Ed Parent Nights, Narcan Training, Vaping 101 and “Marijuana: Weeding Out Fact from Fiction” with Alicia Farrell. Additionally, Tri-Town conducted its bi-annual survey of middle and high school youth, which revealed a sharp increase in teen tobacco use (via vaping), and increases in mental health issues, namely anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts. These statistics align with state and national trends, and Tri-Town Youth Services is working closely with Region 4 Schools on early identification, screening and referral to services so that all young people in our community can be resilient and find a sense of peace and personal fulfillment.

Tri-Town assisted with the launch of the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Enrichment Program at Deep River Elementary School this year. This social emotional learning curriculum was designed by educators and experts in neuroscience to teach self-regulation through the study of courage, gratitude, forgiveness and compassion. Throughout the year, Tri-Town provided preschool, parent and community presentations about Choose Love. In the coming year, the agency will support the roll out of the program at Chester and Essex Elementary schools.

Our special thanks to all of the community members who support Tri-Town Youth Services by giving your time, lending your expertise or making a financial contribution. We’re grateful for the Town’s investment in the work we do to serve local families.
SAYBROOK DISTRICT PROBATE COURT

The Saybrook District Probate Court serves the nine towns of Chester, Clinton, Deep River, Essex, Haddam, Killingworth, Lyme, Old Saybrook, and Westbrook, which have a combined population of approximately 62,000. Judge Jeannine Lewis presides over hearings, and is supported by seven staff including Sharon Tiezzi, Chief Clerk, Marge Calltharp, Stella Caione (fka Beaudoin), Margaret (Peggy) Schroeder, Helene Yates, Jackie Craco, and Rose Nolin. Former Chief Clerk, Valerie Shickel, retired on June 28, 2019 after 34 years of service in the probate system, and is enjoying retirement by sailing and spending time with friends. Sharon Tiezzi has confidently stepped into the Chief Clerk position with 25 years of probate experience and deep community roots.

The court is located on the second floor of the Old Saybrook Town Hall, 302 Main Street, Old Saybrook, and is open from 8:30-4:30 Monday through Friday. Paperwork for children’s matters can be filed in the Old Saybrook location; however, all hearings for children’s matters, with the exception of adoptions and name changes, are heard by Judge Lewis at the Connecticut Children’s Regional Probate Court located at 1501 East Main Street, Meriden. Utilizing this court location enables families to benefit from the services of two full time social workers, called Family Specialists, who assist in developing healthy custody and visitation arrangements that provide healthier outcomes for children and their families. Additionally, the judge travels to the homes or residences of persons who are unable to appear in court due to infirmity or disability.

During the reporting year, the Saybrook District Probate Court administered matters with respect to the following areas of the law: 1419 decedent’s estates; 265 conservatorships; 118 trusts; 102 guardianships of the intellectually disabled; 84 children’s matters including termination of parental rights, temporary custody appointments, and guardianships; 32 name changes; 31 compromise of claims/appointments of a guardian of the estate of a minor; 13 adoptions; and 10 custody of the remains applications. The court also performs many administrative functions and processed 75 fee waivers for indigent individuals to allow full access to its services regardless of ability to pay.

In addition to the daily work of the court, Judge Lewis speaks at community and statewide forums on the topics of: general probate, planning for incapacity, recent consumer scams and how to avoid them, and the Connecticut Standards of Practice for Conservators.

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.
VISITING NURSES OF THE LOWER VALLEY
Susan Maxwell, MSN, RN, C-COS, Executive Director

Visiting Nurses of the Lower Valley is a non-profit organization dedicated to home and community-based health care. In FY 2018, we received 343 referrals for home care in our service area; 9.82% of those home visits to patients in Chester. After a turbulent year in regulatory proposals for the home health care industry, Visiting Nurses of the Lower Valley has been looking toward 2019/2020 on the changes that still lie ahead. Provisions in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 included major reforms for home health care, including a new 30-day payment model by 2020 and elimination of frontloaded payments by 2021. We continue to assist our patients in developing emergency preparedness plans in the event they need to evacuate or shelter in place. We continue to provide weekly walk-in blood pressure screenings, monthly B12 injections, and community educational sessions. Flu shot clinics were held at the United Church of Chester as part of our wellness program. We distribute monthly health promotion newsletters via email and co-sponsor a health fair annually. We are pleased to report we received the Home Care Elite TOP 500 distinction this year and continue to maintain our focus on quality patient care. We highly value our patients and continue to generate positive patient satisfaction.

We are the parent organization of Lower Valley Care Advocates whose staff provides private care services for surgical recovery, caregiver respite, and home management. Special programs are designed to help the frail elderly, terminally ill, disabled, and clients with dementia remain in the comfort of their own homes. All of the staff are carefully screened, trained and bonded, and are expert at determining just what services are needed to achieve optimum health and safety at home. Please call 860-767-2695 for further information.

Our staff wishes to acknowledge the commitment of our volunteer board of directors: Judy Heiser, Dan Tavares, and Debbie Bliska from Essex; Ted Heiser, Peg Lieberman, Rueben Manning and Susan D. Murphy from Chester; Bob Sampson from Mystic; and Claire Walsh from Deep River. And, a special thank you to all Chester residents who support the work of Visiting Nurses of the Lower Valley.

Please visit our website (www.visitingnurses.org) or call us at 767-0186 for service information or flu clinic dates and locations.

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
Jon Lavy, Chairman

The Planning & Zoning Commission finalized its ten-year review of the Town’s Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) in April following numerous Commission meetings and Public Hearings. This document will guide the town for the next decade as it continues to grow economically while maintaining and protecting the Town’s natural resources and quality of life.
The Commission held public hearings and continued to monitor activities to ensure that the town is able to grow, economically, while protecting and enhancing our quality of life. These Public Hearings have led to a number of new businesses adding to the economic growth of the town.

The Commission has continued to work with and support Camp Hazen in its planning efforts to modernize its facilities and continue to ensure the safety of its residents and campers. With the continuation of the Main Street Project, supporting both residents and businesses in the Village Center will be a major focus for the coming year.

Commission members have transitioned during the year and have included Seth Fidel, Elaine Fitzgibbons, Henry Krempel, Andrew Landsman, Jon Lavy, Steven Merola, Bettie Perreault, Michael Sanders, Keith Scherber, Jacqueline Stack, Peter Zanardi, Patricia Bisacky, Sally Murray and Steve Tiezzi.

CHESTER ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
Mark Borton, Chairman

From July 2018 to June 2019, there were only two (2) variance applications to the Chester Zoning Board of Appeals. Both applications were granted.

Members include Mark Borton, John DeLaura, Errol Horner, Alec Stein, Bob Blair, Eric Anderson.

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.

During the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the Conservation Commission focused on a number of public education programs to promote conservation and to improve our local environment. Among these are the following:

- EnviroTips: this is a regular weekly “tip” included in the townwide email to provide information about environmental and conservation topics of local concern. EnviroTips often included specific activities residents could take to protect or improve Chester’s environment.
- Sustainability Fair: On October 27, 2018, the Commission, in collaboration with the Energy-Team and Sustainable Chester, participated in the Energy-Conservation-Sustainability Fair held at the Meeting House. The commission hosted displays and activities on recycling, composting, invasive plants and rain barrels.
- Informational Meeting on Tree Mortality: On June 12, 2019, the Commission held an informational meeting about the recent die off of trees in Connecticut. The speakers, Thomas Worthley, Forester and UConn Associate Extension Professor, Emery Gluck, CT DEEP Forester for Cockaponset, Nehantic & Pachaug State, Andrea Urbano, CT DEEP Service Forester, and Scot Mills, Chester Tree Warden, explained the causes of tree mortality, its extent and the tree
species mostly impacted and also discussed efforts to restore forest stands and what landowners could do to protect their trees.

During the year the Commission, in collaboration with the Cedar Lake Management Committee, developed plans to stencil storm water catch basins in Chester with information such as “Drains to Cedar Lake” or “Drains to CT River” to help alert residents to storm water pollution and how it may affect local water resources. Two commission members, Rick Holloway and Ted Taigen also participate on the Cedar Lake Management Committee as a member and alternate. The Commission also reviewed and provided input to Chester’s updated Plan of Conservation and Development.

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

WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY

Edward Ward, Chairman

Chester’s Water Pollution Control Authority continues to work quietly in the background to assure effective and safe operation of the town sewer system, without interruption twenty-four hours a day, every day. We could certainly not accomplish this without the services and cooperation of the Deep River treatment plant crew, who provide operation and maintenance support for our pump station as well as system oversight. These folks not only treat our wastewater but are on call whenever there is an emergency or routine service to perform. Thanks to Pete Lewis, John Ely and Ken Hebert for their dedication and professionalism!

I would like to thank Bert Armington, past chair, Felise Cressman, and Jim Pease for their service on our committee over the past years! We had three new WPCA committee members join us this past spring, Ed Meehan, Ian McLachian and Mark Riggio.

This past year we have had several properties along Main Street connect to the sewer system due to septic tank system failures. Also, several potential buyers of 9 Waters Street property, the old bank, have shown interest in connecting to the sewer system.

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 substantial 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.

Our WPCA meeting schedule and minutes are posted on the Town of Chester website, and meetings 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.
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 2017-2018 fiscal year, The Chester IWWA issued ten regular permits for activities including:

- Paving of a driveway
- Pond dredging
- Shed
- Driveway
- Box culvert installation
- Rebuilding of a house
- House addition
- Permit extended for driveway and crossing
- Driveway
- Septic System

One administrative permit was granted for a shed.

Remediations from September 2018 washout were allowed after inspection and documentation.
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, 2018 to June 30, 2019 the value of Building Permits totaled

Fee charges for permits total:

- Residential: $40,938.99
- Commercial: $4,432.76

Breakdown:
- Building Permits – 117
- Electrical Permits – 71
- Plumbing Permits – 22
- Heating Permits – 56
- Wood Stove Permits – 4

State Education Fees submitted to the State of Connecticut during this time period $1237.60

CLEAN ENERGY TASK FORCE
Pat Woomer, Chairman

The Clean Energy Task Force (aka the “E-Team) for the past few years has been working in the shadows, you might say. It was officially formed as an ad hoc committee in 2011 to give more specific direction to the energy work which had been previously done by the Conservation Commission. The Commission and Selectmen felt that the town would benefit from a group dedicated solely to energy concerns. The persons who volunteered to serve on this task force formed an impressively talented and qualified team.

Although the E-Team has accomplished numerous small-scale projects which save on heating and air conditioning costs for the town, the largest quantifiable savings come from electrical projects. Note that these are on-going annual cost savings.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Annual Cost Savings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>As a result of Eversource audit, upgraded all lighting in the Chester Elementary School</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Installed solar panels on the elementary school and the town hall. The systems were free to the town as a result of a grant stemming from other energy-saving projects.</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>As a result of an Eversource audit, upgraded all lighting at the Town Garage</td>
<td>$1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>The E-Team enabled the Town to purchase all streetlights from Eversource and had all of these converted to LEDs</td>
<td>$33,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Converted lighting in all town-owned parking lots to LEDs</td>
<td>$2,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Expanded the solar system at the elementary school to fulfill approximately 45% of the school's electrical needs. *</td>
<td>$16,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The annual dollar savings for the elementary school solar project do not reflect the enormous energy savings realized. They were financed through a Power Purchase Agreement which meant that the town had no capital expenditure to obtain the system.

* The E-Team also arranged an upgrade to insulation as well as better sealing of air leaks at the Town Hall. Although it is difficult to calculate actual annual monetary savings, the upgrade resulted in greatly increased comfort for employees and eliminated a previous problem with icicles forming over the bank drive-through.

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**POLICE SERVICES**

*Resident Trooper Matthew Ward*

The following list represents calls for law enforcement in Chester from 07/01/2018 through 06/30/2019:

There were a total of **4,676** calls for service in Chester during this period. These calls, the Chester Police Officers, the Chester Resident Trooper and Troopers from Troop F - Westbrook responded to and include calls for service on Route 9.

**MOTOR VEHICLE CALLS**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motor Vehicle Accidents</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Type</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatal Motor Vehicle Accidents</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MV Accidents with DUI Arrest</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUI Arrests (No Accident)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Vehicle Stops (Ticket issued)</td>
<td>736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Vehicle Stops (Result = Arrest)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Vehicle Stops (Written Warning)</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Motor Vehicles</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Violations</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRIMINAL/OTHER CALLS</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglaries</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larcenies (Stolen Property)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narcotics Violations</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons Compliance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Robbery</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dive Team Response</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual Assault</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assaults</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Person</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stolen Vehicles</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Damage</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unattended/suspicious death</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trespass</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Impersonation</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglar Alarm investigations</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Violations</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assist Other Agency</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist Agency Calls with Written Report</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assist to Citizen</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist to Citizen Calls with Written Report</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disturbance Calls (Breach/Disord)</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disturbance Calls with Written Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical Calls</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative Services</td>
<td>159</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative Svcs. with Written Report</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to Appear in Court</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>K-9 calls for service</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patrol Checks in Chester</td>
<td>2,432</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suspicious Incident Calls</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspicious Incident Calls with Written Rpt</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Chester Fair, The Rotary Lobster Festival, Halloween Parade, Memorial Day Parade, Chester Fair Beer & Wine Festival, Chester Rotary 4 on the 4th Road Race, Duck Race, Stuff-a-Cruiser toy drive,
Chester Tri-Series, Cruise, Blues & Brews and Chester Dog Fair were among activities that required police resources and planning. The department consists of one Resident Trooper, two regular part-time police officers and one special projects/training police officer.

CITATION REVIEW BOARD

The Citation Review Board is established by State Statutes to evaluate requests for review or relief in connection to Citations that have been issued for various matters involving Chester Town regulations. The matters involve charges of violations of traffic, parking and a variety of other enforcement measures. Members are appointed by the Board of Selectmen and are scheduled to meet each month when requests for review are received. While requests for review had been infrequent in recent years, during this fiscal year there has been increased activity as local officials have maintained compliance with regulations, particularly in connection with motor vehicle activities. Members currently serving are Kathy Merola, Bettie Perreault, Richard Schreiber and Whitelaw Wilson.

HARBOR MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

Joel Severance, Chairman

2019 has been an active year for the Commission.

Like in the past we have assisted the Town of Essex in managing the Pumpout Boat Program. We service the 7 municipalities from the East Haddam Bridge to Old Saybrook (but not into the Sound). We had a record year; we pumped 118,656 gallons of waste material from the recreational boaters here on the River.

We had a short grant opportunity become available to raise the height of Dock Road. Whenever the River reaches a flood stage the road becomes impassable and the residents, marina and yacht clubs cannot get to or from their properties/boats. We ran out of time to prepare the Grant Request. Hopefully it will become available in 2020. We’re ready now.

We received a tentative approval from the Connecticut Port Authority to dredge the Mouth of Chester Creek. It needs it every ten (plus or minus) years due to silt coming down river. The State Bonding Commission has yet to approve the CPA funding for projects.

Due to a couple of Chester errors in the 2019 Connecticut Boaters Guide; we drafted corrections and updates. We delivered them to the DEEP Marine Division. A couple were accepted; but the others must be updated in our Harbor Management Plan and accepted by the Town; before they will change them. Our HMP is a work in progress and will be completed in 2020 for the 2021 version!

We reviewed the DEEP, BLUE PLAN, LONG ISLAND SOUND. One major issue, not with just us; but all other coastal municipalities, is as written; if it goes thru, the dredge disposal sites in Long Island Sound will be forced to close. New York objected to use of all but one existing disposal site for dredged material disposal. That one is the Western LIS Disposal site. They use it.
CHESTER HOSE COMPANY
Chief James Grzybowski

During 2018-19, 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 respond, when requested, to assist other fire departments and emergency services within Middlesex County, as well as our neighboring counties. In turn, these departments continued to provide us assistance when we needed them.

The members 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 2018-19. The Hose Company has 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. The Chester Hose Company is a volunteer department that at present has sixty-five members who freely volunteer their time, giving back to the Town of Chester and providing an unmeasurable savings.

The Chester Hose Company saw an increase in call volume under Chief Brainard. 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.

The department was able to purchase the LUCAS Device (automated compression system) due to donations, from the former Chester Ambulance Association and from an anonymous donor. This device is used during CPR and has already been a major benefit to Chester. In May, the Hose Company sent out its oldest ambulance to have it re-mounted on a new cab and chassis. It is expected to return sometime in September. This is more cost effective than purchasing a new ambulance.

In July 2019, the department saw a change amongst the leadership within the department as Chief James Grzybowski returned as Chief, along with Deputy Chief Charles Greeney Jr. and Assistant Chief John Ahearn.

Expanding our communication venues and increasing department public relations, The Chester Hose Company has updated the website, www.chesterhoseco.org, and Facebook Page, @chesterhoseinc, and frequently submits 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.
ANIMAL CONTROL
Caitlyn Sikora, Animal Control Officer

Year to date, approximately 170 calls came into the office, many of them regarding wildlife. As a reminder if you are experience an issue with nuisance wildlife please direct your call to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) at 860-424-3333. You can also call a Nuisance Wildlife Control Officer (NWCO) who is equipped and trained to deal with nuisance wildlife. As always please be mindful of the wildlife and keep your distance, it is also illegal in the State of Connecticut to relocate any Rabies Vector Species (fox, raccoon, skunk) under CT General Statutes sections 26-47 (b) and 26-57. If you see wildlife acting strangely such as walking in circles, walking into things, stumbling, overly aggressive or overly friendly, dragging the hind end please call our office at 860-767-4340 x 160 or the CT State Police Troop F in Westbrook at 860-391-2100.

Please remember to get your dogs licensed every June! By CT state law dogs over 6 months in age must be licensed in the town they reside and all dogs and cats over the age of 3 months old must be vaccinated against rabies. The office has received many calls regarding roaming dogs and dogs running out into the road after pedestrians. Be advised that it is the owner’s responsibility to keep their dog under their control at all times or an infraction can be issued. Also, please be courteous and clean up after your pet when out in public.

I always try to promote responsible pet ownership by encouraging everyone to spay and neuter your pets! We have an enormous cat over population here in Connecticut, even here in Chester. Spaying and neutering also prevents unwanted health issues later in life. If you have any questions, I can be reached at 860-767-4340 x 160 or by email csikora@essexct.gov. As a reminder, the following is a list of possible infractions along with their associated fees:

- Failure to License a dog: $75.00
- Roaming Dog: $92.00
- Nuisance Dog: $75.00
- Failure to Redeem: $75.00
- Impound Fee: $15.00 per day
- Failure to Vaccinate: $136.00

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
Bettie Perreault, Chairman

During the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the Commission worked closely with Hose Company officers to improve its ability to respond to emergency calls, significantly increasing the number of paid staff for medical responses, with improved revenue generated. Going forward, it is anticipated that the Department will continue to enhance the availability and responses of both volunteers and paid staff.

The Commission is responsible for general oversight of the Fire Department. The Hose Company provides, through its volunteers and paid personnel, the needed services to protect life and safety for Chester residents, businesses and a variety of community events and activities. Supported by the Fire Marshals, the Board of Selectmen, Chief and other officers of the Hose Company, the Commission meets monthly, receiving regular updates and reports of activities.
During the year, the Hose Company acquired a significant amount of equipment to better respond to calls for many types of activities. With refurbishment of one of the Ambulance units, the year ended with an up-to-date vehicle added to its ability to respond to medical and other calls.

Membership in the Hose Company continues to grow as new members join and become trained and certified. Both volunteers and paid EMT personnel are active participants in routine activities as well as responding to emergencies and other events. Second- and third-generation family members continue to serve in the many roles of the Hose Company, supporting long-time members and newer members. Recruiting and retaining members is a challenge for all volunteer organizations; Chester is fortunate to have these dedicated, committed people and the Commission extends its thanks and appreciation to them.

Commission members serving this year are Bob Bandzes, John Divis, Bettie Perreault, Rick Schreiber and Peter Zanardi; Ex-officio Members: Chief John Brainard; Fire Marshals Dick Leighton and Dave Roberge; and representing the Board of Selectmen, Charlene Janecek.

FIRE MARSHAL’S OFFICE
Richard “Dick” E. Leighton, Fire Marshal
David “Dave” Roberge, Fire Investigator
Peter “Pete” Terenzi, Deputy Fire Marshal

The Fire Marshal’s Office is being covered by Richard E. Leighton, David Roberge, and Peter Terenzi on a part time “as needed” basis. Through Chapter 541, Section 29-291 of the Connecticut General Statutes provides the statutory authority to not only the State Fire marshal, but also the local Fire Marshals, Deputy Fire Marshals, and Fire Investigators. Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 29-262(b) and 29-298, both building officials and fire officials are required to complete 90 hours of continuing education over a three (3) year period in order to maintain licensure or certification.

In accordance with Section 29-292-7e of the Connecticut General Statutes, the local fire marshal and their respective designees are responsible for conducting inspections as prescribed within Section 29-292 of the Regulations of State Agencies within their said jurisdiction. Such inspections include most commercial as well as business occupancies, which include multi-family residential (excludes one- & two-family residences), assemblies, restaurants, theaters, taverns/bars, churches, educational including primary, secondary, private & public, as well as day cares, institutional, mercantile, storage, high hazard, and factory/industrial. The frequency of such inspections is governed by Section 29-292-7e(c). Additionally, the Fire Marshal’s Office is responsible for issuance of blasting permits, burn permits, liquor permit approvals both temporary as well as annual. The Fire Marshal’s Office is also responsible for the determination of the origin and cause of any fire or hazardous incident within the appointed jurisdiction. The Fire Marshal’s Office, in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes is required to submit a monthly activity report to the Board of Fire Commissioners of all activities involving the Fire Marshal’s Office.
Statistical Analysis of the Fire Marshal’s Office during the 2018/2019 Fiscal Year:

- Temporary Liquor Licensing Activities: 1.5 hrs.
- Annual Liquor Licensing Activities: 38.0 hrs.
- Mandated Continual Educational Training: 53.5 hrs.
- Commercial Inspections: 298.0 hrs.
- Blasting Permits & Inspections: 0.0 hrs.
- Burning Permits & Inspections: 8.0 hrs.
- Administrative Activities: 164.0 hrs.
- Fire/ Hazards Materials/ Emergency Investigations: 287.5 hrs.**

**Approximately 104 hrs. were related to flood / Haz. Mat. Activities

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Joel Severance, Director

A revised draft of the Lower Connecticut River MARINE- MASS CASUALTY INCIDENT RESPONSE PLAN was submitted to DEMHS for acceptance. When approved we will schedule an exercise in coordination with Valley Steam Train and Riverboat and our neighbors. The Plan is based on other similar MCI plans: Coast Guard (CONOPS), CSP (Active Shooter), other region large scale marine incidents, etc. Ours will be based on an emergency on a passenger carrying vessel, with multiple casualties. During the summer season we have three PCVs in service here. During Eagle Fest there are two additional National Audubon Society PCVs here.

There has been a great deal of emphasis on CYBER ATTACKS AND PREVENTION THEREOF We have attended the annual conference; it’s scary. Prevention tactics have been given to the Town. DO NOT PAY RANSOMWARE.

We, working with Human Services and Connecticut River Area Health District, are drafting a Functional Needs Tabletop Exercise to be held in the first quarter of 2020.

Working with RiverCOG, we coordinate CERT (Community Emergency Response Teams) for Region 2 (Connecticut River to the Housatonic River and up to; but not including Middletown). Our fourteen teams consist of 471 volunteers (including active and inactive; but ready to react) generating a whopping 9,583 hours of activity (IN 2019). This includes emergency responses to assist local and regional Public Safety Agencies and Departments in emergencies, Training and Community Service

We have couple of Dam issues we are working on, one in particular is at risk of failing (a privately owned dam) and another the DEEP requires we (it’s our dam) keep a close watch on and exercise a response if it were to fail. We also worked with the Connecticut Water Authority on the Emergency Action Plan for three of their dams that are at risk.

We are working closely with Eversource on “What If” scenarios. We received a revised Road Closure Form to report situations where roads are closed. There are nine categories we classify our response requests. #9 is where there’s only one or two houses involved and there is both a way in and a way-out roadway.
During the data upgrades in the Town Hall we were able to replace our very old Lap Top computer, which we utilize in the Emergency Operations Center when activated. Our Desktop was also updated.

We are active participants in the: Regional Emergency Planning Team (REPT), Valley Shore Emergency Management Association (VSEMA) and Connecticut Emergency Management Association (CEMA) meetings.

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 and Any commercial hazardous waste

CHESTER CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

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 sundown 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 Netsch, Director

Members of the Chester Park and Recreation Commission 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 of 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, 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’hommadeau Park on the Pattaconk Brook, and the baseball fields at Chester Elementary School. This year the Commission repurposed parts of the 1986 Big Toy unit and installed new playground equipment at North Quarter Park as part of a 4-year renovation project. Sandy Atkinson donated the use of the water at A Style Above Hair Salon to make this project possible. The Chester Public Works Department was instrumental in maintaining all parks, with extra attention to North Quarter Park and Lake View Park this spring. Volunteers from Divers’ Cove helped prepare Pelletier Park for the summer season. Sand was also replaced due to the 2018 flood, in advance of a FEMA Disaster Relief Grant of $27,482 received for park damage after the close of the fiscal year, with additional repairs to be completed in 2019/2020.
The department sold a record 203 non-resident park passes during the summer of 2018, with income to the Town’s General Fund for fiscal year 2018/2019 of $14,130. Fees collected for the Children’s Summer Camp contributed $32,125 to the General Fund. The balance of Camp fees collected was used to operate the program. Scholarship funds, determined by the Human Services Director and the Chester Elementary School Counselor, funded expenses for those who would not otherwise be able to participate in the Camp. The Camp program operates without money from the taxpayer funded budget. In addition to support from the Town’s Human Services department, $1,685 in contributions were received from Chester Rotary Club, Allison and Michael Abramson, Carolyn and Drew Blicharz, Jessica Dobratz and Nicholas Gorra, Candace and Justin Kronholm, and Kimberly Stack. Camp supplies were donated by David Clark. First Student provided program participants with school bus service from Chester Elementary School and John Winthrop Middle School to the Town Hall during the academic year. Self-funded programs included 142 participants in the 2018 Children’s Summer Camp Program, filling 325 spaces. Academic year self-funded program registrations included 7 sessions of Karate with 35 different participants and a field trip to Spare Time with 45 students in grades Kindergarten through grade 8. Flag Football had 12 children and there were 64 youth basketball players as well as 8 adult basketball members. Additional Adult programs included 27 Yoga participants at the Town Hall and 18 registrants for Ballroom Dancing at the Meeting House. American Red Cross courses included two classes each, with 31 participants, in Community CPR/AED and First Aid and 13 enrolled in Babysitter’s Training. Our Counselor-in-Training program prepared 13 7th and 8th grade students to assist the Camp Counselors and Lifeguards for the 2019 season.

Chester Parks and Recreation ended the fiscal year in 2019 by registering children in 335 camp spaces. Camp and Lifeguarding positions provided summer employment to 20 local residents, with 9 new staff members hired for 2019. We are fortunate to have the resources of several beautiful park facilities and 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

Have you visited the Chester Library lately? If not, you don’t know what you’re missing. Did you know the library was host to over 100 programs with over 1200 people in attendance? Monday morning story and craft time doubled in size; children of all ages came and listened to stories by Miss Trish and created a themed craft. Afterwards, parents perused a display of similar themed books while children played on our brightly colored carpet with new and updated toys. The library not only created a comfortable space for children but our computer area received a minor uplift; gone is the bookshelf so patrons can have a more open and comfortable atmosphere to read and work. Another change for the Chester Library was the migration from being a stand-alone library to joining the consortium Bibliomation. Patrons now have access to 70 other public and special libraries across Connecticut and can renew materials and place holds from anywhere at any time. Patrons can also receive updates via text message as well as by email or phone.
The library was very active with its many programs throughout the year. For adults, Elena Bigio educated participants on “Essential Oils,” the holistic benefits of each, and allowed us to sample them. Local author Susan Strecker conducted a three-part “Writer’s Workshop,” which was so popular that a few of the attendees formed their own writers’ group here at the library! The group welcomes new members and meets the second Thursday of the month. Marsha Bansavage facilitated our fall and spring bookchats, Greg Dwyer told us about the “Magic of Communication,” while Tracy Livingston and local pediatrician Lizzy Bird educated us on the importance of staying healthy and preparing for flu season. The library partnered with Masonicare at Chester Village for a wonderful program about “Rosie the Riveter” that had audience members reminiscing about their own Rosie. Let’s not forget the Celtic Chocolate program where a sampling of homemade chocolates and Irish soda bread and tea was served as the audience listened to the history and lore of the Irish. There were so many more fun as well as educational programs that listing them all would be impossible.

Adults weren’t the only ones to enjoy a plethora of programs. The kids kicked off summer with “Library’s Rock,” our summer reading program, which included concert performances by Music with Margie, Sunny Train, the Community Music School and Jonathan’s Corner Music. Fall had budding young artists painting with local artist Leif Nilsson “en plein air” at his studio, and our “Haunted Library” had children of all ages on a scavenger hunt receiving prizes along the way. As the holiday’s rolled around, the Eastern CT Ballet Co entertained young ones with an interactive rendition of “The Nutcracker” at the Chester Meeting House; afterwards everyone received their very own nutcracker ornament. Children had fun decorating cookies and cozied up with hot chocolate as they listened to holiday stories. “A Place Called Hope,” a bird rehabilitation center brought an owl, falcon and an American kestrel to the library; these beautiful creatures are rescued raptors. The library held a “Graphic Novel Cartooning” workshop where kids of all ages created one-of-a-kind books with Karen Schumann of RJ Julia, and families loved trying the many varieties of Oreos when we celebrated National Oreo Cookie Day (hint: red velvet was the favorite). Other programs included: Kidscapades, Rechenka’s eggs, and paint and plant flowerpots. Finally, we hosted a four-part stop motion workshop where kids ages 12+ created short films using an Ipod touch and Legos; this was made possible by a grant from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County, submitted by Friends president Cary Hull that focused on STEM/STEAM initiatives.

Programs such as these are not possible without The Friends of the Chester Library. Our Friends work diligently throughout the year holding their four annual book sales which include the holiday book sale and the paperback sale at the Chester Fair. Your generous support of the book sales, donations and community grants provide resources not included in the town budget. Leading the Friends were Cary Hull, President; Susan D. Murphy, Treasurer; and Diane Lindsay and Roseann Ventimiglia, Book Sales. The Friends always welcome new members and are seeking to fill the title of President as well as someone to head future fundraisers. Interested parties should contact the library for details.

The Library Board of Trustees includes Terry Schreiber, Chair; Sandy Senior-Dauer, Vice-Chair; Peggy Carter-Ward; Karin Badger; and Denny Tovey. The Board continues to set the long-term goals and policies that guide all library services.
With a 50th Anniversary on the near horizon in 2020, the Chester Historical Society experienced yet another growth year as a resource for Chester history.

**Exhibits and Programs**

Our 2018 seasonal exhibit focused on the north and south branches of the Pattaconk Brook, and the numerous industries that occupied the stream banks to use waterpower. The exhibit, titled “Two Streams & Many Industries,” was curated by Keith and Sandy Senior-Dauer and was well received by the community and other visitors. We welcomed more than 750 people to the museum.

In February, authors Rob and Tom Miceli showed slides and discussed aspects of their new book, *Chester: Lost, Found, Remembered* to a packed Meetinghouse gathering.

Collaborations with other historical societies resulted in two other events. The 5th annual tri-town Vintage Baseball games were played in September at Devitt Field. In March, a full house was treated to Chester films from 1930s to the 1950s. The old films, now digitized, were the result of a grant from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County, shared with the Deep River Historical Society.

Together with visits from schoolchildren, nearly 2,100 people attended Society programs, exhibits and activities this past year.

**Development / Fundraising / Membership**

This year the Society was the recipient of a generous unrestricted donation from the estate of Barbara Delaney. A very small portion of this donation was used to pay off the remaining member-held notes on the Mill. The organization is now debt free as it begins its 50th year.

The Development Committee with the approval of the Trustees invested $50,000 from the Delaney Estate into our existing investment account at Essex Financial Investment Services. To allow greater future diversity of investment strategies, a similar amount was invested in a new account at Wells Fargo.

The Building Committee, together the Development Committee, identified the replacement of a furnace/HVAC system and removal of several trees as priority items. Both projects were completed this past year. Replacement of the deck floor and some neighboring clapboards are next in line. The two committees are coordinating the costs of these and future improvements with current revenue liquidity and seeking other grant funding sources.

The Society is indebted to Art Christianson and Ed Meehan for their combined efforts and ideas to maintain and improve our building and grounds.

Three very successful fundraising activities contributed to a positive bottom line for operations. In the fall, we were given enough items from the Barbara and Edmund Delaney house to be able to host an Estate Sale at St. Joseph’s Parish Center, netting almost $5,500. Our year-end Annual Appeal topped $12,000, setting yet another new high.
Our Red Velvet Creative Challenge silent auction in April brought in $6,000, thanks to the craftsmanship of 45 artists creating artworks from scraps of old red velvet Meeting House stage curtains. Nearly 100 people attended the event at the Meeting House.

We continue to attract new members, the backbone of any community organization. We closed the year with 382 members spread over 239 memberships, an increase of 21% over the last four years. As an all-volunteer non-profit organization, we are most thankful for the continuing time and support of members and local residents.

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.

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

Bill Myers

In 2019, The Chester Land Trust continued forward with our dedicated mission of protecting irreplaceable forests, farmlands, wetlands and wildlife for the purpose of enjoying our natural resources, open spaces, and the unique environment for present and future generations, here in Chester. We are so fortunate to have a supportive membership, and friends from the community that generously support our cause for the environment. We are always hopeful that everyone will respect, protect, and admire our open spaces here in Chester. The recently completed Town of Chester 10 year required *Conservation Plan of Conservation and Development*, concluded that open space, recreation, and environmental concerns are a high priority for Chester residents.
The 2019 Board of Trustees consisted of officers: Priscilla Robinson, President, Steve Cline, Vice President, Amy Pullin, Treasurer, and Peter Yuhasz, Secretary. Other members of the dedicated CLT board were Jenny Kitsen Senior Advisor, Fran Curto, Deb Dembo, Marie Anne Heft, Gail Norling, and Bill Myers. We were very fortunate to have all these dedicated trustees volunteer to perform in these roles.

Monitoring and maintenance of our 14 properties continues to be a leading and important task, especially at the Carini and Scudder Preserves in the center of town. Invasive Japanese Knotweed continues to spread on the Carini preserve and our volunteers perform at their best to cut and remove as much as possible. Also at the Carini Preserve, the Great Brook has significant stone and gravel that has washed down in the Fall flood of 2018 impeding the natural flow of the brook, adjacent the Carini Preserve. Town officials are aware of this, and are addressing the issue with future remediation efforts.

Another accomplishment in 2019 was that the CLT became a member of the newly established Lower CT River Land Trust. A new non-profit organization created as a regional Land Trust to share resources, conservation skills and seek grants to help local Land trusts in the CT River Valley.

In September 2018 the CLT completed and submitted an application to be considered by the Connecticut Freedom Trail for the Judge Constance Baker Motley Preserve at 100 Cedar Lake Road. On November 14, 2018 the Connecticut Freedom Trail approved the application. A committee comprised of CLT members was formed to prepare the dedication and ceremony for the Motley Preserve in 2019. The committee met over many months preparing the intricate and difficult details of this event. On Sunday October 6th, 2019, at 2 pm, well over 100 people attended the formal dedication by the Freedom Trail officials, followed by a reception, and a house tour by the new owners, The Coleman’s. The home across the street from the preserve is the home where the Motleys lived and owned for 40 years from 1965 to 2005. The former Motley home, and the CLT Motley Preserve both received a Freedom Trail Flag and bronze metal plaque in honor of Constance Baker Motleys extraordinary achievements in Civil rights advancement across the nation. The event was a wonderful and great success!

The Chester Land Trusts Annual 2019 meeting was held on December 5th, at the Chester Town hall meeting room, featuring Guest Speaker Kelsey Wentling, the Connecticut River Conservancy’s (CRC) new steward for the Connecticut River Conservancy. The topic was trash occurring in the river and watershed. Our second speaker, Sandy Sandstrom took the group on a photo journey through Chester. The group enjoyed trying to identify objects and landmarks in and around the village. The speakers were fantastic, and the event was well attended by land trust members, friends, supporters, and it was a great overall success!

In 2019, and also in 2020, we will continue on our mission to update and improve the CLT, including the website, social media, and improve communications with our amazing supportive members and residents.
CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

INCOME:
Essex Financial Services Trans to Checking 8/6 $3,000.00
Town of Chester – 2019-20 Budget 11/21 $3,000.00
CD 51103 H. Brooks Interest (trans to checking) 2.68
CD 51104 L. M. Brooks Interest (trans to checking) 3.16
$6,005.84

EXPENSES and DISBURSEMENTS

CHECKS:
6/13 The Hartford Ins. Co. Bond & Late Charge 130.00
6/4 Bill Vile Fall Cleanup and Mowing 1,400.00
11/22 American Legion Flags 500.00
6/27 Bill Vile Mowing 900.00
8/7 Bill Vile Mowing 650.00
8/29 Bill Vile Mowing 650.00
10/28 Bill Vile Mowing 650.00
$4,880.00

Essex Financial Services Annual Fees $569.74

ASSETS:
Essex Savings Bank CD 51103 H. Brooks 6mos. .15% $1,793.74
CD 51104 L.M. Brooks 6mos. .15% $2,110.31
Checking Account $4,117.00
Essex Fin.Services Fed. Capital Reserves (money market) $1,800.91
Inc. Fund of America (mutual fund) $75,373.93
$85,195.89

CDS 4.5% $3,904.05
Checking and Money Market 7% $5,917.91
Mutual Funds 88.5% $75,373.93

$85,195.89

AUDIT

A copy of the Town of Chester Financial Statements, Internal Control Reports and Compliance Reports for the Year Ending June 30, 2019 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 2019 Town of Chester’s Profile, provided by CERC, is available on the following link:

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