

Regular Meeting

The Town of Chester Council held the Regular Scheduled Council meeting on November 12, 2025, at 6:05 pm.

Members Present: Mayor James Dahlen Council Persons, Sonja Dahlen, Scott Decker, Rachel Ghekiere, Garrett Graff, Tina Neer, Jim Sivils

Members Absent:

Staff Present: Dave Ghekiere (PWD)
Ashley Wickum (Clerk/Treasurer)

Guests: Robin Franzen, MT Rural Water
Nikki Lindsay

1. Mayor James Dahlen called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm
2. Reminder that the Meeting is Audio Recorded
3. Mayor Dahlen moved the Montana Rural Water Mapping Presentation to the beginning of the meeting. Robin Franzen, with MT Rural Water, provided a presentation on the mapping program Diamond Maps and discussed how the different layers work showing examples of what can be done with the program. Nikki Lindsay has been gathering GPS points, and she can enter these into the program, and then Mr. Franzen would schedule to come to Chester and assist in finalizing the points and information. Mr. Franzen answered questions about importing information, exporting reports and printing maps. Mr. Franzen and Nikki Lindsay left the meeting at 6:39 pm. Jim Sivils made a motion to adopt and start implementing the Diamond Maps Program. Garrett Graff asked if we could locate the old GPS that was purchased by the Town, County and School, as it would possibly be more accurate. Ashley will investigate this. Garrett Graff seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.
4. Rachel Ghekiere made the motion to approve the minutes of Regular Council Meeting, October 8, 2025, Special Council Meeting, October 23, 2025, Special Council Meeting, October 23, 2025, Special Council Meeting, November 3, 2025. Tina Neer seconded the motion. Motion to approve the minutes passed with all voting ayes.
5. Claims were presented to the council for approval including updated Hatch claim information as the one included in the packet was incorrect, the Lakeside claim is for services provided in April for a lost invoice. Mayor Dahlen inquired about the repairs at the Ford Lift Station, and will this work with the planned updates, Dave will check. Scott Decker asked about the boiler, and the All-Seasons Spa claim, this is for the first half of the payment for the pool boiler. Rachel Ghekiere made the motion to approve the claims submitted for payment. Ck # 21226-21257 & 21261, canceled checks 21213-21225 for checks printing out of order for payroll, canceled check 21233 for Hach claim correction and electronic payment -99935-99936 & Payroll Advances Ck # 21258-21260. Garrett Graff seconded the motion. Motion to approve claims passed with all voting ayes.
6. The council reviewed the adjustments and journal entries made in October. Tina Neer made the motion to approve the JV & Adjustments. Garrett Graff seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.

7. Public Comments: No public comment.

8. Sheriff's Office Report: Provided to the Council.

9. New Business:

- Approval Resolution #06-2026 FY25/26 Sewer Fund Budget Amendment: Resolution #06-2026 FY25/26 Sewer Fund Budget Amendment was approved during the special meeting.
- Appointment of Council Member to Ward 2: Mayor Dahlen informed the council that no one has filed for or spoke for the open position in Ward 2, beginning January 1, 2026. Scott Decker is willing to continue in this role until the next election. Jim Sivils made the motion to appoint Scott Decker to fill the unfiled for position for Ward 2. Tina Neer seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.
- Approval of Building Permits:
 - John Dahlin- 18 ½ West Jefferson Ave- Fence
 - Mitch Wanken- 35 Casey Street NW

Mitch Wanken's property is in the floodplain, however, under 10-5-1 uses allowed without permit within Jurisdictional area, fences, such as those that have a low impact to the flow of water do not need a floodplain permit. Mitch is going to put up a chain link fence and will provide the town with pictures. In addition to the fence, Mitch inquired about abandoning the alley to the west of his property. This looks to be a current alley on the gas tax map and is used when it is dry to turn the garbage truck around as he doesn't like to back up with kids in the neighborhood. Council discussed options around this. Tina Neer made the motion to approve all building permits as presented and to not close the alley at this time. Rachel Ghekiere seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.

10. Old Business:

- North Central Montana Regional Water Authority: Copies of the rate analysis provided by Chris Hayes, with RPA were provided to the council. Mayor Dahlen believes that the council will need to decide soon. The public meeting on November 5, 2025, was well attended and a lot of the council's questions were addressed. However, there are more questions that need to be addressed such as: the SCADA system and how both systems will work together, does the Core need to get water before water comes to Chester, the connections south of town and where the master meter goes, who's customers they would be. Liberty Colony is still interested in connecting to the town's water. Discussion of what the next steps are and how a decision will be made. Ashley Wickum will work on a brochure or flyer that can be provided to the community to give more information.

11. Mayor Report/ Additional Agenda Items: none

12. PWD update: Dave Ghekiere, PWD, updated the council that the pond is clean and back online. They are currently sweeping streets and putting gravel in the alleys. MET was up and worked on the alarms with the SCADA system. As stated during claims, the boiler for the pool has been ordered. He updated the council that Jadon Sullivan is working on his CDL, he didn't pass the written test but will try again and Will Bryan is scheduled for his CDL physical. Dave would like to discuss Jadon's wages at the next meeting. He received a quote for a new roof on the west shed in the amount of \$17,200, Dave is getting a quote from Western Lumber for the cost of tin. It would be more cost-effective to purchase the tin and have the crew replace the roof. Mayor Dahlen asked about the line coming to town from the lake and Dave is hoping they can

get to it now that the pond is back online. Jim Sivils asked about the tin on the old BNW building. Nothing has been done yet, but if it can be used it will be for a lean-to structure.

13. Clerk update: Ashley Wickum updated the council that MMIA will no longer be providing the workers compensation program, and they will help the town to make the transition to a new provider. Ashley updated the council that Jesse Anderson might be selling the one smaller lot instead of replotting them. Sam Mandel with New Miami Colony wanted the council to know that they are still working on easements for Liberty Colony. Ashley provided the council with information regarding the Christmas Stroll scheduled for 12/7/25 and information on the new clean air act.
14. Council: Rachel Ghekiere has a Bear Paw meeting on 11/20/25, in Chester at 11:30 at the 1st St. Mercantile. Scott Decker asked about the number of users/connections the town has as this will affect the number of seats on the North Central Montana Regional Water Authority Board. Ashley will research this to determine if all connections to the main count or just active connections. Scott Decker asked about Dusty's Sprinklers recent trip at the park, clarification that they were there helping the Garden Club, and that the sprinklers and control for that area were installed during the original installation. Tina Neer asked Dave to look at the manhole in the alley behind the Prairie Homes as it seems to be very high. Garrett Graff stated that he would be more comfortable having Jim Zadick work with the Town on any contracts or negotiations if the Town goes forward with North Central Montana Regional Water Authority as he is a more neutral party. The other council members agreed.
15. Tina Neer made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Scott Decker seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 pm.

Submitted by _____ Approved by _____
Clerk Mayor