

Regular Meeting

The Town of Chester Council held the Regular Scheduled Council meeting on April 8, 2026, at 6:00 pm.

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

Members Absent: Garrett Graff

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

Guests:

1. Mayor James Dahlen called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 pm
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Reminder that the Meeting is Audio Recorded
4. Sonja Dahlen made the motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting, March 11, 2026. Rachel Ghekiere seconded the motion. Motion to approve the minutes passed with all voting ayes.
5. Claims were presented to the council for approval. Scott Decker asked about the Troop 1430 claim for \$35, the Boy Scout Troop 1430 will be taking over the flag posting on holidays from the American Legion. Scott Decker made the motion to approve the April claims submitted for payment. Ck # 21465-21492 electronic payment -99921-99920, April payroll advances, Ck # 21493-21494. March payroll Ck# 21451-21464 and electronic payroll liability payments - 88918-88913 were processed. Sonja Dahlen seconded the motion. Motion to approve claims passed with all voting ayes.
6. The council reviewed the adjustments and journal entries made in March. Sonja Dahlen made the motion to approve the March JV & Adjustments. Rachel Ghekiere seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.
7. Public Comments: None
8. Sheriff's Office Report: Copy was provided by the Sheriff's office.
9. New Business:
 - Approval of Resolution #10-2026 Relating To \$694,000 Water System Revenue Bonds (DNRC Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Program), Consisting Of \$347,000 Subordinate Lien Taxable Series 2026A Bond And \$347,000 Series 2026B Bond; Authorizing the Issuance and Fixing the Terms and Conditions There Of: Sonja Dahlen made the motion to approve Resolution #10-2026 as stated above. Scott Decker seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.
 - Motion of Intent to Raise Water Rates: Ashley Wickum Provided the council with documentation outlining two different rate increase options. The council reviewed

these. The motion of intent will be at the next council meeting. Ashley Wickum will provide Bond Council with the council's request of a 35% rate increase for the water rates, apart from changing the late fee to a % instead of the flat fee, changing the reconnect fee from \$150 to \$200, changing the NSF fee from \$15 to \$30. They would also like to assess the bulk water rate at a higher amount to help with the cost of installing a credit card option at the bulk water site.

- Approval of MMIA Employee Benefits Program Group Election: 2026-2027 insurance rates were presented to the council. Jim Sivils made the motion to continue to offer the menu for all full-time employees and for the Town to pay the equivalent of the Bridger plan \$992/month per full-time employee. Sonja Dahlen seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.
- MOU for Workers Compensation Insurance Procurement: After speaking with the State Fund about workers compensation, and reviewing the application, Ashley Wickum would like to utilize the assistance of an Agent. She spoke with Bill Hunt, and these services do not have to be done through a request for services, nor will they cost the Town. Bill Hunt created a MOU with Northern Plains Insurance to assist the Town in obtaining workers' compensation coverage. Rachel Ghekiere made the motion to approve the MOU for Workers Compensation Insurance Procurement. Tina Neer seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.
- Approval of Fundraising Proposal- Scarlet Sundgren & Parker Kantorowicz: a proposal was received for fundraising to be done at the pool by Scarlet Sundgren and Parker Kantorowicz. They would like to sell flavored lemonade, Italian/dirty sodas, red bull infusions, iced coffee and possibly acai bowls during the summer on the grass area by the pool to raise funds for their Explore America trip. The council discussed whether event insurance was required. It was decided that if the area is kept clean and picked up they can proceed, if it is not then they will have to stop. Tina Neer made the motion to approve the fundraising request. Rachel Ghekiere seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.
- Hiring and Setting Wages: Summer Help, Pool Manager, Lifeguards and Landfill Attendant: There is one application for Landfill attendant, 3 life guard applications and two applications for summer help. There have been no applications turned in for pool manager. Discussion of wages. Sonja Dahlen made the motion to increase the starting wage for each position by \$1.00 and to give \$.50 for each returning year. Lifeguards will start at \$14; summer help will start at \$15; Pool Manager will start at \$17 and Landfill attendant will start at \$15. Scott Decker seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.
- Hiring and Setting Wages: Rachel Ghekiere made a motion to hire Abby Hall, Stephanie Moog and Journie Ghekiere as lifeguards and Tina Neer as landfill attendant. Dave will interview the two summer help applicants. Sonja Dahlen seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.
- Building Permits:
 - Lift Wellness Studio- 111 2nd Street East- Sidewalk and Curb replacement
 - C. Ramberg- 551 West Madison Ave: Fence
 - Northern Plains Insurance- 110 Main Street: New Office BuildingBuilding permits were received for Lift Wellness Studio and Northern Plains Insurance. Lift Wellness will be replacing the curb and sidewalk on the Westside of the building as well as the front of the building. Northern Plains Insurance is building a new office. They will provide state plumbing and electrical permit numbers once they are obtained. They would like to discuss a solution for the streetlight on the north side of the building. Any moving of this post will need to be at their expense. The council will look at this, and the contractor/owners will bring

more information to the May meeting. No permit was received from C. Ramberg. Sonja Dahlen made the motion to approve the building permits as presented (not the lighting). Tina Neer seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.

10. Old Business:

- Approval: 2nd reading of Resolution #09-2026 to adopt New Wage Matrix and revise Employee Handbook to Reflect Matrix: Ashley Wickum updated the council that this has not been completed and will remain tabled.
- North Central Montana Regional Water Authority update was provided by email from Bill Hunt and placed on the website and Facebook. See below.

7 of the NCMRWA's members have officially approved Chester's membership. 4 more members have voted to approve and NCMRWA is waiting for those member's meeting minutes. 3 other members will meet in the next 30 days. Shelby's City Council tabled Chester's request to join to gather more information. NCMRWA needs 12 members to approve Chester's membership. NCMRWA is continuing build infrastructure and planning operations.

11. Mayor Report/ Additional Agenda Items: None

12. PWD update: Dave Ghekier, PWD, updated the council that the landfill licensed for next year has been completed and the new dumpsters should be delivered this week. They are busy getting ready for spring work and will begin sweeping streets tomorrow morning. He is going to ask Jerry Myers to power rake the pool and the hill at the park. The pool boiler should be installed next week and Frank Leeds is working on the curbing at the park and the valley gutter at the east shop. The curb stop at the pool was leaking and they were able to fix it. Electrical work on the generator will begin at the water treatment plant on the 14th, Lakeside will be working on the Ford Lift Station on the 20th and COP will be working on the WTP project shortly after that. They have all the parts to begin working on the valve at 314 West Van Buren Ave. Russell Seidlitz was interviewed and offered the operator job. The background check is being completed and drug testing will be set up.
13. Clerk update: Ashley Wickum informed the council that there will be a school assembly on 4/30 that the County Health Department, Liberty County Sheriff's Department, and CJI Schools will all be part of. She has been assisting the County Health Department with this. The County Health Nurse has also put in two grants on behalf of the Town, one for speed signs by the school and one that would provide a bench for both the City Park and the Lions Park. Serve Day is 4/26.
14. Council: Scott Decker found a meter that could be attached to the pipe at the WTP that might work for the project. Dave Ghekier will talk more with him about it.
15. Rachel Ghekier made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tina Neer seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 pm.

Submitted by _____ Approved by _____
Clerk Mayor