

Regular Meeting

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

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

Members Absent:

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. Reminder that the Meeting is Audio Recorded
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Sonja Dahlen made the motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting, June 10, 2026, Public Hearing June 24, 2026, and Special Meeting June 24, 2026. Tina Neer seconded the motion. Motion to approve the minutes passed with all voting ayes.
5. Claims were presented to the council for approval. Ashley Wickum stated that a claim for membership dues to the MMOA for \$50 was added to the claim list. Sonja Dahlen made the motion to approve the claims submitted for payment. Ck#21631-21666 & 21668, electronic payments -99910, July payroll advances, Ck# 21667. June payroll checks were processed: Ck#21601-21629 and electronic payroll liability payments 88889-88895. Rachel Ghekiere seconded the motion. Motion to approve claims passed with all voting ayes.
6. The council reviewed the adjustments and journal entries made in June. Rachel Ghekiere made the motion to approve the JV & Adjustments. Tina Neer 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 Resolution #1-2027 Appointing Town Attorney William E. Hunt, JR. as Director to the Board of Directors of the North Central Montana Regional Water Authority: Sonja Dahlen made the motion to approve Resolution #1-2027 Appointing Town Attorney William E. Hunt, JR. as Director to the Board of Directors of the North Central Montana Regional Water Authority. Rachel Ghekiere seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.

Rudy Cicon joined the meeting at 6:09 pm

- Approval Resolution #2-2027 Approving the Power Teton County Water & Sewer District as a member of North Central Montana Regional Water Authority: Jim Sivils

made the motion to table this agenda item until more information can be received from Bill Hunt. Tina Neer second the motion. Motion to table this item passed with all voting ayes.

- Approval Resolution #3-2027 Affirming Active Participation in the Bear Paw Economic Development District for FY2026-2027. Council discussion of previous services and Town needs for services. Sonja Dahlen made the motion to not approve Resolution #3-2027 Affirming Active Participation in the Bear Paw Economic Development District for FY2026-2027. Tina Neer seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.

10. Approval of Building Permits:

- Response to Comments on Floodplain Permit 2026-001 Final approval of permit: Rudy Cicon presented the council with information on the one complaint that was received in response to the Floodplain Permit 2026-001. Mr. Cicon did a further study, and Ashley Wickum and Mr. Cicon were in contact with DNRC regarding the permit and complaint. The determination is that the complaint is a localized issue, not a floodplain issue. Mr. Hartz will follow all floodplain rules and regulations, and Mr. Cicon will do a final survey to ensure that the base flood elevation is not raised. Sonja Dahlen made the motion to approve the Floodplain Permit 2026-001 for Mr. Hartz. Jim Sivils seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes. Rudy Cicon left at 6:33 pm
- Duchscher Kapperud Insurance: 46 First Street East- submitted a permit for a new insurance office. All state plumbing and electrical permits will be pulled. An additional building permit was received from David Habets at 222 West Quincy Ave, he will be removing his old garage and building a new one. There will be no sewer or water to the new building. Sonja Dahlen made the motion to approve both building permits as presented. Garrett Graff seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.
- Letter from Liberty Colony, 1361 2700 Road South: New Water Connection. The council reviewed a letter from Liberty Colony requesting water. Council discussion, they would like more information from the engineer regarding this. Concerns about providing water if there is a shortage, and what would happen if the Colony wants to increase the amount of water they have requested in the future. The new connection does have the possibility of providing additional revenue for the town. The Colony does not currently have easements to Chester. If they can't get easements to come towards Chester, would they connect somewhere else? Jim Sivils made the motion to table this agenda item until further information can be gathered from the engineers. Tina Neer seconded the motion. Motion to table this agenda item passed with all voting ayes.
- Setting Date and Time for Budget Building & Preliminary Budget Meeting- the budget building and preliminary budget meeting will take place on July 23, 2026, at 5:00 pm.

11. Old Business:

- Approval: 2nd reading of Resolution #09-2026 to Set the Hourly Wage of All Public Works Department Employees. Sonja Dahlen made the motion to approve Resolution #09-2026 to Set the Hourly Wage of All Public Works Department

Employees as presented. Garrett Graff seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.

- Approval of the Interlocal Agreement for Law Enforcement- Sonja Dahlen made the motion to approve the Interlocal Agreement for County Services. This agreement includes Law Enforcement, Prosecution, Justice of the Peace as well as the Sanitarian, this replaces the previous separate agreements for Law Enforcement/Prosecution and Justice of the Peace. Rachel Ghekiere seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.

12. Mayor Report/ Additional Agenda Items: Mayor Dahlen asked the council to think about adopting a business licenses policy to help cover anything that would cost extra to the town, including events that produce extra trash, and the sanitarian. The water and sewer policies also need to be reviewed.
13. PWD update: Dave Ghekiere, PWD, updated the council that the CCR report is completed, and the generator is installed and working at the water treatment plant. The garbage truck is still being worked on. The Ford Garage is mostly done. The crew is still working on filling potholes; they put gravel on the northside and bladed the roads. They are mowing and continuing to work at the landfill. One curb stop has been fixed, and they have a list of more to replace. They are getting ready to clean the south holding pond at the water treatment plant. Codie Camba was hired and started work on Monday, July 6th. Russell Seidlitz passed all his written CDL tests. Sonja Dahlen asked about the vandalism that happened at the park, and if there could be a reward for finding the individual(s) who did it? It's very hard to catch them, even with cameras at the park.
14. Clerk update: Ashley Wickum updated the council that there will need to be a budget amendment for the sewer fund as the SRF loans were pulled in June instead of July and per discussion with Craig Shepherd, she was advised to leave the payments in June and doing a budget amendment. She is working on the property list for tax liens and provided the council with updated information on the lead and copper rules.
15. Council: Rachel Ghekiere thanked Dave Ghekiere for the extra garbage pickup at the Lions Park. Garrett Graff asked about the water leaks. The area at Jim Browns is currently dry, but Dave Ghekiere reported that he is still planning to replace the valve and pressure test the line. The area by James Dahlens seems to be dry now that the property owner installed a sump pump in their basement. The street area was repaired in June. Garrett Graff also asked about how a street paving project works. Ashley Wickum has asked Chris Hayes, with RPA for assistance with this as she is unsure and a meeting will be set up in the near future.
16. Rachel Ghekiere made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tina Neer seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:29 pm.

Submitted by _____ Approved by _____
Clerk Mayor