

Regular Meeting

The Town of Chester Council held the Regular Scheduled Council meeting on August 12, 2026, at 6:04 pm at the Town Office.

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

Members Absent: Garrett Graff

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

Guests: Janice Myers and Kirk Parge

1. Mayor James Dahlen called the regular meeting to order at 6:04 pm
2. Reminder that the Meeting is Audio Recorded
3. Sonja Dahlen made the motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting, July 8, 2026, July 23, 2026, Special Public Hearing Meeting FY26 Budget Amendment, July 23, 2026, Special Meeting FY26 Budget Amendment, July 23, 2026, Special Meeting Preliminary Budget Building FY27, and July 23, 2026, Special Meeting Preliminary Budget FY27 Approval. Tina Neer seconded the motion. Motion to approve all minutes passed with all voting ayes.
4. Claims were presented to the council for approval. Rachel Ghekiere made the motion to approve the claims submitted for payment. Ck#21697- 21726, electronic payments -99908-99909, August payroll advances, Ck# 21727-21728. June payroll checks were processed: Ck#21670-21695 and electronic payroll liability payments 88888-88884. Sonja Dahlen seconded the motion. Motion to approve claims passed with all voting ayes.
5. The council reviewed the adjustments and journal entries made in July. Ashley Wickum reviewed the utility charges that were moved from a renters account back to the property owner's account. Sonja Dahlen asked about the wire transfer fees; they are charged by DNRC not the bank. Sonja Dahlen made the motion to approve the JV & Adjustments. Tina Neer seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.
6. Public Comments: none
7. Sheriff's Office Report: Copy was provided by the Sheriff's office.
8. New Business:
 - Class of 1976 50th Reunion Request: Janice Myers asked the council for permission to paint 12 fire hydrants as part of the class of 1976's 50th reunion celebration. She presented pictures of the hydrants they painted during their senior year of high school as part of their history project. The requested hydrants are 2 on School Drive, 3 on Main St., 2 on 1st Street East, and 5 on Washington Ave/HWY 2. They will be asking the Boy Scouts to help as a community service project, and they will work with the Public Works Department to make sure they aren't painted closed. Council agreed that it would okay as long as they are done tastefully. Rachel Ghekiere made a motion to approve the Class of 1976's request to paint 12 fire hydrants. Sonja Dahlen seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.

- Global Agro requests to be removed from inside Town boundaries: This agenda item was tabled as advised by the Town attorney.
- Discussion/Action: Liberty Colony request for new waterline connection: Information was presented to the council for review. Tina Neer asked about easements, they didn't at the last update. Jim Sivils stated that the town needs to decide, so that we are able to confirm the amount of water to request from North Central Montana Regional Water Authority. The Colony must want a decision as they took the time to submit a letter. Mayor James Dahlen suggested that the council wait to decide until the entire council has time to review the information. Item tabled, no action taken.
- North Central Montana Regional Water Authority Nominated Water Capacity Request. This will be an agenda item at the next regular meeting.
- Approval- Resolution #4-2027 Fixing Mills FY 2026-2027: Ashley Wickum reviewed the Tax Revenue and Mill Levy Limitations form and explained the new large taxpayer reserve account option MCA 7-6-620. A new fund will need to be created for this reserve account. This will not be a large amount of money but could assist in the future should a large taxpayer leave the town. Sonja Dahlen made the motion to approve Resolution #4-2027 Fixing Mills FY 2026-2027. Rachel Ghekiere seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.
- Approval- Resolution #5-2027 Adopt FY 2026-2027 Final Budget. Tina Neer made the motion to approve Resolution #5-2027 Adopt FY 2026-2027 Final Budget as presented. Jim Sivils seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.
- Approval- Assessment Letters to Department of Revenue: The Street Maintenance assessment and Light assessments will remain the same. Sonja Dahlen made the motion to Approve the Assessment Letters to Department of Revenue. Rachel Ghekiere seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.
- Approval – Letter adding delinquent water/sewer/garbage and mowing to taxes. Rachel Ghekiere made the motion to approve adding delinquent accounts to taxes. Sonja Dahlen seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.
- Approval – Engagement for year-end services: Craig Shepherd. Rachel Ghekiere made the motion to approve of having Craig Shepherd assist with year end services. Tina Neer seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.
- Request for Approval of replotting of CHESTER ORIGINAL TOWNSITE, S21, T32 N, R06 E, BLOCK 02, E 6.17'X 70', W 15'X 70' OF LT 19 ALL 20. This will be completed by Cicon and Associates and filed at the courthouse as required. This will square up the lots where the new Duchscher Kapperud Insurance building is being built (previously the area where the Liberty County Times office, the old newspaper was located) and the lot to the north of it where the front porch business currently sits. Rachel Ghekiere made the motion to approve the replotting of CHESTER ORIGINAL TOWNSITE, S21, T32 N, R06 E, BLOCK 02, E 6.17'X 70', W 15'X 70' OF LT 19 ALL 20. Sonja Dahlen seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.

9. Approval of Building Permits:

- Kirk & Michelle Parge- 338 West Jefferson Ave- add 12x16 Shed and create circle drive
- Front Porch (Amanda Petrick/Vicki Kolstad)- 38 1st Street East-12x28 Addition
- Cory Decker- 527 Patrice Ave-26x32 garage

The building permits were presented to the council. Kirk Parge spoke on behalf of his permit and described what the circle drive would look like for the council. Sonja Dahlen made the motion to approve all building permits as presented. Rachel Ghekiere seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.

10. Old Business:

- Approval Resolution #2-2027 Approving the Power Teton County Water & Sewer District as a member of North Central Montana Regional Water Authority. Council reviewed Attorney Bill Hunts' response to this resolution. Rachel Ghekiere made a motion to approve Resolution #2-2027 Approving the Power Teton County Water & Sewer District as a member of North Central Montana Regional Water Authority. Jim Sivils seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.

11. Mayor Report/ Additional Agenda Items: None

12. PWD update: Dave Ghekiere, PWD, updated the council that the updates to the Ford Garage Lift Station are complete. The south pond at the water treatment plant is clean and they are refilling it now. The valve at Jim Browns was replaced, however there is still water coming in and they are unable to pressure test the line. A new plan will need to be made to address this. The curb was destroyed during the replacement, and Dave has contacted Frank Leeds about replacing it for the Town. He has the crew still reclaiming pits and fixing fences at the landfill. Davinder, the summer help, has finished for the summer and did a great job. Dave had two pickup windshields replaced. They are continuing to replace curb stops. Dave will be gone the last week of August- September 2nd for a funeral.
13. Clerk update: Ashley Wickum updated the council that the pool will be closing on 8/14/26. Pool Manager Lily Wickum and Ashley pulled estimated numbers to see how the revenues compared this year with last year as the pool was closed on Sundays. The numbers for all objects were very close, with even a small increase in revenues over last year. Lily Wickum has created a list of items the pool manager is responsible for to help whoever is hired next year. There have been a few requests for a four-way stop sign at the intersection of 2nd Street East and Adams Ave. Currently there are yield signs. This will be investigated. Margaret Campbell would like to set up her food truck at the Lions Park on Monday, she will provide the Town with all her insurance, licenses, and food safety documents, as well as notify the sheriff's office and county sanitarian. The Chamber has requested a letter of support from the town for a grant they are applying for. Ashley drafted a letter for the council to review. Ashley updated the council on multiple cyber security issues and information on the new firewall and computer costs. There is a letter from the MDT about a bench on First Street East and Hwy 2, Ashley is trying to track down the owner of it to have it moved. There have been several complaints about the weed notices. The process is working well, however, there are a number of properties that need to be addressed as far as cleaning up/nuisance properties. Ashley will work with Bill Hunt on creating a list of properties.
14. Council: Rachel Ghekiere asked if we know who owns the area to the south of Harrison Ave, where the trees are located? There was a survey done around 2016, Ashley will locate this and reach out for assistance to determine the property line.
15. Rachel Ghekiere made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tina Neer seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Submitted by _____ Approved by _____
Clerk Mayor