

**Town of Chester
Recreation Commission Meeting
Monday, September 14, 2026, 6:00 p.m.
Municipal Complex**

Draft Minutes

I. Preliminaries

1.1 Call to Order

Chair Dircks called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1.2 Roll Call

Members present:

Kathryn Dircks, Chair

Kim Rairdon

Ed Stuart

David LaVita, Selectboard Liaison (joined at 7:20 p.m.)

Members absent:

None

Staff present:

Corinna Reishus, Recreation Director

Guests present:

Jennifer Gagne

Dana Theokas, Selectboard Member (left at 6:57 p.m.)

PACT

II. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Stuart moved to accept the minutes from the June 8, 2026, meeting as written. Ms. Rairdon seconded the motion. A vote was taken. The motion carried 3-0-0.

III. Reports

3.1 Recreation Report

Director Reishus submitted the Recreation Department's Strategic Plan to the Selectboard as requested, which is in line with the Vision and Mission Statements:

Vision Statement: To provide an opportunity for every Chester resident or visitor to enrich their quality of life by offering a full spectrum of community-driven recreational activities and to increase citizen awareness about all recreational programs and facilities.

Mission Statement: Chester Recreation endeavors to offer diversified programming, activities and events, and to increase accessibility to parks and amenities. The Department strives to

provide a wide range of quality programs that encourage all community members to participate in healthy, fun, and enriching activities. Together, they celebrate the essential role public recreation plays in fostering a cohesive and vibrant community.

3.2 Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee

Ms. Rairdon reported the Fall Fest is Saturday, September 19th. She asked how to let the School know about the event. Ms. Gagne offered to post flyers, and will share the information with the PTA and other groups. Director Reishus noted the School no longer adds attachments to the newsletter from outside organizations. She asked if the next Fall Fest could be held in the fall and not as close to Town Fair. Ms. Rairdon will pass on that request.

The SHFAC held a free movie night, which had to be rescheduled due to the weather, so attendance was not as high as anticipated. They plan to offer another one in October, with a Halloween theme.

3.2 Wason Pond Conservation and Recreation Commission

Site Visit: Chair Dircks reported that Commission members walked the property and inspected the buildings to record issues that need addressing, in preparation to work on their Strategic Plan. They plan to ask the Selectboard to reinstate the budget so that repairs can be made. The current budget is \$9/month. She noted the impact of the constraints imposed by the conservation easement on the property.

The Commission discussed the need to regularly maintain the beach. Selectboard Member Theokas suggested submitting a detailed list to the Town so that the Maintenance Department can add these items to their responsibilities; they would need to be prioritized with other Town issues.

Chair Dircks said there have been discussions about repurposing materials from the Pounder.

IV. Old Business

4.1 Recreation Programming (ongoing)

All Levels Boot Camp: New six-week session begins this week (T/Th 5:30 PM)

Canasta: Ongoing on Wednesday evenings at 6 PM at the Community Center

Open Gym: Will start on Monday afternoons after soccer season is complete

Pickleball: Four days a week in the MPR on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Sunday

Senior Move It or Lose It: Ongoing twice a week

Stay & Play Family Playgroup: Friday mornings in the Recreation Activities Room

Walking Club: Held Monday mornings at 9 AM

Women's Strength & Stretch: New six-week session begins this week (T/Th 4:15 PM)

Yoga: New six-week session begins this week (Wed 4 PM & 5:30 PM)

4.2 Seasonal Programming

Summer Program: Director Reishus reported the program was capped at 65 kids this year; there was a waitlist. All but two of the staff members returned. The staff underwent Behavior Training through Bright Moose Training, Consulting & Advocacy. Two staff members were also sent to lifeguard waterfront certified training in Concord.

Soccer Drills & Skills: Sessions were held the first three weeks in August for the U8-U15 divisions. There were 75 participants, with goalkeeper clinics on Friday evenings.

Fall Soccer: Almost 200 kids are enrolled in fall soccer; Director Reishus said she is still working through last-minute registrations and parent requests. The deadline for eligibility has changed from the end of the year to July 31st, so the Soccer Board has decided to extend it for two months to align with the School deadline, which is the end of September. They will be using both Town Fields and Wason Fields. They will be moving the little kids to another field the last week in October, due to the drainage work being done on French Field.

4.3 Seasonal Events

Chester Town Fair: The fair was very well attended; the largest attendance in a while. They received lots of positive feedback on the timeframe and the free activities. Director Reishus thanked the sponsors. She offered a shoutout to the Town Fair Committee – Chris Carolan, Karolyn O’Cull and Jessica Hatch – for their hard work. She thanked past committee members, the Freiburgers, for their help; David LaVita, and Jean and Dianne Methot for helping to run the midway ride; Dana Theokas and her son for helping pick up trash after the fireworks; and Scott Mallinson for helping pick up trash and fireworks debris on Sunday morning.

Selectboard Member Theokas asked about putting the fireworks out for bid. Director Reishus said the Town Fair Committee is not responsible for the fireworks; the Town would be responsible for putting out a bid.

Selectboard Member Theokas asked why there were no cones on Route 102. Director Reishus said this is the responsibility of the Fire Department and did not know why there were none.

V. New Business

5.1 Upcoming Programming

Girls Field Hockey: Registration closed on September 14th for K1&2, as they had the maximum number of 15 players with one volunteer coach. There might be a small charge to keep the program going.

Basketball Open Gym: Open gym for basketball began on September 13th and will run on Sundays from 11 AM to 1 PM for grades 5-8.

Basketball: A Lamprey River Basketball League meeting is scheduled for September 17th. Director Reishus will have a better idea on start dates after that. Registration will begin once the dates are set.

5.2 Upcoming Events

Soccer Under the Lights: Soccer Under the Lights is scheduled for October 9th at Town Fields.

5.3 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

This year, impact fees were used to purchase chairs for the MRP and Meeting Room, and soccer goals. The soccer goals should be on the CIP in a five-year rotation. Director Reishus explained the need to be able to move the goals, and is working with the Maintenance Department on this. She commended the Department for fixing the soccer net that was overgrown with weeds.

Director Reishus would like to purchase new tables for the MPR with the remaining impact fees. The new tables will be used inside; the old white tables can be kept for outdoor usage requests.

The Commission reviewed and discussed items on the Recreation CIP table. These include picnic tables, light towers, benches and bleachers, other phases for ball fields, pavilion at Wason Pond, playground refurbishment, and Nichols Field rebuild. Repairs were made to the playground in March/April to address safety issues. The Commission discussed how items can be added to the CIP. They also discussed plans to add restrooms at Wason Pond and what other items could be added to the CIP.

Director Reishus noted the Planning Board can request that developers include recreational facilities in their plans, and has spoken to the Town Planner about this.

Selectboard Member Theokas suggested utilizing goats to eat the poison ivy between Nichols Field and the basketball court, and moving benches to the site. She also noted trees near the soccer shed that need to be removed.

Director Reishus reviewed the history of work needed on the fields and the impact of budget cuts made at Town Meeting on this.

Director Reishus will continue to work on the CIP. She asked the Commission to submit any changes by September 21st.

VI. Any Other Business

6.1 Vice Chair Appointment

Ms. Rairdon moved to appoint Ed Stuart as the Vice Chair. Ms. Dircks seconded the motion. A vote was taken. The motion carried 3-0-0.

Selectboard Member LaVita joined the meeting.

VII. Next Meeting - December 14, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

VIII. Adjournment

Ms. Rairdon moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Stuart seconded the motion. A vote was taken. The motion carried 4-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Beth Hanggeli, Recording Secretary