

Minutes of the Town Board of the Town of Chesterfield Public Hearing and Regular Board Meeting Held on Tuesday, July 14, 2026 at Town of Chesterfield Office, 1 Vine Street, Keeseville, County of Essex and State of New York Pursuant to Due Notice.

Supervisor Barber called the Public Hearing on a temporary moratorium on major solar energy systems, a proposed Town Property Maintenance Law and a proposed housing project on the Thompson Road in Keeseville at 5:30 PM.

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Those present:

Supervisor:	Clayton Barber
Town Clerk:	Bruce Bourgeois
Councilman:	David Gload
Councilman:	John Casey
Councilman:	Harrison Blaise
Town Attorney:	Mark Cowen
HW Super:	John "Jay" Champine
Water Super:	David Winter
Code Officer:	Trent Gravelle
Clerk to Super:	Laura Ocasio

Guests present:

Andy Prescott	Dan Ocasio	Terry Jandreau	Tamara Mrose
Ken Pashow	Barara Donela	Marion English	Pete Trombley
Amy Brelia	Gordon Howard	John Lacy	Chris Jage

Supervisor Barber explained to the public the Hearing on the Town of Chesterfield Water Ordinance is put on hold to re-work certain wording. The Public Hearing for this will be scheduled at a later date.

Supervisor Barber opened the floor for discussion on the proposed Property Maintenance Law. He explained nothing, now, happens to burnt or uninhabitable houses. The proposed law would have fines re-levied on their taxes similar to overdue water/ sewer bills. The Town of Chesterfield will be the first in

the County to try this and, if successful, the County would model their law with ours. The proposal would be an annual fine of \$2500 for private homes and \$5000 for commercial parcels.

Dan Ocasio asked the room who had actually read the proposed law and few hands were raised. He proposed almost no home would be able to be under the 100-point system due to the many small violations that could add up quite quickly. He suggested the proposed law would be arbitrary, uneven, hard for the Town employees to enforce and a potential source of lawsuits. While he was confident the current Board would be fair-handed, future Boards would be burdened by this law.

Councilman Casey asked Mr. Ocasio how he would deal with the situation if it was his neighbor.

Mr. Ocasio replied that it would not be like this law. In his opinion, this law would pit neighbor against neighbor. Code Officer Gravelle added he would not have enough time to write tickets. He can only do the serious ones now.

Peter Trombley surmised, by this law, a sawmill could be in violation. Some people just cannot afford the expenses of upkeep.

Clerk to the Supervisor Ocasio mentioned, while the intention of the law was good, the law could be weaponized. The law is way too aggressive and Code Officer Gravelle does not have enough time now.

Ken Pashow asked for ways the community could help with the less serious offenses.

Supervisor Barber added it would be up to the Town Board to review and make decisions on penalties.

Mr. Ocasio opined this would make even more work for the Board.

Mr. Trombley asked if this was for interior as well.

Supervisor Barber said it would be for the serious offenders.

Andy Prescott noted the problem is with serious offenders.

The majority of the Board would have to agree on penalties after Code Officer Gravelle wrote the tickets. The public needs to have trust in their officials. In his opinion, it is a well-written law that addresses the process and asked for the public to give it a chance.

Mr. Trombley suggested there would be lawsuits and wants to make sure the law does not negatively affect the elderly.

Mr. Ocasio asked for a cleaner draft.

Code Officer Gravelle explained the process. He talks to the property owner after a complaint, tickets if not fixed and follows up. If this law is passed there will be a lot of work for everyone.

Town Attorney Cowen offered the proposed law was in conformance of due process. The current law is cumbersome and confusing. One of the pitfalls is it puts the burden on the Town Board. Is this law enforceable and supportable in court. It does meet all criteria but can still be contested. He feels the point system is a necessary step. He reiterated current law is weak. If Essex County adopts a similar law, this lowers Town liability.

Clerk to the Supervisor Ocasio would like to see all the little items taken off.

Supervisor Barber noted the Essex County Attorney is not opposed to re-write the law and will do it pro-bono.

Walter Chmura asked if other communities in Essex County have this.

Supervisor Barber replied the Town of Chesterfield is the Guinea pig.

Supervisor Barber opened the floor for comments on the proposed Battery Storage Law, noting other Towns are adopting similar laws, St. Armand and Essex as an example. This law would not affect personal systems, only major systems for a term of six months which could be renewed.

Tamera Mrose opined good things come from solar.

Andy Prescott noted the size and safety factor of the major systems.

Ken Pashow said there is a big solar farm in Chareaguay.

Supervisor Barber opened the floor for comments on the Thompson Road property to the Essex County Land Bank. There has been changes to the original plan. Originally, there was to be six, 3.2-acre lots for homes with garages, with the Land Bank paying for all infrastructure. Now, the homes will not have garages, but there is more space in the design for storage. The lot sizes are approximately 1.8-acres with a 6-acre nature space. The applicable grants will not pay for the main water supply line for these homes. The homes will sell for \$150-\$160,000 but be assessed for \$250-\$260,000. The Town of Chesterfield will pay for the water line extension from the corner of Chesterfield and Prospect with two hydrants. NYSEG will not do underground electrical.

Clerk to the Supervisor Ocasio asked what the cost to the Town would be for the water line.

Water Superintendent Winter surmised approximately \$98,000 for plastic and up to \$160,000 for ductile.

This opened a discussion on ways to have the new homeowners pay for the water line without affecting the entire Town residents.

Mark Allen asked if the smaller lots were zoned correctly.

Planning Board Chair Prescott noted the density of homes in the proposed project is correct and there is nothing in the project that violates Town Zone Laws.

Walter Chmura wondered if the project can go forward with building without water.

Supervisor Barber closed the Public Hearing and entered into Regular Session at 6:39 PM.

Upon a motion by Councilman Gload and seconded by Councilman Casey and unanimously carried it was

#125 Resolved: to accept and dispense with the reading of the Regular Board Meeting of June 9, 2026.

Supervisor Barber informed the Board he met with Connie Prickett from Adirondack Land Trust concerning the purchase of Drake Mountain in the Town of Chesterfield. Supervisor Barber's first concern was this purchase was for a solar farm but was assured the site would be forest preserve.

Supervisor Barber introduced Chris Jage from Adirondack Land Trust to field questions.

Mr. Jage explained the goal of the purchase is to eventually transfer Drake Mountain to NY State for hiking, hunting and other recreation. There are two legal right of ways but not good parking.

Andy Prescott noted NY State has to come up with a management plan.

Mr. Jage added any hunting leases would be renewed for one more time or until the land is transferred to NY State.

Pete Trombley mentioned there is a potential third right of way and voiced his concern on the danger of parking to access the site.

Supervisor Barber introduced the Town of Chesterfield Property Maintenance Law noting the need to do something for the numerous buildings in Chesterfield that need serious repair or demolition.

Councilman Gload stated the issue must be tabled. The intention was correct but there are issues with the law.

Code Officer Gravelle asked what happens with squatters such as on Margaret Street.

Councilman agreed that the Law must be tabled until re-written to address the issues presented.

Upon a motion By Councilman Gload and seconded by Councilman Casey and approved with Supervisor Barber voting No it was

#126 Resolved: To table the Proposed Chesterfield Property Maintenance Law and task with Essex County Attorney's Office with re-writing the context to address the Town Board's concerns.

Supervisor Barber introduced the Local Law #1 Of 2026; Local Law Enacting a Temporary Moratorium on Major Solar Systems and On Battery Energy Storage Systems. He asked the Board if they had any more questions. With none forthcoming, Supervisor Barber made the first motion.

Upon the motion by Supervisor Barber and seconded by Councilman Gload and unanimously carried it was

#127 Resolved: To adopt Local Law #1-2026; A Local Law Enacting a Temporary Moratorium on Major Solar Systems and on Battery energy Storage Systems.

Supervisor Barber addressed the Board on the transfer of the Thompson Road Property to the Essex County Land Bank. The Board has had two Public Hearings on the plan. There was discussion on how the water supply would be paid for. The Board was considering tabling until this issue was settled. Andy Prescott addressed the Board and noted the Town of Chesterfield would probably lose this deal if not adopted this meeting. Supervisor Barber added the Town of Jay would take this project in an instant if the Town of Chesterfield did not pass this motion.

Upon a motion by Councilman Casey and seconded by Supervisor Barber and carried by roll call vote
Supervisor Barber: AYE

Councilman Gload: AYE

Councilman Casey: AYE

Councilman Blaise: NAY

It was

#128 Resolved: To transfer a 20-acre parcel (4.3-2-3.000) from the Town of Chesterfield to the Essex County Land Bank for a proposed 6-home development and an approximately 6-acre nature zone.

While the transfer was approved, the Board questioned the cost of a new water line to the six new homes. Extending the water district, forming a new water district or having the Town of Chesterfield use other funds were discussed. It was decided a Public Hearing would be held to address the different options.

Upon a motion by Councilman Casey and seconded by Supervisor Barber and unanimously carried it was

#129 Resolved: To schedule a Public Hearing on Wednesday, July 29, 2026 at 6:30 PM to discuss potential avenues of payment of a new water line on the proposed project by the Essex County Land Bank on the Thompson Road, Keeseville.

Supervisor Barber informed the Board it was necessary to pass a gender-based violence policy to be able to qualify for grant applications.

Upon a motion by Supervisor Barber and seconded by Councilman Gload and unanimously carried it was

#130 Resolved: To adopt the Gender-Based Violence and the Workplace Model Policy for NYS Bidders policy for the Town of Chesterfield.

Supervisor Barber informed the Board the initial request for an insurance policy increase was 17.9% over last year. With budget planning coming up, this is a serious issue the Town Board needs to be aware of.

Supervisor Barber presented the Board with a letter from KCDC requesting funding for the initial Keeseville Butterfly Festival in the amount of \$250.

Upon a motion by Councilman Blaise and seconded by Councilman Gload it was

#131 Resolved: To donate a sum of \$250 from ROOST Funds to help fund the Keeseville Butterfly Festival.

Supervisor Barber informed the Board at June's meeting; the Board discussed purchasing a roller to be split between the Towns of Chesterfield and Ausable. The amount needed for each Town is approximately \$89,000.

Upon a motion by Councilman Casey and seconded by Councilman Blaise and unanimously carried it was

#133 Resolved: To approve the purchase of a roller for the Town of Chesterfield Highway Department to be shared with the Town of Ausable for the amount of approximately \$89,000 due from each Town.

Supervisor asked Town Clerk Bourgeois to open the two bids for the surplus Water Department Skid Steer. There were no bids received for the vac-truck.

Town Clerk Bourgeois opened the sealed bids from Dale Doner for \$3,000 and Fullers Excavating for \$4,200.

Water Superintendent Winter thought \$4,200 was a fair bid.

Upon a motion by Councilman Gload and seconded by Councilman Casey and unanimously carried it was

#134 Resolved: To award the highest bid of \$4,200 to Fuller's Excavating for the purchase of a used, surplus, Water Department skid-steer.

Supervisor Barber informed the Board E-Waste made their first pick-up from the transfer station and everything went smoothly.

Supervisor Barber opened the floor to the public officials.

Town Clerk Bourgeois thanked Councilmen Casey and Blaise, Dog Control Officer Hachigan and Citizen Tamera Mrose for helping out the successful rabies vaccination of 109 pets at the Knights of Columbus in June. He gave an overview of the upcoming Keeseville 250 Celebration and offered handouts of the schedule to the Board and the Public. He presented the Board with the June Clerk's Report. Walter Chmura asked if the Town Clerk could supply a better dog report showing changes year over year. Town Clerk Bourgeois will do that for the August Meeting.

Supervisor Barber added thanks to Rick and John Casey for installing electricity to the pavilion at JC Park in time for the 250 Celebration.

Highway Superintendent Champine asked the Board to surplus a list of outdated and underused equipment including a flail mower, sanders, generators and other miscellaneous equipment. He will provide Town Clerk Bourgeois with a list.

Highway Superintendent Champine informed the Board there are about 20 dead trees on the Giddings Road that are becoming a danger to the public. He would like to reach out to a couple of tree contractors, as per Town Requisition Policy to ground the very large trees for the Highway Department cut up.

Highway Superintendent Champine questioned the Town's dead end roads policy and obligations especially with the need for turn arounds for the snow plows. With new construction or new owners, former agreements may become difficult to keep. John Lacy asked about residents on roads that are tight that have no driveways like Beech Street.

Highway Superintendent Champine presented the Board with an incentive bonus plan to help keep employees from leaving Town employment from Departments. This opened a discussion on employee evaluations and the need to do something to keep employees. The Board took it into consideration.

Supervisor Barber set a Board workshop for July 29th at 6:00PM.

Supervisor Barber opened the floor to the public.

Barbara Donela mentioned she had tried to register on the Town of Chesterfield website with the link to the Essex County website to register for the occupancy tax on her Airbnb but it does not work. Supervisor Barber said the County is having issues and the people running the County Website need to improve.

Walter Chmura warned the Board on the review system as everyone, with the wrong process, would get rave reviews for the top tier bonus. He suggested Governor Hochul use the prisons the State has closed for battery storage.

Dan Ocasio offered to help craft an employee review sheet.

Supervisor Barber informed the public the dog kennel purchased from the Town of Willsboro may be placed on Frontage Road by the Water Plant. Two or three Towns have expressed interest in signing a contract with the Town of Chesterfield. The Town Dog Control Officer has also been hired by the Towns of Ausable and Willsboro for their Dog Control.

Supervisor Barber presented the Board with a Resolution urging NYS to provide equitable funding to Ausable Valley School District.

Upon a motion by Supervisor Barber and seconded by Councilman Gload and carried by Roll Call Vote it was

Supervisor Barber: AYE

Councilman Gload: AYE

Councilman Casey: AYE

Councilman Blaise AYE

#136 WHEREAS, the Town Board of the Town of Chesterfield recognizes that a strong public education system is essential to the future success of our children, the vitality of our communities and the long-term economic health of our region; and

WHEREAS, the Ausable Valley School District serves students throughout a large rural geographic area, including residents of the Town of Chesterfield, while facing increasing costs associated with employee benefits, transportation, utilities, contractual services, and other operational expenses; and

WHEREAS, despite responsible financial planning by the Board of Education and District administration, the District has recently experienced financial challenges that required reductions to its proposed budget before it was ultimately approved by the voters; and

WHEREAS, the Town board recognizes that rural districts face unique challenges, including declining enrollment, large transportation routes, aging infrastructure, and limited opportunities to generate additional local revenue while continuing to provide quality educational opportunities for students; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board believes that New York State should provide funding that more accurately reflects the actual cost of educating students in rural communities and reduce the growing burden placed upon local property taxpayers.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Chesterfield respectfully urges the Governor of the State of New York, the New York State Legislature, and the New York State Department of Education to review and strengthen the State's school aid formulas, including Foundation Aid, to provide fair, equitable and sustainable funding for rural school districts such as the Ausable Valley School District; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Board respectfully requests that New York State increases its investment in public education so rural school districts are able to maintain educational opportunities, extracurricular programs, and essential student services without placing an excessive financial burden on local taxpayers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Clerk is hereby directed to forward certified copies of this resolution to Governor Kathy Hochul, Senator Dan Stec, Assemblyman Michael Cashman, the New York State Education Department, the New York State School Boards Association, the Ausable Valley School District Board of Education and each municipality located within the Ausable Valley Central School District; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution shall be entered into the official minutes of the Town Board.

Supervisor Barber informed the Board the Compaction Station is still not sustaining itself despite all the efforts to cut costs including more part-time help, food composting, etc. Costs for trash, insurance and wages continue to rise. It may be time to consider raising ticket prices. That being said, the Compaction Station fund needs a loan from general to be able to pay its bills.

Upon a motion by Supervisor Barber and seconded by Councilman Gload and unanimously carried it was

#137 Resolved: To transfer a sum of \$5000 from the General Fund to the Compaction Station as a loan.

Supervisor Barber informed the Board quite a few gas slips from the Highway Garage are not being turned in and it is time we look into a system to better keep track of fuel. The Town has money in the budget for a fuel system. Highway Superintendent Champine thought it might be too cost prohibitive to solve the problem.

Upon a motion by Supervisor Barber and seconded by Councilman Gload and unanimously carried it was

#138 Resolved: To authorize Clerk to the Supervisor Ocasio to request quotes for a fuel management system to be submitted at the August 11 Town Board Meeting.

Supervisor Barber presented the Board with a copy of the Lake Champlain Drinking Water Source Protection Plan. The Town of Willsboro has signed it. There is no costs associated with joining. It will be grant driven.

Upon a motion by Supervisor Barber and seconded by Councilman Gload and unanimously carried it was

#139 Resolved: To schedule a Public Hearing on the Lake Champlain Drinking Water Protection Plan for Tuesday, August 11, 2026 at 5:30 PM.

Upon a motion by Supervisor Barber and seconded by Councilman Gload and unanimously carried it was

#135 Resolved: To declare the list of items provided by Highway Superintendent Champine, including generators, flail mower, chipper and sanders as surplus and allow for the Town Clerk to solicit bids for the same.

Upon a motion by Councilman Gload and seconded by Councilman Blaise and unanimously carried it was

#140 Resolved: To accept the Supervisor's Report for June 2026, a copy of which can be found in the Town Clerk's Office.

Upon a motion by Councilman Blaise and seconded by Councilman Gload and unanimously carried it was

#141 Resolved: To accept water billing and adjustments for the period of June 9, 2026 to July 13, 2026.

Upon a motion by Councilman Casey and seconded by Councilman Blaise and unanimously carried it was

#142 Resolved: To pay all bills to date including credit card bills. Bills amounting to \$28,555.57 were audited and paid from the General Fund. Bills amounting to \$51,826.87 were audited and paid from CDBG. Bills amounting to \$119,775.23 were audited and paid from the Highway Fund. Bills amounting to \$4,325.37 were audited and paid from the Chesterfield Water District. Bills amounting to \$615.59 were audited and paid from the port Kent Water District. Bills amounting to \$2,2773.08 were audited and paid from Village Debt. Bills amounting to \$499.00 were audited and paid from Keeseville 250 Fund. Bills amounting to \$3,905.85 were audited and paid from the Compaction Station. Bills amounting to \$306.01 were audited and paid from Trust & Agency. The total of all bills received since June 10, 2026 equals \$212,082.57.

Upon a motion by Supervisor Barber and seconded by Councilman Gload and unanimously carried it was

#143 Resolved: To accept all bank reconciliations through the June 30, 2026.

Upon a motion by Councilman Blaise and seconded by Councilman Gload and unanimously carried it was

#144 Resolved: To file all letters brought before this Board in the Town Clerk's Office.

Upon a motion by Councilman Gload and seconded by Councilman Blaise and unanimously carried it was

#145 Resolved: To audit and accept all budget amendments through June 30, 2026.

Upon a motion by Councilman Gload and seconded by Councilman Blaise and unanimously carried it was

#146 Resolved: That with no other business to come before this Board, the Regular Board Meeting of July 14, 2026 be closed at 8:51 PM.