

CHCA General Meeting Summary – April 23, 2026

Location: Harborfields Public Library - Large Meeting Room

Participants: [Michael Regan], [Abraham Oonnoony], [Rory Manning], [Carol Zweilich], [Bob Berding], [Paul DiPaola], [Sue Broderick], [Anne Wesp]

Meeting Notes

Treasurer's Report and Community Updates

- Treasurer's Report:
- The checking account has a balance of \$10,887.
- The savings account has a balance of \$133.
- Taxes were paid this month, which will be the last tax payment as the organization is now a 501(c)(3).
- Spring Cleanup Success:
- The event was a great success with over 60 volunteers.
- Participants included the Harborfields High School Environmental Club, Boy Scout Troop 32, Cub Scout Pack 2255, and kids from Love of Learning Montessori.
- More garbage was collected than in the previous year.
- Dues Payment Reminder:
- Members who have not paid their dues are encouraged to do so, either in person or online via the website.

Harbor Fields School Update

- Sports:
- The baseball team has a 4-4 record.
- The lacrosse team is performing well.
- The "Battle of the Borders" baseball game against Elwood is this Saturday, April 25, 2026.
- Student Activities & Recognition:
- April is Autism Acceptance month.
- A college and career fair was recently held.
- Arts & Music:
- The theater department completed its run of "Chicago."
- The High Arts Showcase will be on April 26, 2026.
- Harbor Fields hosted the NISMA Music Festival, with the largest attendance of all participating schools.
- Senior Events:
- Upcoming events for seniors include senior sunrise, prom, and senior season.

School Budget Presentation for May 19 Vote

- Budget Overview:
- The total proposed budget is a little over \$107 million.
- The budget vote is on May 19, 2026, from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Oldfield Middle School.
- Revenue Sources:
- State aid is projected to increase by \$245,000.
- The tax levy limit is set at 4.29%, which is within the legal cap.
- The higher levy is due to debt payments from a \$41.2 million capital project approved in January 2024.
- Budget Highlights & Program Enhancements:
- Maintains all existing programs.
- Adds a special education self-contained program at the middle school.
- Adds grade level coordinators and curriculum leadership support.
- Funds new student-initiated clubs.
- Introduces SAT testing for all students during the school day.
- Launches an EMT certification program for students.
- Community Engagement:
- The district's budget website contains presentations, voter information, and a tax calculator.
- Dr. Manning agreed to add the Centerport Harbor Civic Association website to the community resource page on the district's website.
- Club Costs:
- The stipend for a new club advisor is approximately \$1,600. This covers a minimum of 10 meetings per year.

Advanced Science Research Program Experience

- Paul DiPaola discussed a project from the advanced science research program, which provides students with research opportunities.
- The initial idea involved a process of mixing saltwater and freshwater to generate energy, which could then be used for desalination.
- The project idea was deemed too complex, so the team pivoted to creating an educational video instead.
- This program operates outside of the regular school schedule, with students meeting an advisor weekly and working on projects independently.

Presentation on Mitochondrial Disease

- Description:
- Mitochondrial disease is a genetic disorder affecting how cells produce energy. Mitochondria have their own DNA, inherited only from the mother.
- It is a group of disorders caused by mitochondrial dysfunction, where cells don't receive enough energy. This can affect any part of the body, especially the brain and heart.
- Inheritance patterns include maternal inheritance, autosomal recessive inheritance from either parent, and random spontaneous mutations.
- Major Types of Mitochondrial Disease:

- ***MELAS***: Causes stroke-like episodes, typically presenting before age 40.
- ***MERRF***: Causes epilepsy and abnormalities in visceral muscles.
- ***Leigh Syndrome***: A severe early-onset disorder causing progressive loss of mental and motor abilities.
- ***Kearns-Sayre Syndrome***: Affects eye movement and vision, with cardiac issues.
- ***Barth Syndrome***: A rare disorder in boys causing muscle weakness.
- ***NARP***: Causes nerve damage, bowel problems, and progressive vision loss.
- **Symptoms and Diagnosis:**
- Symptoms are diverse, including seizures, developmental delays, muscle weakness, fatigue, and cardiac issues.
- Diagnosis can be complex, involving clinical evaluation and lab tests for elevated lactic acid.
- A muscle biopsy can reveal characteristic fibers.
- Genetic testing is the most effective method to identify specific mutations.
- **Treatment and Management:**
- There is currently no cure, but treatments help manage symptoms.
- Nutritional supplements are often prescribed to support mitochondrial function.
- Physical therapy and exercise help maintain muscle strength and cardiovascular health.
- Gene therapy is being explored as a potential future treatment, with clinical trials ongoing.

Presentation on Blue Energy (Osmotic Power)

- **Description:**
- Blue energy, or osmotic power, harnesses the energy produced when saltwater and freshwater mix.
- It is highly applicable to Long Island, an estuary where rivers meet the Atlantic Ocean.
- The presentation explores the potential of using this technology in the local area, especially in the context of potential saltwater intrusion into groundwater.
- **Scientific Principles:**
- Electricity is the movement of electrons. In salt (sodium chloride), electrons do not flow freely in its solid state.
- When dissolved in water, the atoms spread out, but electrons are still not mobile enough to create a current.
- Blue energy techniques are designed to make these electrons flow and generate electricity.
- **Blue Energy Techniques:**
- **Reverse Electrodialysis (RED):**
- Uses alternating anion and cation exchange membranes in a cell.
- The movement of ions between saltwater and freshwater streams across these membranes creates an electric potential, generating electricity.
- It is theoretically very energy-efficient and produces no greenhouse gases.
- Negatives include high initial costs and reduced efficiency due to salt buildup (fouling) on membranes.
- **Pressure Retarded Osmosis (PRO):**
- Uses a semi-permeable membrane that allows only water to pass through.
- The flow of water from the freshwater side to the saltwater side creates pressure.

- This pressure is used to spin a turbine, similar to a conventional dam or water mill, to generate electricity.
- Applications and Current Status:
- Companies like companies in the Czech Republic are developing and researching RED technologies at scale.
- Applications include powering cities with wastewater and creating rechargeable seawater-activated batteries for marine uses like life jackets and light buoys.
- The technology is still in its early stages due to challenges with cost and membrane fouling.

Traffic Issues at Little Neck and 25A Intersection

- The intersection of Little Neck Road and 25A is a major point of traffic congestion.
- The left-turn signal often fails to activate because drivers do not pull far enough into the intersection to trigger the under-road sensors.
- New cameras have been installed to detect backed-up cars and activate the turn signal accordingly.
- The cameras were installed on the day of the meeting (April 23, 2026) and will undergo a test period before becoming fully operational.
- There was a discussion about the ownership of traffic lights, indicated by color: yellow for town, green for county, and black for state.

Planned Traffic Study and Safety Concerns

- The Civic Association has been advocating for improvements at the 25A intersection for a long time.
- A new traffic study has been verbally agreed to by the Department of Transportation (DOT).
- A site meeting is planned with representatives from the town, DOT, and the community to observe traffic at peak times.
- There are significant safety concerns, with one speaker witnessing a school bus almost tipping over while making a turn.
- The possibility of widening the road by taking property near the firehouse was discussed, but it would be a major expense.
- A comprehensive traffic study has been requested for the entire stretch of 25A through the village.

Jellyfish Restaurant Parking Plan Update

- A new parking plan for the Jellyfish restaurant has been proposed.
- The plan includes relocating a dumpster to a corner, adding parking spaces on either side of it, and moving two handicap spaces into the lot.
- The plan also mentions a 14-foot long, 30-inch high ramp connecting to the parking lot.
- A letter was sent to the town planning department on April 20, 2026, raising questions about whether the new ramp would reduce available parking spaces.

Mill Pond Walk Project Update

- The project involves creating new informational signs for the Mill Pond walk, with two initial signs planned for Heron Park and Gristmill Park.

- The project involves multiple stakeholders, including the Town, historical societies, and the Vanderbilt museum.
- The content for the signs will be curated by experts to include historical and environmental information.
- The Centerport Garden Club is also involved and will contribute to the landscaping and planting plan.
- The project aims to incorporate community participation, potentially including student poetry or artwork, and to evolve over time.

Next Meeting Announcement

- The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 20, 2026.
- The guest speaker will be Dr. John Rasweiler.
- The topic will be managing deer and tick-related problems in the community.

Next Arrangements

- Pay outstanding membership dues in person or online.
- Add the Centerport Harbor Civic Association website to the school district's community resource page.
- Schedule a site meeting at the 25A intersection with the town, DOT, and community representatives.
- Follow up with the town planning department regarding questions about the Jellyfish parking plan.
- Meet with curators to finalize the content and phrasing for the Mill Pond signs.
- Secure the Mill Pond sign display from Hecksher after the annual run.