TOWN OF CHESHIRE

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Meeting Minutes – February 2, 2021

Members Present: Michelle Francesconi, Chair
Jason Levesque, Emergency Services Liaison
Ronald DeAngelis, Highway and Infrastructure Liaison

Members Absent: Mark Biagini, Clerk

Others Present: Mark Webber, Interim Town Administrator
Noelle M Pandell, Interim Administrative Assistant
Aaron Dean, Superintendent, HVRSD

Go-To-Meeting: Denise Gregoire, Finance Committee
John Tremblay, Finance Committee
Heather Emerson, Finance Committee
Lenwood "Woody" Vaspra, Finance Committee
Kathleen Levesque, Finance Committee
Peter Traub, Council on Aging
Eugene Gebarowski, Council on Aging
Anne Marie Furey, Cemetery Commission

M. Francesconi opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

Open Session

Ms. Francesconi read from a prepared set of remarks that was listed on the agenda concerning that, pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible.

Ms. Francesconi acknowledged the members of the Board present at the meeting.

1. **To Hear and Act on the Minutes from the Prior Meeting(s) – January 19, 2021 and January 26, 2021**
   J. Levesque made a motion to approve the minutes from January 19, 2021 as written – seconded by R. DeAngelis – there was no discussion – ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carried****.*

   M. Francesconi tabled the January 26, 2021 minutes.

2. **Department Spending Review with Finance Committee**

a. **Highway Department –** M. Francesconi noted that R. Navin was not present due to the snowstorm so this spending review will be rescheduled to a later date and time.

b. Water Department – M. Francesconi noted that the Water Superintendent was not in attendance so this spending review will also be rescheduled to a later date and time.

M. Francesconi further noted that all of the department heads were notified of the spending reviews tonight.

c. Council on Aging – P. Traub and E. Gebarowski were present and they noted that C. Hilderbrand was not present because she was at the COVID Vaccine Clinic. M. Francesconi asked how they felt about the current budget; did they think it was adequate. E. Gebarowski said he felt it was more than adequate they were not able to do a lot of the things they had budgeted for this year.

E. Gebarowski also noted that for the next fiscal year, the COA submitted a level budget hoping that things will open back up. He noted that the biggest problem they have is the dishwasher and they did put in a request for one in the next fiscal year. M. Francesconi asked the Finance Committee if they had any questions for the Council on Aging and they had none.

E. Gebarowski read C. Hilderbrand's report; M. Francesconi noted that she had not received the report so she asked him to email her a copy so it can be attached to the minutes. He agreed.

d. Cemetery Department – M. Francesconi asked the Board members and the Finance Committee members if they had any questions about the Cemetery Department's budget; they had none. She then asked A. Furey if she had any questions for the Board; A. Furey said she did not have any questions, but she did want to note that in the Labor line, there will be about $4-5K left at the end of the year because an employee left at the end of July. They did not look for a replacement because they did not need the manpower as much at that time of year.

In April, the Cemetery Department will have two general laborer positions to hire; each for 19-hours per week. M. Francesconi asked A. Furey to go through the Interim Town Administrator when she is ready to post for the positions. She agreed.

3. Old Business

a. Discussion regarding the lease agreement with Hoosac Valley Regional School District (discussion occurred at the end of the meeting)

b. Update regarding open positions and job postings – No update this week.

4. New Business

a. Announcement of open positions for the Annual Town Election and instructions to obtain nomination papers

M. Francesconi read a letter from the Town Clerk advising that the May 3rd election has openings for the following positions:

2	Selectmen	Each for a 3-year term
1	Assessor	3-year term
1	Board of Health	3-year term
1	Water Department	3-year term
1	Water Department	1-year term
1	Cemetery Department	3-year term

1	Tax Collector	3-year term	
1	Town Clerk	3-year term	
1	Planning Board Member	5-year term	
1	Planning Board Member	4-year term	
1	Planning Board Member	2-year term	
1	School Committee Member	3-year term	Cheshire Representative
1	School Committee Member	3-year term	Adams Representative

Beginning February 2, 2021, nomination papers will be available at the Town Clerk's office by appointment only. Nominations papers are due back by 5:00 pm on March 15, 2021. The list will be made available for the press.

b. Discussion regarding potential warrant articles – M. Francesconi asked if any Board members had any suggestions for warrant articles this year; J. Levesque suggested a warrant article for a replacement brush truck and R. DeAngelis noted that he had hoped to have the updated town bylaws back from Town Counsel by now so that they could go in a warrant article. Discussion followed regarding the town bylaws; M. Francesconi noted that the Board does not have a full set of bylaws. It was also noted that the Board does not know if any new bylaws passed by the Town were ever approved by the Attorney General. M. Webber said he would check with the Town Clerk.

c. **Discussion and potential decision regarding building locks and keyholder policy** – M. Francesconi advised that there are discrepancies with how many keys have been given out to town buildings and who they have been given out to. She said only some of the keys say "Do Not Duplicate" on them. She also noted that there isn't a keyholder policy either. M. Francesconi suggested that a keyholder policy be developed and all town building locks be replaced with keys that say "Do Not Duplicate". Following some discussion, *J. Levesque made a motion to develop a keyholder policy and replace all existing locks in town buildings with keys that say "Do Not Duplicate" on them – seconded by M. Francesconi –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carries***

6. Public Comment Period

A. Furey, from the Cemetery Department, asked what the town policy was on posting for a job opening; M. Francesconi advised that she, together with the Cemetery Commission, create a job description and then share it with M. Webber and the Board of Selectmen. The Board will then post for the position.

A. Furey said that regarding the incremental raises over the next two years, they need to have a virtual meeting that includes a public notice; she asked if someone could help her with that. M. Francesconi told A. Furey to set the date and time and then let her know when it is, and she will help her set it up.

P. Traub asked when the van driver and aide positions will be advertised; M. Webber said within two weeks. P. Traub also suggested maybe meeting with BRPC because they help write bylaws and zoning bylaws. M. Webber said he know they help with zoning bylaws, but he was not sure about town bylaws.

P. Traub also asked about holding a joint meeting with the Board and the Lake District; M. Webber asked if he had anything pressing to meet about and P. Traub said nothing that had to be dealt with within weeks but would within months. M. Francesconi suggested meeting in early to mid-March and P. Traub said that was reasonable.

M. Francesconi said it was 7:15 pm so she paused the Public Comment period to hold the public hearing.

5. Public Hearing – 7:15 pm – A petition from National Grid and Verizon to locate a pole at 1115 Sandmill Road

M. Francesconi noted that Michael from National Grid was present for the public hearing. She then asked if anyone else was on the Go-To-Meeting for the pole hearing and there was not. Michael stated that they are looking to put up a pole to provide service to Mr. Choquette's home at 1115 Sandmill Road. M. Francesconi noted that the Highway Superintendent looked at the location and he was fine with the placement of the pole. With no further discussion or questions, *M. Francesconi made a motion to approve the placement of the pole to provide service to 1115 Sandmill Road – seconded by J. Levesque* – ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carries***

M. Francesconi resumed the Public Comment Period and there were no further comments.

7. Announcements from Board Members

M. Francesconi asked the Board members if they were okay with she and M. Webber meeting 2-weeks from Thursday with the Town Clerk and Town Assessor to have a preliminary discussion regarding the senior veteran's tax work off program. The Board members said yes.

M. Francesconi said that the Water Department decided to put in a floating floor in Town Hall instead of carpet. She said the flooring has been purchased and it ends up costing the Town less money.

8. Any Other Business Not Reasonably Anticipated 48-hours Prior to the Meeting – None

9. Old Business (con't)

a. Discussion regarding the lease agreement with Hoosac Valley Regional School District

A draft of an updated lease was distributed to the Board members prior to the meeting. A. Dean advised that the library is included in the lease. He explained that the three people in the Special Education Room, which is about half the size of the library, could use more space so they are thinking of moving them into the library and then using their existing space for storage. The Board asked about buildout in the library and A. Dean said that they have partitions they can use.

A Dean asked if the rent increase was negotiable since they share their space and their internet with the Board. R. DeAngelis asked if the lease was yearly and A Dean said that it is a 4-year lease, of which we are in year two. R. DeAngelis stated that the Town's costs go up every year so there should be a small percentage increase each year. M. Webber suggested an accelerator until the end of the term to get to the $12,500 – discussion followed – R. DeAngelis said we know how much utilities are, but he felt it would be good to know the cost of plowing, mowing and maintenance. He said we need to make sure we are covering our costs.

M. Francesconi suggested A. Dean discuss the need for the library space with the School Committee and the Board will get more information on the expenses then we will meet again in two weeks. Everyone agreed.

A Dean also asked about using the kitchen at the old Cheshire Elementary School for a meal pick up site – following some discussion, A Dean said he would go back and find out exactly what is needed.

A. Dean left the meeting.

Town Administrator Update
M. Webber asked the Board members to get back to him as soon as they can with answers to the questions he gave them. Discussion followed.

M. Webber said he spoke with the person who did the last audit, who will commit to be here in April or May and audit FY20 or wait until July and do FY 21 – following some discussion, the Board agreed to have the FY20 audit done in April or May.

Borrego Solar has reached out to continue the process of moving forward with the solar project on East Harbor Rd. A note was sent to D. DeFino at the Planning Board to see if it was approved. R. DeAngelis advised that we were sued and reasonable accommodations were added and we agreed to them. We were sued again but it was thrown out.

Special conditions in place. M. Webber said that there is a 20-year agreement with an accelerator clause in it; $10-12K per megawatt. R. DeAngelis said that utility companies have to put up a decommission bond and he wondered who keeps track of the bonds; M. Webber said he didn't know but it falls under the Board but it is a lot to ask. It needs to be a condition. A brief discussion followed.

M. Francesconi said she got a quote from a shredding service that offers different receptacles. She said if the Board is interested, she can find a place in the budget. M. Francesconi will send the information she received to the board for their review.

10. **Adjournment** – With no further business, *M. Francesconi made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 PM – seconded by J. Levesque –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes*** *– Motion carries*

Respectfully submitted,
Noelle M. Pandell