TOWN OF CHESHIRE

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Meeting Minutes – February 16, 2021

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

Others Present: Mark Webber, Interim Town Administrator
Noelle M Pandell, Interim Administrative Assistant

Go-To-Meeting: Tim Garner, Police Chief
Tom Francesconi, Fire Chief
Robert Navin, Highway Superintendent

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 26, 2021 and February 2, 2021**
   M. Biagini made a motion to approve the minutes from January 26, 2021 as presented – seconded by J. Levesque – there was no discussion – ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carried****.*

   J. Levesque made a motion to approve the minutes from February 2, 2021 as presented – seconded by R. DeAngelis – there was no discussion – ***Roll Call Vote – M. Biagini abstained - All other members yes – Motion carried****.*

2. **Reports of Town Departments**

   a. **Highway Department –** M. Francesconi noted that R. Navin submitted his Highway report but it had not been distributed to the Board members yet. R. Navin provided an update noting that they have been dealing with what seems to be one continuous snowstorm. He said the crew has done a great job keeping roadways clear and safe during storms and post storm cleanup. They were also able to help with Town Hall and the school moving projects. He also noted that steps are starting so they can

take the building down at Fr. Tom's campsite. He said he will update the Board once the timeline has been sent.

R. Navin said that Representative John Barrett had reached out to M. Francesconi about the possibility of funds from the MassWorks Infrastructure program since we did not get the grant for the Rt. 116 work. R. Navin and M. Webber working with Secretary Mike Kennealy and his assistant Juan Vega, they were able to secure partial funding from MassWorks for $200K to repave about half of Rt. 116. They will start at the Savoy town line and go as far as they can. R. Navin said that there is a new round of grants opening and they are planning to reapply for the remainder of the paving and guardrail replacement. He then acknowledged everyone who made this happen.

b. **Police Department** – T. Garner advised that the new police cruiser and the Fire Department's new command vehicle are both completed and will be ready for pick-up on Friday. The new cruiser still needs to be lettered and should be done within 2-weeks. T. Garner also noted that the received a $32K grant for new radios for the base station and the cruisers. The current radios will be given to the Fire Department to be reprogrammed. It was also noted that a new antenna will be installed on the roof of the police station as part of the grant.

Regarding the budget, M. Francesconi stated that we need to fine tune how we track officers' salary data. T. Garner said that the line item was split in two, but it is not happening the way it should be. He said he thinks it should just be one line item.

c. **Fire Department** – T. Francesconi advised that they were unsuccessful in getting the grant for a new brush truck, but they are reapplying for the grant again this year. He said that they are not putting any more money into the military surplus vehicle that they currently have. T. Francesconi said that there may be a need to move forward with a used pickup truck or we will not have anything to use. Discussion followed.

T. Francesconi advised that they have resumed drills; the team has been broken down into seven member teams and they rotate each week. He said the members are happy to be back training. T. Francesconi also advised that the company that is going to fix the 1976 pump in the Engine 2 mini pumper is in Maine; it is the closest location he could find. Once the parts come in, the vehicle will be sent to Maine.

T. Francesconi said that his new command vehicle will be picked up on Friday. J. Levesque asked if he had any plans for disposing of the old vehicle and T. Francesconi said he will probably junk it. Police Chief T. Garner agreed. Regarding the heating system at the Fire Station, T. Francesconi advised that everything is working right now, and he hopes to have a report next month about the cost to do the repairs necessary to have fix the heating system.

d. Board of Health – M. Francesconi said that the Board of Health was unable to attend tonight. She said they are all moved into the Annex.

i. Discussion regarding updated Guidance for Outdoor Gatherings and Events

M. Francesconi said that the Board of Health provided her with an updated Guidance for Outdoor Gatherings and Events, a copy of which is attached to the minutes. M. Francesconi read the updated guidance and asked for any feedback; discussion followed, the Board members had a couple of questions regarding the guidance and M. Webber requested to see the guidance from the town that they took it from. M. Francesconi said she would bring the Board's questions back to Board of Health.

3. **Old Business**
    a. **Discussion regarding the search for a Town Administrator** – M. Webber provided the Board with three versions of a job description for them to review. He asked that they get back to him with feedback within 2-weeks. M. Webber said he also included a semi-recent salary survey in their packets.

    b. **Discussion regarding the Hoosac Valley Regional School District file storage location**
    M. Francesconi advised the storage cabinets are special education filing cabinets and they use them every day. She asked if the Board was okay with letting them move the filing cabinets back into the library. She said the district will move them. The Board agreed.

    c. **Discussion regarding open positions**
        i. **Compactor Operator** – two applications were received via Berkshire Jobs
        ii. **COA Aide** – one application was received via Facebook
        iii. **COA Van Driver** – three applications were received via Facebook
        M. Francesconi said she forwarded the applications on to the department heads; she then questioned who should contact the applicants regarding interviews and to ask the applicants to complete a Town of Cheshire application. The Board felt that it should be the department head that does that. E. Gebarowski said that either he or C. Hilderbrand will reach out to the applicants. After a brief discussion about the interview process, it was agreed that M. Webber and the department head will do the interviews and make a recommendation to the Board.

4. **New Business**
    a. **Status of District Local Technical Assistance Program (DLTA) for 2021**
    M. Webber said that this is through the BRPC; they take applications each year for technical assistance. The application usually comes from the Planning Board. M. Webber said that since they are not meeting this month, the deadline will be missed.

    b. **Review and potential decision regarding Valley Green Shredding Service Proposal**
    The Valley Green Shredding Service Proposal was sent to the Board prior to the meeting. After a brief discussion, the Board agreed that it was a service that was needed. M. Francesconi asked if the Board wanted to try and find money in the current budget to start the service or wait until the next budget cycle; the Board agreed to wait until the next budget cycle. M. Francesconi will let Valley Green know and she will ask them to extend their proposal.

6. **Public Comment Period**
    E. Gebarowski asked about job postings being advertised in the Berkshire Eagle in addition to Facebook and Berkshire Jobs; M. Webber said we are not advertising in the Berkshire Eagle because they are too expensive.

    R. Navin said that while he was in Holyoke with his wife shopping, a salesman asked where he lived and when he told him Cheshire, the salesman said that they stayed at the Father Tom Campsite and that they had a great stay and a great experience. M. Francesconi thanked him for sharing that. Police Chief Garner reminded R. Navin about the light that needs to be installed at the entrance of the campsite.

7. **Announcements from Board Members**

M. Biagini asked about reaching out to Town Counsel about the release of Executive Session minutes and the Town bylaws. M. Webber said that he is following up with Town Counsel.

J. Levesque thanked R. Navin and told him to keep up the good work. He said it is appreciated.

M. Webber said that he spoke with R. Herzog regarding the actuarial study and she has spoken to the vendor, so it is progressing. He also advised that Charter annually reports how many complaints it received, and they reported that they only received one.

M. Webber said the spoke with the Town Accountant to get the detail on prior and current fiscal year expenses and revenue of the transfer station. He continues to work on the FY22 budget.

M. Biagini asked about the chrome books and when they will be distributed. It was noted that they are not ready to be distributed as there is no system in place to set them up. A brief discussion followed regarding what other towns do about technology; do they have an IT person. M. Webber said that they usually use consultants. M. Francesconi noted that there also needs to be a system in place to track technology and that nothing else will be distributed until a plan and policy are in place.

R. DeAngelis wanted to recognize John Tremblay for his part in the grant for the Rt. 116 paving.

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

7. **Adjournment** – With no further business, *M. Biagini made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 PM – seconded by J. Levesque –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes*** *– Motion carries*

Respectfully submitted,
Noelle M. Pandell