TOWN OF CHESHIRE

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Meeting Minutes – February 23, 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
Lynne Lemanski, Town Accountant

Go-To-Meeting: Denise Gregoire, Finance Committee
John Tremblay, Finance Committee
Heather Emerson, Finance Committee
Lenwood "Woody" Vaspra, Finance Committee
Kathleen Levesque, Finance Committee

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) – February 16, 2021**
   The minutes of February 16, 2021 were tabled to the next meeting to give members of the Board a chance to review them.

2. **Old Business**
   a. **Discussion and potential decision regarding Senior/Veteran Tax Work Off Program details**
      M. Francesconi advised that she and M. Webber met with the Tax Collector and the Assessors' Administrator last week regarding Clause 41C, the tax abatement program through the Assessors' Office and the Senior/Veteran Work-Off Program. M. Francesconi stated that under

41C, the Board can reduce the age restriction, increase the exemption amount up to 100% and increase income up to $20K for single and $30K for married individuals.

i. **Income Level Requirement** – M. Francesconi said she felt that the current 400% of the federal income level is too high of a threshold to meet the needs of who needs help the most. Discussion followed – J. Levesque suggested adding a 225% option to the spreadsheet of options for income thresholds.
ii. **Age Restrictions** - The Assessor and Tax Collector are asking the Board to reduce the age requirement needed to be eligible for Clause 41C – currently there are less than 10 people eligible for Clause 41C. After some discussion, the Board agreed to reduce the age requirement from 70 to 65.
iii. **Timeline** – When the Senior/Veteran Tax Work Off Program is eventually implemented, applications should be received in February; job duties should be received in March and then work would be March through September.

There was discussion about the process; M. Webber noted that we would need to establish a need and determine how many jobs would be available. It was also noted that the selection process would need to be fair and the tax bill would also have to be eligible.

M. Francesconi asked Board members to review the information distributed and to send any questions to M. Webber and he will ask the Assessors' Administrator. The Board will revisit this matter next week.

3. Workshop Meeting with Finance Committee

a. Chart of Accounts
b. VADAR – Project Tags

M. Francesconi advised that she spoke with VADAR about what else can be done to track data; they said we could re-do the chart of accounts or we can use Project Tags – discussion followed regarding Project Tags and VADAR's ability to add on numbers. There was also discussion about the need to automate systems like payroll and billing. J. Tremblay said that there are grants available for financial systems and he suggested that she check with GLS to see if there is any money left because they do rolling grant approvals until the money has been expended. M. Francesconi asked the Board to send any questions to her or M. Webber and she would then check with VADAR. M. Francesconi asked R. DeAngelis if he would look into the grants for financial systems and he agreed.

4. New Business

a. Accountant request for information from Town Department

L. Lemanski, Town Accountant, reminded Department Heads to provide her with copies of any grants they receive so that she can track them and make sure that deadlines are met. M. Francesconi said that a memo will be sent out.

5. Announcements from Board Members

J. Levesque said that he spoke with the Fire Chief and he is asking John Burzimati for a quote to replace the repaired circulator pump, which went again.

M. Francesconi advised that the floor in the Town Hall Water Department Office in the basement is completed. The Water Department did not want to use the countertop that was built through the CARESact for their office. She met with the Assessors' Administrator and reconfigured the file cabinets to allow for the countertop to benefit the Assessors' Office instead. The shades for the basement

windows came in. The Clerk's office is all set with just some little tweaks left. Plexiglass was put in the library.

An inventory of the locks that need to be changed was completed. The door handle sets are $100 each and the Do Not Duplicate keys are $10 each. She said she is waiting for a quote, which she should have in a couple of days. M. Francesconi noted that the Highway Department is excluded in this count because they have a keypad system.

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

7. **Executive Session**
M. Francesconi made a motion to enter into Executive Session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non-union personnel pertaining to the Town Accountant and will exit the Executive Session only to adjourn – seconded by R. DeAngelis – ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes*** *– Motion carries.*

8. **Adjournment** *– M. Francesconi made a motion to adjourn at 9:19 pm – seconded by M. Biagini –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes –*** *Motion carries*

Respectfully submitted,
Noelle M Pandell

Meeting minutes approved by:

Michelle A. Francesconi
Chair, Marketing & Development Liaison

Mark Biagini
Clerk

Jason Levesque
Emergency Services Liaison

Ronald DeAngelis
Highway & Infrastructure Liaison