TOWN OF CHESHIRE

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Meeting Minutes – March 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: Denise Gregoire, Finance Committee
John Tremblay, Finance Committee
Lenwood "Woody" Vaspra, Finance Committee
Kathleen Levesque, Finance Committee
Heather Emerson, Finance Committee
Thomas Francesconi, Fire Chief
Timothy Garner, Police Chief
Robert Navin, Highway Department
Amber LaFogg, Board of Health
Eugene Gebarowski, Council on Aging

M. Francesconi opened the meeting at 6:32 pm.

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) – March 9, 2021**
   Minutes were tabled to next week.

2. **Department Budget Review with Finance Committee**
   a. **Tree Warden –** R. Navin advise that the budget is level funded. He said he has a large list of trees to work on. A brief discussion followed.

b. Police Department – T. Garner advised that the budget is level funded except for the salaries for the officers. T. Garner did not include a salary increase for the Police Chief, but a 2% increase was added by M. Webber.

T. Garner advised that an old pipe in the ceiling in his office was leaking; Pyramid Plumbing came and ran a new line. John Burzimatti, of Pyramid Plumbing, donated his time which came to $1,068. He said he appreciates what the Police Department does for the kids in Cheshire. Discussion followed and the Board agreed to pay the $1,068 to John Burzimatti and he can donate the money to the Police Department.

c. Fire Department – T. Francesconi said the budget is level funded except for a 3.1% increase in the Fire Chief salary. T. Francesconi said that the pipe failed in Engine 2, the main pumper truck that is used when the big trucks can't get to brush fires or during inclement weather. The only company they found that can fix it is in Maine. It will cost about $18K to replace it and that will come out of the Fire Department budget. They are in the process of making arrangements to get the truck to Maine.

There was discussion regarding adding a maintenance line item - T. Francesconi said that it would be a good idea for FY23; he keeps track of the maintenance and he will be able to come up with a number for FY23. J. Tremblay suggested that the remaining amount in the budget be encumbered so that it can be used for the pumper truck. T. Francesconi said he would work with M. Webber on this.

M. Francesconi left the meeting for the discussion regarding the Fire Chief's salary. It was noted that the Fire Chief's salary and the Police Chief's salary are significantly lower than others. Discussion followed and the Board agreed to increase both salaries to $8K as a placeholder and the Board will gather information on other Fire Chief and Police Chief salaries.

M. Francesconi re-joined the meeting. T. Francesconi requested that an article be placed on the Annual Meeting Warrant for $15K for a used pickup truck to replace the existing brush truck, which is a 1984 military surplus truck. T. Francesconi said that it is not financially responsible to continue to put money into repairing the truck. Because it is a military surplus truck, it needs to be returned to the government. Discussion followed.

T. Francesconi advised that the Director of the Adams Ambulance agreed to put an ambulance at the Fire Station Monday through Friday from 8 am to 4 pm. T. Francesconi requested that the Town pay $10K to the Adams Ambulance for their willingness to assign an ambulance to the Fire Station. The Adams Ambulance pays to have an EMT and a Paramedic assigned to Cheshire. T. Francesconi pointed out that this request is not coming from the Director of the Adams Ambulance. Discussion followed.

With regard to the boiler in the Fire Station, T. Francesconi advised that John Burzimatti will be doing the work and we are talking about going to two boilers; T. Francesconi is waiting for a quote. T. Francesconi said that the floor in the Fire Station is uneven and cracking. He has a local contractor that is going to give him an estimate to fix it. Discussion followed.

d. Board of Heath – A. LaFogg, the Board of Health Secretary was present to present the BOH budget; she said that the budget is level funded except the salaries of the members of the Board of Health and the Board of Health secretary received a 5% increase. Discussion followed.

e. **Town Compactor** – M. Francesconi advised that the money taken in is significantly higher, so they want to create a revolving fund. Discussion followed.

3. **New Business**

a. **Review and possible decision on field usage request from the Cheshire Little League**
M. Francesconi advised that the Cheshire Little League submitted a field usage request to hold games here again. Following some discussion, *M. Biagini made a motion to approve the Cheshire Little League's field usage request – seconded by J. Levesque –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – motion carries***

b. ***Review of Adams Cheshire Savoy Softball League field plans for 2021***
M. Francesconi advised that the Adams Cheshire Savoy Softball League submitted a field usage request to hold games here. Following some discussion, *M. Biagini made a motion to approve the Adams Cheshire Savoy Softball League's field usage request – seconded by J. Levesque –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – motion carries***

c. **Appoint – Transfer Station Attendant: Michael Meczywor**
CJ Garner of the Board of Health and R. Navin of the Highway Department submitted a letter recommending the appointment of Michael Meczywor as the Transfer Station Attendant.
J. Levesque made a motion to appoint Michael Meczywor as the Transfer Station Attendant – seconded by M. Biagini – ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carries***

d. ***Appointment – Inspector of Animals: Myron Proper***
J. Levesque made a motion to appoint Myron Proper as the Inspector of Animals – seconded by M. Biagini – ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carries***

e. ***Discussion and potential decision regarding salary increases***
M. Francesconi advised that last year 11 people received a 6% salary increase and everyone else received a 2% salary increase. Discussion followed and M. Francesconi said that they would continue to work on this and bring it back at a later time.

f. ***Discussion and potential decision on pay rate for the COA Van Driver***
Discussion followed regarding the pay rate of the COA Van Driver as well as the position; E. Gebarowski said they had a candidate, but that person backed out. He said they need a bigger pool of candidates; M. Francesconi said that she reached out to the Berkshire Eagle to see what the price is for small ad. It was suggested to find out what other communities pay.

4. **New Business**

a. **Discussion regarding Senior/Veteran Tax Work-Off Program**
M. Webber said that he has not received any more responses regarding departmental needs. A brief discussion followed.

b. **Update regarding Town Administrator position**
M. Webber advised that he plugged in $75K for a Town Administrator's salary as full-time. Discussion followed regarding how many hours the Town Administrator's position should be and it was agreed that the position should be 40-hours per week with a salary of $85K.

c. Discussion and potential decision regarding the re-opening of Town Buildings

There was discussion about re-opening town buildings. M. Francesconi advised that many town buildings across the country have already opened but we have not. Following additional discussion, *M. Francesconi made a motion to open town buildings on May 1st by appointment only and to allow in-person meetings – seconded by J. Levesque –* ***Roll Call Vote – 3 yes 1 no – Motion carries***

5. Public Comment Period

Amber LaFogg asked if the library will reopen and M. Francesconi said it would need to be discussed with the library trustees.

Woody Vaspra said it was a good meeting.

6. Announcements from Board Members

J. Levesque said that a resident of Sand Mill Road said that it is decaying; J. Levesque told the resident that he would take a look at it.

R. DeAngelis said that Jenks Road gets shut down when the road gets bad but there are a lot of building lots for sale and once people start to build, that road will have to stay open. Something to think about. J. Levesque said that it would be nice to budget for these types of repairs.

M. Francesconi gave the following Town Hall update:

- Painting is done in the Town Administrator's office, the meeting room and stair way is done
- Lighting fixtures are starting to come in; period lighting for the stairwell and in front of the window
- Bathrooms are now getting painted
- Painters are in the basement stairwell
- The alarm company met with George Sweet to do a walk through of what areas will be alarmed:
  - Town Clerk's office
  - Library
  - Basement will have a carbon monoxide detector
  - Annex will have a smoke detector

M. Francesconi advised that an external monitoring company monitor the alarm system.

M. Webber gave the following update:

- The latest municipal aid figures from the "American Rescue Plan" had Cheshire listed to receive $915,543 rather than the $308,693 originally reported. The increase is due to Cheshire's portion of the amount that would have been lump summed to county government if we still had county government;

  To date, all M. Webber has seen so far from the state is that the money is unrestricted. The MMA says that the funds may be used to:
  - Replace revenue lost or reduced as a result of the pandemic
  - Fund COVID-related costs
  - Provide support to aid households and businesses impacted by the crisis
  - Invest in economic recovery and renewal and fund investments in water, sewer and broadband infrastructure.

- Mark Rabinsky the Green Communities regional contact said that previously approved project funding will remain in place for the time being. M. Rabinsky thought that the approved figure was in the range of $120,000. He suggested that M. Webber speak to the Town's Green

Communities consultant from Guardian Energy to get an update on the Town's projects. M. Webber has a meeting with M. Rabinsky on Thursday, March 18th.

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

8. **Adjournment** – *M. Biagini made a motion to adjourn at 8:41 pm – seconded by J. Levesque –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes –*** *Motion carries*

Respectfully submitted,
Noelle M. Pandell

Approved: August 17, 2021