# TOWN OF CHESHIRE

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN


## Meeting Minutes – March 30, 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
Erika Snyder, HVRSD
Aaron Dean, HVRSD

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

**M. Francesconi opened the meeting at 6:31 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 16, 2021 and March 23, 2021**
   *M. Biagini made a motion to accept the minutes from March 16, 2021 as presented – seconded by J. Levesque –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carries****.*

   *J. Levesque made a motion to accept the minutes from March 23, 2021 as presented – seconded by M. Francesconi –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carries****.*

2. **School Budget Presentations with Finance Committee**
   a. **McCann Technical School** – J. Brosnan was present via Go-To-Meeting; J. Brosnan presented the Northern Berkshire Vocational Regional School District's budget noting that Cheshire's overall assessment is $499,250, which is a decrease from last year. Discussion followed. J. Brosnan left the Go-To-Meeting.

   b. **Hoosac Valley Regional School District** – E. Snyder and A. Dean were both present at the meeting; E. Snyder reviewed the budget noting that the total assessment for Cheshire is $2,790,484, which is a decrease from last year. A**.** Dean explained the impact that COVID-19 had on student academic growth, what the core budget provides and what grant resources will allow the school district to do. He said the bottom line is the Cheshire assessment decreased 1.04% or -$27,146**.** Discussion followed. E. Snyder and A. Dean left the meeting.

3. **Budget**
   a. **Budget discussion recap and draft budget review** – Tabled to next Tuesday.

4. **Department Reports**
   a. **Interim Town Administrator** – M. Webber reported the following:
      - Chesterfield and Williamsburg are looking for a Town Administrator; Chesterfield posted the position at 32 hours and $52K. A brief discussion followed.
      - Building permit has been issued for old water department building demolition and for the E. Harbor Road solar project.
      - Back in the October, the Town was awarded a $32K grant; the Town received the money in December and we now have to get the plan done. M. Webber spoke to an engineering firm from the state's list of accepted vendors, and they are available to do the plan, which is supposed to be done by June 30th.
      - He is meeting with J. Tremblay will be meeting to go over general FY '22 budget items on Thursday.

5. **Old Business**

   **a. Update regarding Town Administrator Search**

   M. Webber said he received two responses from people interested in sitting on the search committee plus himself and J. Tremblay; we still need one more person. M. Francesconi suggested asking Special Town Counsel to sit on the committee and the Board agreed. She will ask Special Town Counsel and also put out one public plea. Next Tuesday the Board will vote.

   - He had a conversation with the Town's Green Communities vendor, Guardian Energy; they conducted surveys and energy audits of town facilities a while ago and a list of properties and projects were identified. We have about $130K of funding that has to be spent before we can apply for the next round which will be later this fall. We discussed the Fire Station boiler and he told them that he would report back in a week or two.

     There are two urgent projects that need to be scheduled in the next few weeks; they are LED lighting change overs in the Town Hall and Community Center; both of which will be paid for out of the grant. Discussion followed.

   - According to DPH, 68% of Cheshire residents between 65 and 74 and 98% 75 or over have received at least their first dose of the vaccine; this places Cheshire on the upper end compared to other Berkshire communities.

6. **New Business**
   a. **Review and possible decision on field usage request from Northern Berkshire Youth Lacrosse**
   M. Francesconi said that the coaches talked and worked out a plan for using the field. Following a brief discussion, *J. Levesque made a motion to approve the field usage request from the Northern Berkshire Youth Lacrosse – seconded by M. Biagini –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – motion carries***

   b. **Discussion and potential decision regarding Flag Day proposal by the Council on Aging**
   *M. Francesconi made a motion to approve the Flag Day proposal by the Council on Aging – seconded by J. Levesque* – M. Biagini said he wants to make sure the Board of Health is contacted to make sure guidelines are followed – ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – motion carries***

   c. **Appointment – Council on Aging Aide: Brenda Caufield**
   *J. Levesque made motion to appointment Brenda Caufield as Council on Aging Aide – seconded by M. Francesconi –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – motion carries***

   d. **Appointment – Council on Aging Van Driver: Anne Mare Furey**
   *M. Biagini made a motion to appoint Anne Mare Furey as Council on Aging Van Driver – seconded by J. Levesque –* ***Roll Call Vote – Three members yes – M. Francesconi abstained – motion carries***

7. **Public Comment Period**
   **Gary Trudeau** asked about the accusations made by Ben Garner and said he was upset that he was allowed to make slanderous statements. M. Francesconi said that the Board is looking into the matter and we cannot discuss this any further. Mr. Trudeau said he plans to go to the Attorney General and the Secretary of State regarding this matter.

   **J. Guerino** asked if the Board would be adjourning after the Executive Sessions and M. Francesconi said yes.

   **Peter Traub** asked if the two positions were approved and M. Francesconi said yes both positions were approved as well as the Flag day proposal pending Board of Health approval.

8. **Announcements from Board Members**
   **M. Biagini** asked when we started to put the department name into the Executive Session notice; M. Francesconi said that we always put the department name in the notice. A brief discussion followed.

   **J. Levesque** asked if there was an update on the money the Town is slated to receive from the latest stimulus plan; M. Webber said that he has not heard anything more.

   **R. DeAngelis** said he received call from a business in town that they have had no response from the Town for their signs, which they wanted for their grand opening. R. DeAngelis said there needs to be a way to approve these requests when departments don't meet. Following some discussion, M. Francesconi suggested putting this topic on the agenda for next week. Board members agreed.

   **M. Francesconi** stated that there is a public flyer being distributed that states she is related to the Biagini Family. She publicly stated for the record that she is not related to the Biagini Family.

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

***10.*** **Executive Session**: *M. Francesconi made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual (Animal Control Officer) – seconded by J. Levesque –* ***Roll Call Vote – All Members yes – motion carries***

***11.*** **Executive Session**: *M. Francesconi made a motion to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual (Town Clerk) – seconded by J. Levesque –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – motion carries***

***12.*** **Adjournment** – *M. Biagini made a motion to adjourn at 9:49 pm – seconded by M. Francesconi –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carries***

Respectfully submitted,
*Noelle M. Pandell*