TOWN OF CHESHIRE

80 CHURCH STREET | CHESHIRE, MASSACHUSETTS 01225
PHONE (413) 743-1690 | FAX (413) 743-0389

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Meeting Minutes – April 20, 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
Christine Emerson, Town Clerk

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

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 minutes from prior meeting(s)**
   M. Biagini made a motion to approve the minutes dated March 30, 2021 as presented – seconded by J. Levesque – ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carried***

   M. Biagini made a motion to approve the minutes dated April 6, 2021 as presented – seconded by J. Levesque – ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carried***

2. **FY22 Budget**
   a. **Discussion regarding Elections & Registrations Budget**
      C. Emerson was present at the meeting and she distributed an adjusted budget and noted the following changes:
      - Dog License Expense decreased by $100
      - Assistant Town Clerk $10K; she plans to teach the job so when she retires, there will be someone who knows the job;

- Board of Registrars was decreased by $2K
- Elections was decreased to $2K; per J. Levesque's inquiry, she put together a rough schedule for the next 3-years.
- Vital statistics line item was removed;

Discussion followed regarding the Assistant Town Clerk position that is not in the draft budget; *M. Biagini made a motion to add the Assistant Town Clerk position to the budget with a salary of $10K – seconded by M. Francesconi –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carried***

There was additional discussion about adding warrant articles to this year's Town Meeting warrant to make the positions of Tax Collector and Town Clerk appointed positions instead of elected positions; *M. Francesconi made a motion to add a warrant article to the Town Meeting Warrant to change the Town Clerk's position from an elected position to an appointed position as of 2024 – seconded by M. Biagini –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carried***

M. Francesconi made a motion to add a warrant article to the Town Meeting Warrant to change the Tax Collector's position from an elected position to an appointed position as of 2024 – seconded by M. Biagini – ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carried***

b. Discussion regarding Library Budget

C. Emerson submitted a new Library budget and advised that the figures presented have been reviewed with the Board of Library Commissioners. C. Emerson noted the following changes to the budget:

- CW Mars yearly fee was decreased by $1K because they received a grant to reduce fees for libraries;
- Salary increased because a new Library Director needs to be hired;
- New books increased by $600;
- Expenses increased by $100;
- Education increased by $50 for the new Library Director

Discussion followed.

c. Draft budget update with the Finance Committee

J. Tremblay said that the Town Accountant told him the cost of utilities at the Cheshire Elementary School is $40K and it was about the same for FY20. Following some discussion, it was agreed to leave $45K in for Cheshire Elementary School Utilities.

There was also discussion regarding the Special Repairs to Town Buildings line item; M. Francesconi suggested shifting $25K from Cheshire Elementary School Utilities to the Special Repairs to Town Buildings for a total of $75K. This will cover the projects that we know needs to be done at Town Hall. J. Tremblay said that this a reactive way to deal with these items and it is not ideal. He said thinks we need to articulate clearly what the money is for. Warrant articles should include projects and quotes.

J. Tremblay felt that something needs to be said at the start of Town Meeting regarding the $75K for Special Repairs to Town Buildings because the more the taxpayers know the better. Additional discussion followed.

3. **Department Reports**
   a. **Interim Town Administrator** – M. Webber gave the following update:
      - Regarding the COVID Relief funds, municipalities have been instructed to make sure their SAM and DUNS registrations are current and active; we are current on both.
      - He is registered for an MMA sponsored webinar tomorrow entitled "American Rescue Plan Act: A Deeper Dive into Municipal Funding Opportunities" which may provide more details.
      - The treasurer asked that the Board sign a State House Note renewal for the grader at .390% annual;
      - Hopes to set up a meeting next week for the TA Screening Committee; this would be an organizational/meet and greet meeting and general discussion. Applications are due April 30th.
      - Robin in the Assessor's office did an independent calculation of our levy limit position, which based on the current budget, shows us about $55K over the levy limit. As a result, M. Webber recommends using $75K of available free cash to reduce the tax rate and get us under the levy limit.
      - After using $75K of free cash, we would have about $458K in available free cash. M. Webber said we need to revisit the short list of items previously discussed seeking a free cash appropriation for the upcoming Annual Town Meeting. It is recommended to leave a minimum of $200K in free cash going forward to next year.

4. **Old Business**
   a. **Update regarding Town Administrator Search**
   M. Webber noted that he has not received any new resumes since the first couple of days of the position being posted.

   b. **Appointment of Core Team for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program**
   J. Levesque made a motion to appoint the new Town Administrator once hired to the MVP Core Team – seconded by R. DeAngelis – ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carried***

   J. Levesque made a motion to appoint the Highway Superintendent Robert Navin to the MVP Core Team – seconded by R. DeAngelis – ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carried***

   J. Levesque made a motion to appoint Conservation Commission member Raymond Killeen to the MVP Core Team – seconded by M. Biagini – ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carried***

   J. Levesque made a motion to appoint Fire Chief Thomas Francesconi to the MVP Core Team – seconded by R. DeAngelis – ***Roll Call Vote – Three members yes – M. Francesconi abstained - Motion carried***

   J. Levesque made a motion to appoint Emergency Management Corey Swistak to the MVP Core Team – seconded by R. DeAngelis – ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carried***

   M. Webber said he would let Carrieann Petrik know that the Core Team has been appointment.

5. **New Business**
   a. **Discussion and approval of Town Election Warrant**

Town Clerk, C. Emerson, reported that the Town Election is on May 3, 2021 from 9 am to 7 pm at the Community Senior Center. Positions on the ballot include:

2 Selectmen, each for a 3-year term
1 Assessor, 3-year term
1 Board of Health member, 3-year term
1 Tax Collector, 3-year term
1 Town Clerk, 3-year term
1 Water Commissioner, 3-year term
1 Water Commissioner, 1-year term
1 Cemetery Commissioner, 3-year term
1 Planning Board member, 5-year term
1 Planning Board member, 4-year term
1 Planning Board member, 1-year term
1 HVRSD School Committee member – Cheshire, 3-year term
1 HVRSD School Committee member – Adams, 3-year term

b. Appointment: Planning Board (vacant seat – regular member) – Aaron Singer
Donna DeFino requested that Aaron Singer be appointed to the Planning Board for 2-weeks and 1 day. D. DeFino said that the Planning Board is trying to finish up their work before the election and having one additional member will ensure that they have a quorum. Discussion followed – *J. Levesque made a motion to appoint, based on the recommendation of D. DeFino, Aaron Singer to the Planning Board for two weeks and one day – seconded by R. DeAngelis* – M. Webber stated that this vote needs to be a joint vote with the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board ***– Roll Call Vote – 3 members yes, M. Francesconi abstained*** **and D. DeFino yes – Motion carried**

6. Public Comment Period
M. Francesconi confirmed with P. Traub that the next meeting with the Lake District is on April 29th at 6:30 pm at the Cheshire Elementary School building. P. Traub confirmed.

7. Announcements from Board Members
M. Francesconi recommended shifting the Town Hall opening date to June or July 1st; after a brief discussion, the Board agreed to push the opening to June 1st.

M. Francesconi thanked Gary Trudeau and Mickey Biagini for the demolition of the Water Department building.

R. DeAngelis said there has to be a way to undo the lifetime appointment of the Harbor Master; it should really be someone local. R. DeAngelis said that he would follow-up if someone had a contact. M. Webber said that he has the name of who should be contacted.

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

9. **Adjournment** – *M. Biagini made a motion to adjourn at 8:23 pm – seconded by J. Levesque –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes –*** *Motion carried*

Respectfully submitted,
Noelle M. Pandell