TOWN OF CHESHIRE

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Meeting Minutes – May 11, 2021

Members Present:	Michelle Francesconi, Chair Jason Levesque, Emergency Services Liaison Shawn McGrath Mark Biagini, Clerk
Members Absent:	Raymond Killeen
Others absent:	Mark Webber, Interim Town Administrator
Others Present:	Noelle M Pandell, Interim Administrative Assistant
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. **Re-organization of the Board of Selectmen**
   a. **Elect Chairman**
   b. **Elect Clerk**
   c. **Discussion regarding additional Board roles and meeting time**

   M. Biagini made a motion to postpone the re-organization of the Board until next week when all selectmen are present – seconded by J. Levesque – ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carries***

2. **To Hear and Act on Minutes from Prior Meeting(s)**
   M. Biagini made a motion to approve the minutes dated April 13, 2021 as presented and the minutes dated April 20, 2021 as presented – seconded by J. Levesque – ***Roll call Vote – All members yes – Motion carries***

3. FY22 Budget

a. General Review

M. Francesconi said that M. Webber added the new Assistant Town Clerk and the new Assistant Tax Collector positions and also the new full-time Town Administrator position. There was some discussion between the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee. J. Tremblay mentioned a study of town building needs and S. McGrath questioned whether anything had been done toward that. M. Francesconi said that there was discussion about having a town meeting article to allocate some free cash for this, but she didn't know if M. Webber had done that or not.

M. Francesconi also noted that since OSHA is now involved in fire services, the Fire Chief obtained a quote to fix the current floor in the fire station to meet OSHA standards. She also advised that the Board was looking at where money had been budgeted but not all the money was spent. It was suggested to have department heads look at their budgets and determine if they need all that they budgeted for and if not, ask them to only budget for what they need.

The Board noted that last year there was a salary discussion to align some of the big salaries with other towns, which resulted in a 6% increase for a few positions. In this budget all town employees are receiving a 2% increase except the part-time police officers, the police chief, and the fire chief, all of which were determined to be grossly underpaid.

J. Tremblay said that an up-to-date capital investment spreadsheet is in the shared drive for the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee.

b. Discussion regarding money appropriated for engineering costs (requested by the Highway Superintendent) M. Francesconi said that R. Navin discussed appropriating $15K with M. Webber. She said we could leave it at $15K for now and reassess or do a warrant article to appropriate ore money. After a brief discussion, it was decided to discuss this more next week.

c. Discussion regarding Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles

J. Levesque said that he feels there needs to be a recall process to remove an elected official who is not working out. He drafted a draft warrant article and sent it to M. Webber.

J. Tremblay said there had been discussion about doing a warrant article to change the order of elections and the Annual Town Meeting. He said he knew of another town that had elections before the Annual Town Meeting, but the elected officials do not take office until July 1st. He said this is something the Board of Selectmen could consider. J. Tremblay said he sent a warrant article to M. Francesconi; he said he will also send it to M. Webber. Following a brief discussion, M. Francesconi said she will ask M. Webber to have a list of warrant articles for the Board next week.

M. Francesconi noted that there is going to be a larger upfront cost to get us up-to-date on IT issues. She said that Retrofit does not have a service contract and we cannot continue to do things internally. She said she contacted Retrofit and asked them to give us a price for what needs to be done. M. Francesconi said she has a call tomorrow with Retrofit, who will send out two engineers to review what is needed. Retrofit is recommending that we consider going with Office365, which would be covered through CARES Act money. She said we have money left from CARES Act funding that can be used through December 31, 2021. A brief discussion followed; M. Francesconi said that she would keep the Board posted.

4. **Old Business**

a. Update regarding Town Administrator Search

In M. Webber's absence, J. Tremblay, a member of the Search Committee, advised that they had their first meeting in Executive Session. He said they are in the process of vetting the candidates; they might need another week and the Board of Selectmen was okay with that. J. Tremblay said they are meeting again tomorrow night.

5. **New Business**

a. License Approval – Class II Dealers License – Berkshire Van Company, 1191 West Mountain Road

M. Francesconi said that a special permit was granted by the Planning Board for Dylan and Stephanie Rapisarda to modify vans at their property to turn them into camper vans. Now the Board needs to vote on giving them a Class II Dealer's License. M. Francesconi said they will be doing less than 11 vans per year and there will be no store front. After a brief discussion, *M. Francesconi made a motion to approve the Class II Dealer's License for Dylan and Stephanie Rapisarda – seconded by M. Biagini –* ***Roll Call Vote – All Members yes – Motion carries***

b. Discussion regarding condemning houses and vermin – M. Francesconi tabled this discussion because the Board of Health met last night but she does not know what happened at that meeting.

c. Discussion regarding the Cemetery Grounds Crew openings

M. Francesconi said that the jobs were posted, and they were asked to send applications to M. Webber; she said she will check with M. Webber to see if he received any applications. Discussion followed – S. McGrath asked if they needed to be 18 years old to work at the cemetery and, if not, why don't we have an agreement with the high school to have high school students work; M. Francesconi said this was something to look into.

d. Discussion and potential decision regarding Police Department phone line improvements

M. Francesconi had a discussion with the Police Chief about getting the Police Department's phone lines to dispatch. She said the only cost would be the cost to run the phone lines. If the phone lines go to dispatch, then that would eliminate the cruiser cell phone and the phone line running to the Chief's personal residence . Following discussion, *M. Francesconi made a motion to allow the Police Chief to move forward with this process – seconded by J. Levesque –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carries***

e. Discussion and potential decision on the location of the Annual Town Meeting

Town Meeting June 14, 2021. M. Francesconi also advised that the COA was concerned with the date of the Annual Town Meeting because it is Flag Day. She spoke with Bob Balawender, and he said they would change their date for the flag ceremony if necessary. After a brief discussion, *M. Francesconi made a motion to hold the Annual Town Meeting in the gym at Hoosac Valley High School – seconded by M. Biagini –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carries***

f. Discussion regarding the appointment process

There was discussion regarding the process for the annual appointments and the Board agreed to review all of the annual appointments at once and set aside the ones the Board wishes to discuss. The board will review the annual appointments on May 25, 2021.

M. Francesconi said the Board needs the final budget draft next week, so we need the draft by Thursday. We also need the final draft of the warrant articles. A brief discussion followed – S. McGrath said that these documents need to be accessible to the townspeople.

g. Discussion and potential decision regarding in-person meetings

There was discussion about going back to in-person meetings; everyone agreed that there was enough space in the Green Room to social distance so they agreed to going back to in-person meetings, but they all felt that Go-To-Meeting should continue as well. *M. Francesconi made a motion to hold in-person meetings starting May 18, 2021 – seconded by S. McGrath –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carries***

6. Public Comment Period

Gene Gebarowski asked when the Annual Town Meeting is and M. Francesconi said June 14, 2021, at 6:30 pm in the gym at Hoosac Valley High School. He also asked if the dishwasher for the COA was a line item in the budget, and M. Francesconi said that it was.

Peter Traub expressed concerns about the Veteran's Senior Work Off Program. M. Francesconi explained the process and that they then contacted the departments to see who was interested in utilizing them and the only department that responded was the COA. A brief discussion followed.

Terry Miller questioned that the Board of Selectmen did not want the Board of Heath to condemn buildings; M. Francesconi explained that historically the Board of Selectmen did not want the Board of Health to condemn buildings as it is costly to the Town. M. Francesconi further explained that the discussion was tabled tonight because the Board of Selectmen doesn't know what the Board of Health discussed at their meeting regarding the topic. A brief discussion followed and M. Francesconi said that this discussion will be on the Board of Selectmen's agenda next week.

7. Announcements from Board Members

M. Biagini said he would see the Town Clerk to see where the general laws are because they need to be approved at the Annual Town Meeting.

M. Biagini asked if the Animal Control Officer position would be posted and M. Francesconi asked how the Board felt about having the position fall under the Police Department; the Board agreed that it made sense to put it under the Police. M. Francesconi will discuss it with the Police Chief.

M. Biagini also advised that the Wire Inspector has a backup inspector, but he is now asking for a backup inspector to the backup inspector. He said if they are out of town, he does not want to hold up contractors. M. Francesconi said she thinks two backups is not acceptable; she said there should be someone in the position who is available. The Board discussed the situation and noted that the Wire Inspector salary had increased significantly to account for the increase in solar inspections but there was no way to hold people accountable. S. McGrath said there needs to be structure around what the position entails like a job description. M. Francesconi asked the Board members to brainstorm and send ideas to M. Webber for discussion next week.

M. Biagini asked why there hasn't been a Highway Department update or Police Department update in a while; M. Francesconi said it is because of the budget meetings. She said she can ask them to start providing updates again.

M. Francesconi suggested that the Board start to meet bi-weekly and hold workshop meetings as needed.

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

9. **Adjournment** – *M. Biagini made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 pm – seconded by J. Levesque – **Roll Call Vote – All members yes –** Motion carried*

Respectfully submitted, *Noelle M. Pandell*