TOWN OF CHESHIRE

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Meeting Minutes – May 18, 2021

Members Present: Michelle Francesconi, Chair
Jason Levesque, Emergency Services Liaison
Shawn McGrath
Raymond Killeen
Mark Biagini, Clerk

Others absent: Mark Webber, Interim Town Administrator
Noelle M Pandell, Interim Administrative Assistant
Robert Navin, Highway Department
Dick Scholtz

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

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

Ms. Francesconi noted that this is the first hybrid meeting with in-person attendance as well as Go-To-Meeting.

Ms. Francesconi acknowledged the members of the Board present at the meeting.

1. **Re-organization of the Board of Selectmen**
   a. **Elect Chairman**
   J. Levesque made a motion to appoint M. Francesconi as Chairman – seconded by S. McGrath – R. Killeen stated that he felt the senior person on the Board should be the Chairman – following some discussion - ***Roll Call Vote – three members yes – M. Biagini abstained - Motion carried***

   b. **Elect Clerk**
   R. Killeen made a motion to appoint J. Levesque as Clerk – seconded by M. Francesconi – ***Roll Call Vote – all members yes – Motion carried***

   c. **Discussion regarding additional Board roles and meeting time**
   There was discussion about the liaison positions and whether there is a need for them. It was noted that all Board members should circulate through departments, so they all know what is going on. Following additional discussion, *M. Francesconi made a motion to eliminate the liaison positions – seconded by J. Levesque –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carried***

2. **To Hear and Act on Minutes from Prior Meeting(s)**
   The minutes of April 27, 2021 was tabled since not all of the Board members received them due to an issue with the email system.

3. **Department Reports**
   a. **Highway Superintendent** – R. Navin gave an update on what the Highway Department has been working on such as spring cleanup and blacktop patching, which is in good shape. Street grading has been delayed due to the rain. R. Navin reported that the truck he ordered in November is still on backorder. R. Navin said he has two projects out to bid: Rt. 116 and chip sealing. Bids are due May 27, 2021. The process will be that M. Webber will open the bids with R. Navin present and then R. Navin will bring the bids to the Board the following week.

      R. Navin also advised that he is waiting to hear on a grant for an engineer on the culvert underneath Lanesboro Road. He said if he does not get the grant, we will have to look for money next year. Discussion followed.

   b. **Town Administrator** – M. Webber advised that the PILOT agreement for the solar project has been settled between the consultant and their attorney. Town Counsel now has it to review. Prior to M. Webber coming back, M. Francesconi said she had asked to see the PILOT agreement but never received it. She asked for the agreement to be distributed to the Board members and put on next week's agenda.

      M. Webber advised that the Highway contract negotiations have started; they are asking for a 1-year extension of the current agreement and a 2% salary increase.

4. **Old Business**
   a. **Update regarding Town Administrator Search**
      i. **Report from the Town Administrator Screening Committee**
      M. Webber advised that the Search Committee met for the second time last week and narrowed it down to three finalists. The Board can interview the candidates during the first week in June, but an offer cannot be made until after Town Meeting. The interviews are public and will be 45-minutes each. M. Webber will draft interview questions for the Board. After a brief discussion, the Board agreed to conduct interviews on June 3, 2021, starting at 6:00 pm.

   b. **Discussion regarding rodent concerns –** Jan, a resident at 61 E Main Street, expressed concerns about a rat problem at his house and other neighbors' houses as a result of housing that should be condemned. He said he never had rats until this year. He said a resident spent about $1K on pest control. Another resident, Terry Miller also expressed concern about two vacant houses across from her house on Main Street. She said the Commonwealth of MA Neighborhood Renewal Divisions works with cities and towns to look at houses that look abandoned but are just delinquent by the owners. Following some discussion, it was noted that the Board needs a report from the Board of Health. It was suggested that the Board of Health be invited to come to a Selectmen's meeting.

   c. **Discussion regarding appointment process** – There was discussion about reaching to people who hold positions to see if they are still interested in serving. Everyone agreed to go through the list next week and approve all that are unanimous.

d. **Discussion regarding progress of Town bylaws** – M. Francesconi said that the draft bylaws came back from Town Counsel and went to the Town Clerk, but she wasn't sure why they were not sent to the Board of Selectmen. M. Webber said he will check on this. M. Francesconi noted that there is no legal requirement to have the bylaws approved at this Town Meeting.

5. **New Business**
   a. **Discussion and potential decision regarding Memorial Day** – M. Francesconi said that as of May 29th, Governor Baker's lifts all restrictions. Last year we had a small ceremony at Town Hall. Discussion followed and it was suggested to bring back the parade. *J. Levesque made a motion to bring back the parade for Memorial Day – seconded by R. Killeen –* ***Roll Call Vote – All members yes – Motion carried.***

   b. **Discussion and potential decision regarding basketball court reservations at former elementary school** – There was discussion about having court reservations for pickleball, basketball, etc. It was decided to use the same process as used for the field usage; we could make a court usage form.

   c. **Appoint – Conservation Commission: Ronald DeAngelis** – *R. Killeen made a motion to appoint Ron DeAngelis to the Conservation Commission – seconded by M. Biagini –* ***Roll Call Vote – All Members yes – Motion carried***

6. **FY 22 Budget**
   a. **Final draft review** – M. Webber briefly reviewed the budget and noted that the total budget is $6.7M. J. Tremblay asked for a copy of the updated draft budget and M. Francesconi said she would send it to him.

      M. Francesconi said she met with the representative and engineer from Retrofit and went building to building to look at our IT infrastructure. She said a bare minimum backup is essential. She said we really need to invest in our IT infrastructure. Retrofit should submit their quote by Monday. M. Francesconi explained that an upgrade to Microsoft365 can be paid for by the CARES Act money.

   b. **Review of Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles** – M. Webber reviewed the list of items for Town Meeting Articles and said he would have the article language for next week.

7. **Public Comment Period**

Gene advised that the date for the flag disposal event was changed to Sunday, June 13th in the business circle outside the Cheshire Elementary School building at 6:00 pm. He also asked if the Board heard anything from the insurance company about the bike program. M. Webber said not yet.

Jan noted that the catch basin on Church Street needs repair due to lack of inspections. He said the Town could save money and trouble over the long term if they included a competent inspector to inspect the catch basins. Discussion followed.

Dick Shultz suggested that the Board check to see which state agency owns the land where the overlook is on Wells Road that looks out to Mt. Greylock. He said the trees should be cut back so maintain the view.

8. **Announcements from Board Members**
   M. Biagini congratulated and welcomed S. McGrath and R. Killeen to the Board. He then said that the computers that were purchased for the Board need to be set up so he can get the Town email off of his phone. M. Francesconi explained that the Town email is not stored on his phone; it is stored on a server that the Town rents.

   There was discussion about R. Killeen's work schedule. R. Killeen said that it will improve, and he will be more available. The Board understood.

   M. Francesconi asked if the Board wanted to bring back the department reports; she noted that they were only stopped because the Board was spending so much time reviewing the budget. The Board felt the department reports should be brought back.

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

10. **Adjournment** – *M. Biagini made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:22 pm – seconded by J. Levesque – **Roll Call Vote – All members yes –** Motion carried*

Respectfully submitted, *Noelle M. Pandell*