TOWN OF CHESHIRE

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen & Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes – February 2, 2022

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee was held in person at 191 Church St (Cheshire Elementary School) on Wednesday February 2, 2022, at 6:30 PM.

Board of Selectmen Members Present:	Michelle Francesconi - Chair Jason Levesque, Clerk Mark Biagini Shawn McGrath (remote)
Board of Selectmen Members Absent:	Ray Killeen
Finance Committee Members Present:	John Tremblay – Chair Michael Biagini Kathy Levesque – arrived at 6:57 p.m. Denise Gregoire Lenwood "Woody" Vaspra – arrived at 6:41 p.m.
Finance Committee Members Absent:	Heather Emerson
Others Present:	Jennifer Morse, Town Administrator (remote); Liseann Karandisecky; Lynn Melchiori; Gene Gebarowski; Peter Traub; Brian Rhodes, I Berkshires; Eileen Quinn; Rebecca Herzog, Treasurer

Michelle Francesconi called the meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order at 6:30 p.m.
John Tremblay called the meeting of the Finance Committee to order at 6:32 p.m.

1. **Debt Exclusion Options**
   Rebecca Herzog, Treasurer joined the board to present three options for Debt Service for Fiscal Year 2023. Option 1 includes the recent borrowing for the two highway vehicles and the water project. The town does have the option of paying interest only for two years on that borrowing. Option 2 delayed the principal for one fiscal year and Option 2 delayed the principal for two fiscal years. S. McGrath suggested putting the numbers into the budget from Option 1 which can be altered as the budgeted season continues.

2. Health Insurance

Rebecca Herzog shared the FY22 current budgeted amount for health insurance (no dental) along with options for FY23 which included a 75/25 split and an 80/20 split. She also requested that when budgeting the retiree insurance numbers be separate. There was discussion on making all employees the same across the board. Currently the highway department is at 80/20 and the remainder of the active employees are 75/25. J. Tremblay discussed the trend of increasing insurance nationwide and locally. There was an 8% increase to the health insurance but with a holiday the actual dollar amount for FY23 if the split is 75/25 will be less. J. Morse mentioned that since the COLA increase is likely to be set at 2% it would be a nice benefit for employees to increase the insurance to 80/20 siting retention of employees. R. Herzog noted that for the past four fiscal years the rates have not increased and prior to that they were higher. At this time, it will be left at 75/25 since highway union negotiations are going to commence, further discussion will happen at future joint meetings.

3. Salary Discussion

J. Morse shared that the spreadsheet includes what COLA increases would look like for employees at 2%, 2.5%, 3% and a $.75 per hour increase. It was decided to review the increases line by line and discuss the higher requests with the departments when they have budget hearings.

Admin. to the Boards is a new position, draft job description was presented to the boards. The position would encompass work of the various boards and committees. There was discussion on retaining a scribe for the boards who currently have a clerk.

Highway Department Foreman is a position that the highway had in the past. There was discussion regarding a four-man crew and the need for a foreman.

Highway Mechanic/Equipment Operator – Discussion on using funds for training for all the department members, also concerns about computerized systems and warranties on new equipment.

Treasurer - Discussion on the need to increase the pay for the position to make it more competitive and to reflect the amount of work and knowledge needed for the position. J. Morse mentioned that she knows of several communities who have been unable to hire a Treasurer/Collector and will provide the boards will salary information.

Council on Aging Director – Discussion on the job being more detailed than the current job description and the need to review.

Police Department - Discussion on the Bridge Academy and training requirements. It was noted that the Town is losing a great part time chief and has been spoiled by the level of dedication by the current Chief. There was discussion regarding the state police and coverage as well as baseline town coverage. It was suggested that the town look into a shared services agreement with another community. S. McGrath would like to see baseline coverage and then regionalization for part time officers. M. Francesconi noted that the proposal includes a large salary that would be for a fulltime department with larger staff and vehicle numbers. It was agreed to investigate shared services options for the town for both Police and Fire.

Fire Department - M. Francesconi left the room for the discussion. M. Biagini would like to see a stipend or hourly pay for fire fighters. There was discussion on retention and recruitment, J. Morse will talk to the Chief about pay for the volunteer fire fighters and possible regionalization.

Boards and Committee Stipends will be frozen at FY22 rates. All employees other than those mentioned above will receive a 2% COLA increase.

4. **Capital Requests**
   J. Morse will compile the requests into a spreadsheet for discussion at the next meeting.

Finance Committee Adjournment: *A motion was made by Michael Biagini and seconded by Denise Gregoire to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 8:22 p.m.*
Roll Call Vote: J. Tremblay – Yes, Kathy Levesque- Yes, Michael Biagini – Yes, Woody – Yes, Denise Gregoire- Yes
Motion Carries: 5-0

a. **Unanticipated Business**
   J. Morse received an application on Monday for a one-day liquor license for the Cheshire Rod and Gun Club for Saturday February 5, 2022.
   A motion was made by M. Francesconi and seconded by M. Biagini to approve the one-day liquor license for Cheshire Rod and Gun Club for Saturday February 5, 2022.
   Roll Call Vote: M. Francesconi – Yes, J. Levesque- Yes, S. McGrath – Yes, M. Biagini – Yes
   Motion Carries- 4-0

Board of Selectmen Adjournment: *A motion was made by M. Biagini and seconded by J. Levesque to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.*
Roll Call Vote: M. Francesconi – Yes, J. Levesque- Yes, S. McGrath – Yes, M. Biagini – Yes
Motion Carries- 4-0

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Morse
Town Administrator
February 7, 2022

Document List
1. Agenda 2/2/22
2. Debt Services Options
3. Health Insurance Options
4. Salary Spreadsheet
5. COA Wage Information
6. Admin to the Boards Job Description
7. Highway Foreman Job Description

Approved:
Board of Selectmen – 2/16/22
Finance Committee – 2/16/22