TOWN OF CHESHIRE

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Meeting Minutes – February 9, 2022

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held in person at 191 Church St (Cheshire Elementary School) on Wednesday February 9, 2022, at 6:30 PM.

Members Present: Michelle Francesconi - Chair
Jason Levesque, Clerk
Mark Biagini
Ray Killeen (remote)
Shawn McGrath

Others Present: Jennifer Morse, Town Administrator; Liseann Karandisecky; Francis Willett; Lynn Melchiori; Gene Gebarowski; John Tremblay; Peter Traub; Art Kaufman.

Michelle Francesconi called the meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order at 6:30 p.m.

Summary of Votes Taken:

- Vote to award contract for Herbicide Treatment of Hoosac Lake to the Pond and Lake Connection
- Vote to end State of Emergency for COVID -19 in Town of Cheshire
- Vote to request Capital Planning Assistance from BRPC as part of the DLTA Program 2022
- Vote to appoint Ryan Contenta as Alternate Building Commissioner
- Vote to approve the consent agenda
- Vote to approve the 2022 IRS mileage reimbursement rate of $.585
- Vote to adjourn

1. **Discussion/Decision Items**

a. **Police Department – Fulltime Training (Use of ARPA funds)** – Tabled to February 23, 2022

b. **Contract for Herbicide Treatment of Hoosac Lake**

Liseann Karandisecky (Prudential Committee Chair) and Francis Willett (Prudential Committee Member) joined the board to discuss the contract. J. Morse started by sharing that the Request for Proposals brought in two proposals one from the Pond and Lake Connection and one from Solitude. Pond and Lake Connection was chosen due to the lower bid amount and the references provided. Francis thanked the Town Administrator for her support sharing that the Solitude bid was dramatically higher than the Pond and Lake Connection bid and that the end of the year report from Solitude showed no progress with the weeds, the Prudential Committee is prepared to move forward with the Pond and Lake Connection. Permitting is underway and the Prudential Committee is working on filing a new NOI with the Conservation Commission. There was discussion about the weeks in the second lake and treatment for water chestnuts.

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by M.Biagini to award the contract to the Pond and Lake Connection.

Roll Call Vote: S. McGrath- Yes, J. Levesque – Yes, M. Biagini – Yes, R. Killeen – Yes, M. Francesconi – Yes

Motion Carries: 5-0

c. Vote to end State of Emergency due to COVID-19

A motion was made by M. Francesconi and seconded by J. Levesque to end the State of Emergency due to COVID -19 in the Town of Cheshire

Roll Call Vote: S. McGrath- Yes, J. Levesque – Yes, M. Biagini – Yes, R. Killeen – Yes, M. Francesconi – Yes

Motion Carries: 5-0

d. Telecom/5G Restrictions – Zoning

M Francesconi would like to start a conversation with the Planning Board regarding 5G due to the unknown health risks and wildlife concerns. Peter Traub, Planning Board was in the audience, and he shared that BRPC had a seminar recently and that some communities have restrictions in place. The Planning Board will put this on the next agenda

e. Personnel Manual – Benefits Sections

The benefits section was reviewed, and the board would like to investigate the use of PTO time instead of sick days and a shortly accumulations time. Discussion on union negotiations and trying to negotiate less accumulated sick time. S. McGrath would like the policy to be consistent. J. Morse will get a legal opinion about PTO vs. sick for a future meeting.

f. DLTA Program through BRPC – Planning request for "Housing Assessment"

Peter Traub shared that the Planning Board is requesting a Housing Assessment since it has been on the table for years and is in the master plan. Mr. Traub explained that housing is a large issue in the county, and this would address housing needs for seniors and lower income families.

M Francesconi felt that financial issues are at the forefront right now and that the town has inadequate capital planning which was discussed during her interview this week with the Department of Revenue, M. Biagini agreed. S. McGrath noted that the board keep talking about priorities and needs to create a working document with the various projects that are currently in progress and needed in the future to prioritize. Discussion on the amount of work/grants on the desk of the Town Administrator and the need for a Grant Policy. J. Morse will send a list of all the projects in progress and grants to the board.

A motion was made by M. Francesconi and seconded by M. Biagini to apply for Capital Planning through the DLTA program at BRPC.

Roll Call Vote: S. McGrath- Yes, J. Levesque – Yes, M. Biagini – Yes, R. Killeen – Yes, M. Francesconi – Yes

Motion Carries: 5-0

g. BRPC Proposal for Zoning Bylaw Amendments

J. Morse shared that the proposal has been received from BRPC for the Community Compact Zoning Bylaw Grant and work will begin with the Planning Board on the project.

i. Appointment – Alternate Building Commissioner – Ryan Contenta

M Francesconi shared that she had met with Building Commissioner Travis Fachini, Mr. Contenta, and the Town Administrator regarding the appointment. Mr. Contenta is a Building Commissioner in the town of Williamstown and will be available in Mr. Fachini' s absences, for support and when conflicts arise.

A motion was made by M. Biagini and seconded by M. Francesconi to appoint Ryan Contenta as Alternate Building Commissioner

Roll Call Vote: S. McGrath- Yes, J. Levesque – Yes, M. Biagini – Yes, R. Killeen – Yes, M. Francesconi – Yes
Motion Carries: 5-0

j. Meeting Schedule

Discussion on the meeting dates moving forward since three members have a conflict with Wednesday meetings will go back to Tuesday evenings beginning March 1, 2022.

2. Consent Agenda

A motion was made by M. Francesconi and seconded by S. McGrath to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Roll Call Vote: S. McGrath- Yes, J. Levesque – Yes, M. Biagini – Yes, R. Killeen – Yes, M. Francesconi – Yes
Motion Carries: 5-0

Minutes	*1/12/22 & 1/26/22*	*√ As Submitted ◯ As Amended*
Warrants	*2/9*	*√ Payroll √ Vendor*

3. Town Administrator Updates

a. **MVP/HMP Update** - J. Morse shared that the MVP Committee is making progress and will be meeting bi-monthly in preparation of the listening session scheduled for March 14th and then the May workshop. The survey is being distributed to the community this week with a deadline of March 14th. The grant deadline is June 30, 2022, and there has been discussion with MEMA about an extension to finish the project, at first MEMA was resistant to another extension but has agreed if the Town shows good progress in the next several months.

b. 2022 Mileage Reimbursement Rate $.585

A motion was made by M. Francesconi and seconded by M. Biagini to use the Federal Mileage rate of $.585 for calendar year 2022.

Roll Call Vote: S. McGrath- Yes, J. Levesque – Yes, M. Biagini – Yes, R. Killeen – Yes, M. Francesconi – Yes
Motion Carries: 5-0

c. DOR – Financial Management Review and Financial Policies

J. Morse shared that the team from the Technical Assistance Bureau was in town on Tuesday and met with board members M. Francesconi and M. Biagini. They also met with the accountant, treasurer/collector, and town administrator. There will be additional interviews with board members, assessors, and finance committee chair. J. Morse also shared that the work with UMASS Collins Center on the Financial Policies is happening rapidly, drafts are being forwarded for comments before they go to the Financial Policies committee for review.

4. Announcements from Board Members

There was discussion about the Human Resources Regional Grant that Cheshire was considering but withdrew from earlier in the week. Discussion on hiring a labor law attorney to help the town with Human Resources issues and the possibility of working with smaller towns on a shared position.

J. Levesque inquired about an agreement with Adams for the water supply, J. Morse will talk to the Assistant Assessor.

M. Francesconi brought up the Water Main break on Route 8 and congratulated everyone involved for handing the situation and a special thank you to temporary water operator Corey McGrath.

M. Francesconi brought up the article in I Berkshires regarding the School District lease, the board will discuss this further at the next meeting.

M. Francesconi mentioned that Governor Baker and DESE will end the mask mandates in school on February 28th. J. Morse shared that when she met with the Superintendent this week that the school committee will be meeting to take a vote and that the Superintendent stated that he does not plan on going against the state's recommendations.

M. Francesconi reminded board members that if they would like an item on the agenda that they should let her know.

There was discussion regarding a MEMO to boards/committee that they should not be hiring or setting pay rates without consulting with the Board of Selectmen.

5. Public Comment

Art Kaufman thanked J. Morse for doing a great job just wanting to show his expression of gratitude.

Becky Herzog inquired on salary increases stating that she had been told that boards and committees can set their own wages if there is an appropriation. J. Morse to get clarification from town counsel.

Adjournment: *A motion was made by M. Biagini and seconded by J. Levesque to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m.*

Roll Call Vote: S. McGrath- Yes, J. Levesque – Yes, M. Biagini – Yes, R. Killeen – Yes, M. Francesconi – Yes
Motion Carries: 5-0

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Morse
Town Administrator
February 17, 2022

Document List

1. Agenda 2/9/22
2. Email from Sargent Alibozek regarding Bridge Academy
3. Contract for Herbicide Treatment of Hoosac Lake
4. BRPC – DLTA information
5. BRPC Zoning Bylaw Proposal
6. Draft Minutes – January 12, 2022
7. Draft Minutes – January 26, 2022

Approved: February 23, 2022