TOWN OF CHESHIRE

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes –March 5, 2024

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held in person at 191 Church Street (Cheshire Community House) on Tuesday March 5, 2024, at 6:30 PM.

Board of Selectmen Members Present: Shawn McGrath, Chair
Jason Levesque, Vice Chair
Ray Killeen, Member
Ron DeAngelis, Member
Michelle Francesconi, Member

Others Present : Jennifer Morse, Town Administrator ; Corey McGrath, DPW Director ; Corey Swistak, EMD ; Whitney Flynn ; Peter Traub ; John Tremblay, CCA ; Art Kaufman; Lynn Melchiori

Summary of Votes:

- Vote to approve the ACS Girls Softball League facility use 5-0
- Vote to approve the CCA facility use form for the tag sale & bazaar 5-0
- Vote to approve the AC Little League facility use form 5-0
- Vote to approve the Greylock Thunder Softball facility use form 5-0
- Vote to approve the Berkshire County Youth Lacrosse facility use form 5-0
- Vote to approve Town Hall Lease/authorize Town Admin. to sign 5-0
- Vote to approve DRAFT CEMP Plan 5-0
- Vote to approve Chapter 90 Chip Sealing Project 5-0
- Vote to approve Consent Agenda as amended 5-0
- Vote to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m. 5-0

S. McGrath opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Facility Use

- ACS Girls Softball

A motion was made by M. Francesconi and seconded by J. Levesque to approve the facilities use request for the Adams Cheshire Girls softball league.

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

- Cheshire Community Association - Tag Sale & Bazaar

A motion was made by M. Francesconi and seconded by S. McGrath to approve the facilities use request for the Cheshire Community Association – Tag Sale & Bazaar

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

Motion Carries: 5-0

- Adams Cheshire Little League

Mike Benson was present to discuss the application. DPW Director Corey McGrath asked the board to consider a deposit for cleaning as the concession stand was left in disarray at the end of the last season. There was discussion about the ownership of the building. The building is on town property, however the content inside and the electricity is paid for by the little league. There was discussion about the town taking over the electric and charging the organizations that use the building a fee, it was also noted that the town has the financial responsibility of mowing the fields. After discussion it was determined that a $200 refundable deposit would be held by the town for cleaning purposes, if it is cleaned by the organization the money will be returned. The board will have further discussion about fees for utilizing the ground and facilities in the future.

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by M. Francesconi to approve the facilities use request for the Adams Cheshire Little League

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

- Greylock Thunder Softball (unanticipated business received 3/5/24)

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by R. Killeen to approve the facilities use request for Greylock Thunder Softball

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

- Berkshire County Youth Lacrosse League (unanticipated business received 3/4/24)

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by M. Francesconi to approve the facilities use request for the Berkshire County Youth Lacrosse League

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

Town Hall Lease - Grace Note Guitars

Joshua and Christy Superneau, owners of Grace Note Guitars joined the board to discuss the twelve-month lease of three rooms on the second floor of the Town Hall. These rooms are identified as the former Administrative Office, Tax Collector Office, and Assessors Storage room. The total lease per month is $775. Mr. Superneau explained that they would be open for music lessons every day but on Wednesday, they offer lessons on Tuesday evening starting at 5:30 p.m. so noise should not impact library operations. Mr. Superneau further explained that with music technology, headphones make the noise level minimal. The company offers music lessons for all ages from one year to eighty-five years. There was discussion about a $200 refundable deposit. There was discussion about the tenancy beginning as soon as possible and the Town Administrator will get the lease finalized tomorrow.

A motion was made by S. McGrath and R. DeAngelis to approve the lease as amended and authorize the Town Administrator to sign the lease on behalf of the town.

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

Draft Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan – EMD Corey Swistak

Corey Swistak, EMD joined the board to discuss the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan , he explained that this is the first update to the plan in many years. The Town Administrator mentioned that the town is

hosting a new EMD class for MEMA at the end of the month. Corey shared that once approved by town officials and MEMA the plan will be posted to the website.
A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by J. Levesque to approve the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan as submitted.
Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis – Yes; R. Killeen- Yes; J. Levesque – Yes; M. Francesconi – Yes; S. McGrath – Yes
Motion Carries: 5-0

Chapter 90 Approval – Chip Sealing Summer 2024
Corey McGrath and Corey Swistak discussed a quote obtained to rubberize chip seal Dean Street, Richmond Street, School Street and Eastview Drive. There was discussion regarding the extension of the road life by chip sealing as well as the percentage of liquid asphalt in the treatment.
A motion was made by J. Levesque and seconded by S. McGrath to approve the Chapter 90 request for the summer Chip Sealing project.
Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis – Yes; R. Killeen- Yes; J. Levesque – Yes; M. Francesconi – Yes; S. McGrath – Yes
Motion Carries: 5-0

Consent Agenda
a. Minutes – February 20, 2024
b. Warrants – Payroll and Accounts Payable
A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by J. Levesque to approve the Consent Agenda as edited.
Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis - Yes; R. Killeen – Yes; J. Levesque – Yes; M. Francesconi – Yes; S. McGrath- Yes
Motion Carries: 5-0

Discussion/Decision Items
a. Way Finding Plan – BRPC Grant Support
John Tremblay was present and discussed BRPC supporting Phase 1 of the economic development plan by filing a One Stop Grant through the Downtown Initiative to do a Way Finding Plan. The Town Administrator will reach out to Laura Brennan at BRPC.

b. Fiscal Year 2025 Budget
The Town Administrator shared that free cash has yet to be certified as the accountants/treasurer continue to close out Fiscal Year 2023, as of now the estimated free cash is $350,000 with another $109,000 being reserved until the close out is complete, the Town Administrator shared that the discrepancy needs to be found since the town utilizes free cash to stay within the tax levy.
The first draft of the budget was reviewed section by section. The deficit in the first draft of the budget is more than $461,000.

- Legal Services – Increase due to litigation with a trial in the fall of 2024.
- Longevity Compensation- For employees with five plus years of service to coincide with the highway union contract.
- Executive Assistant - In the budget for full time recognizing the need to have clerical support for the various boards and committees and town administrator. The Town Administrator noted that she realizes with the deficit this will likely not be made a full-time position in Fiscal Year 2025. The position was hired last year as Municipal Clerk and Assistant Treasurer/Collector with the intent of split being twenty- five hours for Municipal Clerk and fifteen hours for Assistant Treasurer/Collector, this has not been the case with water collections being added to the responsibility. The municipal clerk is role is currently supporting the water department and planning board; however, many boards and committees need additional administrative support.

- Assessors – Large increase in consulting services due to DOR recertification for FY25, also an update to the software.
- Assistant Treasurer/Collector – Request to make this a full-time position with five hours direct from the Water Department for water collection.
- Board of Registrars/Elections – Increase in number of elections due to Presidential Election and possible Special Election.
- Non-Departmental Expenditures - Due to the increase in Health Insurance and Retirement, also move insurances to this section.
- Police Department - Increase in pay for Sargeant position noting that this position is underpaid compared to other communities. The Town Administrator shared that there was going to be a Student Resource Officer discussion with the School District and Police Department next week. M. Francesconi mentioned that she heard that the chief would like to keep the cruiser that is due for replacement to use as a SRO vehicle, the Town Administrator shared that he would discuss this with the Board of Selectmen during budget hearings.
- Highway Department Salaries - The request is for an additional laborer position that would oversee the grounds in the summer, saving $13,000 in mowing costs for the season. The position would work along the highway department the remainder of the year. There was discussion about the hiring of DPW Director and foreman for efficiency. R. DeAngelis stated that the town has been growing the past several years and needs to take a break to determine if the positions are working the way they were designed.
- Board of Health - The Town Administrator shared that she had put a line in for Health Agent services knowing that the board needs expertise in handling condemned properties, housing issues and camp inspections. There was discussion about the stipend and the fees retained for inspections. The Town Administrator shared that the Town Clerk also retains fees for dog licensing and will investigate fees retained by board members. She also mentioned that the Board of Health needs clerical support which will be encompassed in the Executive Assistant position.
- Transfer Station - The Town Administrator shared that the UMASS Collins Center is recommending an Enterprise Fund for the transfer station. She also shared that she met with Linda Cernik and the town is losing a lot of money at the transfer station for several reasons, the demo fees are astronomical, the most in Northern Berkshire County, fees to dispose are not covering costs, the transfer station sticker (bag tags) are underpriced. A new price structure is being created for approval by the Board of Health. It was noted that in Fiscal Year 2023 there was approximately $93,000 in revenue on a $157,166 budget. There was discussion about finding another vendor for hauling as expenses continue to rise, this will be explored however it will mean that the town needs to withdraw from the Northern Berkshire Solid Waste Management District.
- Hoosac Valley Regional School District has not turned in their budget, numbers are estimated from the recent newspaper article which indicated a 5% increase for Cheshire. McCann has submitted the budget with a 3% decrease.

The Town Administrator will make the revisions to the budget, removing the additional hours from the current position and present the changes to the board at a special meeting next Tuesday. The Finance Committee will also get the budget by the end of the week and the two will meet jointly on March 19, 2024.

Town Administrator Updates

a. New Town website

The Town Administrator shared that the new website is live, it is a work in progress as content and information is added, she requested that anyone who has changes email her.

Announcements from Board Members

J. Levesque noted that the Open Space and Recreation Survey is being distributed with results being collected until mid-June.

Public Comment – None

Adjournment

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by J Levesque to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:
Jennifer Morse
March 7, 2024

Document List

1. Agenda – March 5, 2024
2. Town Facilities Use Form – ACS Girls Softball
3. Town Facilities Use Form – CCA
4. Town Facilities Use Form – AC Little League
5. Town Facilities Use Form – Greylock Thunder Softball
6. Town Facilities Use Form - Berkshire County Youth Lacrosse
7. Draft Lease – Town Hall Rental
8. Draft Minutes – February 20, 2024
9. COA – January Monthly Report
10. Highway Department Biweekly Report
11. Youth Center Inc. Agency Review
12. OSRC Survey Flyer