TOWN OF CHESHIRE

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes –March 12, 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 12, 2024, at 7:00 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 ; John Tremblay, Lynn Melchiori

S. McGrath opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Discussion/Decision Items

a. Fiscal Year 2025 Budget – DRAFT

The board reviewed the changes to the draft budget since the last meeting on March 5, 2024.

- Executive Assistant (Municipal Clerk) position was reduced to twenty hours per week.
- $6,500 was removed for Assessors upgrade AssessPro Software, this will be considered in next year's budget, the remaining increase is due to assessing services for the DOR five-year recertification. The Town Administrator shared two strategies that should be considered to elevate the impact every five years on the operating budget. First an Assessors Stabilization Account can be established by town meeting vote with money put in each year or the Assessors could go out to bid for a five-year contract that would split the total cost over the five years, five-year contracts must be approved by town meeting.
- Assistant Treasurer/Collector was reduced to twenty hours per week with five hours coming direct from the Water Department budget.
- Tax Title increase was discussed, having been a topic during the meeting earlier in the day with the UMASS Collins Center regarding Capital Planning. Overlay surplus is created when tax receivables are moved into Tax Title with a process called Tax Taking. Overlay surplus is then released by the Board of Assessors office releasing the funds to be used for projects. Numbers provided by the Collector office show that there is approximately $144,000 in outstanding receivables for which the past 3 ½ years can be rolled into tax title. The current financial policies state that the tax taking process should be happening every two years. The Board is requesting the following information from the Collector office – a full list of delinquent taxes for each fiscal year and full list of tax title taxes for each fiscal year.

- There was discussion about Debt Service including the Water Department debt which is shown annually on the DE-1 and in the Water Department Enterprise budget which is causing additional free cash yearly. More information regarding debt will be discussed at the joint meeting with the Finance Committee after this is researched in greater detail.
- There was discussion regarding free cash which was submitted to the DOR for certification over the weekend after the variance was found. There was discussion about monthly reconciliation between the Treasurer Office and Accounting Office, as well as department reconciliation, which is one of the adopted financial policies. The board requested that the Town Administrator request that the monthly reconciliation process be implemented with verification from the Treasurer Office quarterly that the process is complete.
- Health Insurance was reviewed, and numbers adjusted to actuals, currently there are 8 employees with family plans and 5 employees with single plans acknowledging that open enrollment in the late spring may change. There was discussion about looking at other health insurance options for future years.
- There was discussion about fees paid directly to certain boards and committees for inspections, licenses etc. It was noted that several years ago fees were removed from the Collector position with an increase in pay.
- Transfer Station fees and hauling costs were discussed, the Town Administrator and DPW Director continue to work with the Board of Health and Linda Cernik from NBSWMD on a fee analysis and plan to reduce waste.
- HVRSD was discussed and the Town Administrator was directed to discuss with the Superintendent a reduction to the assessment which is a 5.1% increase as the board will not support the budget as presented.

Public Comment – None

Adjournment

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by J Levesque to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:
Jennifer Morse
March 15, 2024

Document List

1. FY25 Draft Budget

Approved: March 19, 2024