TOWN OF CHESHIRE

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen
Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes –March 19, 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 19, 2024, at 6:00 PM.

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

Board of Selectmen Members Absent: Ron DeAngelis, Member

Finance Committee Members Present: John Tremblay, Chair
Denise Gregoire
Kathy Levesque (remote)
Jeff Chaput
Patrick Pettit
Mickey Biagini

Others Present : Jennifer Morse, Town Administrator ; Corey McGrath, DPW Director ; Lynn Melchiori; Peter Traub; Bob Tetlow; Ron Charbeneau (remote); I Berkshires; Rebecca Herzog; Whitney Flynn.

S. McGrath opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Consent Agenda

- Minutes – March 5, 2024 & March 12, 2024
- Accounts Payable and Payroll Warrants

A motion was made by M. Francesconi and seconded by S. McGrath to approve the consent agenda with edits to the minutes.
Roll Call Vote: R. Killeen – Yes, J. Levesque – Yes, M. Francesconi – Yes, S. McGrath- Yes
Motion Carries: 4-0

Discussion/Decision Items

a. Public Records Access Guidelines – Appoint Michael Alibozek, Tom Francesconi and Jennifer Morse

The Town Administrator shared that she had reviewed the Public Records Access Guidelines and the appointment of additional Records Access Officers with the Town Clerk. Chief Alibozek and Chief Francesconi will get their respective department records requests as they have highly confidential information.

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by J. Levesque to appoint Michael Alibozek, Tom Francesconi and Jennifer Morse as Records Access Officers.

Roll Call Vote: R. Killeen – Yes; J. Levesque- Yes; M. Francesconi – Abstain, S. McGrath- Yes
Motion Carries: 3-0-1

b. Cheshire Rod & Gun Club Liquor Licenses

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by M. Francesconi to approve the one-day liquor licenses for the Cheshire Rod and Gun Club

Roll Call Vote: R. Killeen – Yes, J. Levesque – Abstain, M. Francesconi – Yes, S. McGrath- Yes
Motion Carries: 3-0-1

The Board went into Recess until 6:30 p.m. when they will meet jointly with the Finance Committee

Rebecca Herzog inquired if she could ask a question during this time. The upgrade to Harpers Payroll is going well and the Treasurer office needs clarification on the vacation policy. She stated that the current policy allows for one week of vacation at the six-month mark, the next jump is at two-year mark, the policy currently states that all vacation time is done at the beginning of the fiscal year and the question is if the increase in time should be at the anniversary mark. There was a brief discussion, M. Francesconi stated that she wants to defer the vote to the next scheduled meeting as this was not on the agenda and it needs time to be reviewed by the board.

Joint Meeting with the Finance Committee to review Draft Budget

John Tremblay called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

HVRSD - S. McGrath shared that the board was looking for a decrease in the school assessment noting that there was a significant amount of funds being put into the budget that were previously paid for with ESSER funds, he felt that E&D money should be used to offset the sudden increase, further stating that he would like to see the increase be less than 3%. J. Levesque spoke about the minimal increases to teachers and inquired about what positions are mandated by the state as the administration feels top heavy. There was discussion about the baseline and growth, and success of the co-mingled classrooms. HVRSD will be presenting their budget on April 9, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.

Budget Review

- Legal Expenses – Due to ongoing litigation with a trial in the fall, expenses estimated by attorney.
- Longevity - S. McGrath explained the reasoning stating that is an added benefit as most salaries are behind. The program is for benefitted employees who have been with town for five years with $500 in the first year, each additional year is an additional $100, capped at $1,500 paid out in June of each fiscal year.
- Assessors - J. Morse explained the increase is due to the DOR recertification year for additional assessing services, further she spoke to the Assessors Administrator about a stabilization fund that would put money aside each year for these costs, so it doesn't affect the operating budget.
- Tax Taking - The increase is for legal fees and fees associated with tax takings, J. Morse shared that there is a revolving account set up with a little more than $6,000 in revenue this fiscal year.
- M. Francesconi gave an update on the Student Resource Officer position; she attended a meeting earlier today with the town administrator, Police Chief and Superintendent. She shared that the position would be funded with rural aid funds indefinitely.

- Transfer Station and discussion on revenue shortfalls and hauling expenses. NBSWMD Director Linda Cernick will be invited to attend a budget hearing, the DPW Director and Town Administrator continue to work with the Board of Health to review the necessity of an enterprise fund.
- Debt discussion regarding maintaining a level of debt according to the financial policies and recommendations of the Collins Center
- Free Cash has not been certified, though it was submitted and is pending DOR review and approval.

Finance Committee Adjournment

A motion was made by M. Biagini and seconded by D. Gregoire to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Roll Call Vote: M. Biagini – Yes, P. Pettit – Yes, J. Chaput – Yes, J. Tremblay – Yes, D. Gregoire – Yes

Motion Carries: 5-0

(K. Levesque left the meeting due to technical issues)

Announcements from Board Members – None

Public Comment – None

Board of Selectmen Adjournment

A motion was made by M. Francesconi and seconded by J. Levesque to adjourn the Board of Selectmen meeting at 7:50 p.m.

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

Motion Carries: 4-0

Respectfully Submitted:
Jennifer Morse
April 2, 2024

Document List

1. Agenda – March 19, 2024
2. Draft minutes – March 5, 2024
3. Draft Minutes- March 12, 2024
4. Public Records Access Guidelines
5. Draft Budget Workbook

Approved: 4/17/24