TOWN OF CHESHIRE

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen
Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes –April 23, 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 April 23, 2024, at 6:00 PM.

Board of Selectmen Members Present: Shawn McGrath, Chair
Jason Levesque, Vice Chair
Ray Killeen, Member (arrived at 6:05 p.m.)
Michelle Francesconi, Member
Ron DeAngelis, Member

Finance Committee Members Present: John Tremblay, Chair
Jeff Chaput
Mickey Biagini
Patrick Pettit

Finance Committee Members Absent: Denise Gregoire
Kathy Levesque

Others Present : Jennifer Morse, Town Administrator ; Corey McGrath, DPW Director; Chris Emerson, Town Clerk; Lynn Melchiori; Peter Traub; Liseanne Karandisecky; Tom Francesconi, Fire Chief; Michael Alibozek, Police Chief; Rebecca Herzog; Whitney Flynn.

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

Discussion/Decision Items

A. Facilities/Ground Position

The DPW Director introduced Daniel Roy as the candidate to move forward for hiring for the Facilities/Grounds position. C. McGrath shared that five individuals were interviewed for the position and discussed Mr. Roy's qualifications.

A motion was made by M. Francesconi and seconded by J. Levesque to hire Daniel Roy to fill the Facilities/Grounds position.

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

B. Annual Town Election Warrant

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by M. Francesconi to sign the Annual Town Election Warrant as presented by the Town Clerk

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

c. Employee Time/Personnel Policies/ PTO Discussion

The board reviewed information pertaining to employees benefitted time off, four employees have discrepancies in the records. Each employee's time was reviewed, including recommended adjustments to fix the discrepancies so time could be put into the upgraded payroll system for future tracking.

A motion was made by J. Levesque and seconded by S. McGrath to adjust the time as recommended.

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

The Town Administrator shared that she had found a vote for the Personnel Polices however Section 5 – Benefits was not adopted. A committee was put into place to work on the policies in conjunction with the union negotiations and the board did not go back and vote to adopt section 5, however changes have taken place within section 5 and all employees have been given the policies in April 2022.

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by M. Francesconi to ratify Section 5 of the Personnel Policies.

Discussion: M. Francesconi suggested amending the first paragraph to the section , last sentence which addresses unbenefited position part-time positions to a benefitted part time or full-time position. She would like to see it address employees who have been dedicated to the town to have the hire date reflect the benefits allowed. The Town Administrator used the Senior Center Director position as an example, the position went from 19 hours a week to 22 hours a week in Fiscal Year 2024, according to the policy that position would only be eligible for one week of vacation after six months however that employees actual start date was in 2021 which would make the position currently eligible for two weeks of vacation time. There was discussion on the language and how that may impact stipend employees. The Town Administrator suggested proposing language to be considered at a future meeting.

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

The Town Administrator mentioned that the board had previously discussed Personal Time Off to encompass all benefitted time off, after discussion this topic will be tabled until the next union negotiations.

Budget Hearings – Joint Meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee

J. Tremblay called the Finance Committee Meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

A. Fire Department – Chief Francesconi

Chief Francesconi shared the specs and pricing information for a new fire engine to replace the 2001 HME Frontline Pumper which is now twenty-three years old. NFPA calls for replacement of fire engines in 20 years. The Chief shared that he received quotes from two vendors after reaching out to three, the cost for a new engine is approximately $850,000 at this time, the new engine is bare bones and will take 21 months to arrive. The engine to be replaced as pump issues costing approximately $3,000 - $5,000 per year due to salt intrusion in the electrical compartment. P. Pettit asked about the trade in value for the engine? The Chief will reach out to the company to inquire. The new truck will maneuver in hard-to-reach places but easier including the camp road due to the wheelbase being 2 ½ feet shorter. There was

discussion about buying a used piece of equipment, R. DeAngelis stated that you are shortening the life and the Town Administrator shared experience in another community that purchased a used vehicle and then had to buy a new one two years later due to the condition. M. Biagini asked the Chief about refurbishing the current apparatus. He also asked about the Pay Per Call stipend and how that is going. The Chief responded that is going great as a retention tool and that the junior program currently has five members.

Discussion turned to the Public Safety Complex Committee and J. Levesque mentioned the property across from the Fire Sation abutting town property is for sale.

B. DPW - Director, Corey McGrath

Corey McGrath shared that the Highway Department is looking to replace the Boom Mower with an attachment for the loader. All personnel will be able to utilize the equipment without a specialized license. Last summer the mower spent more downtime than mowing time due to repairs. Two local towns recently purchased the same piece of equipment and once received by those towns the highway department will visit. J. Tremblay asked about options for used equipment and leasing. C. McGrath was asked to obtain the total hours on the old tractor and loader.

C. Police Department – Chief Alibozek

Chief Alibozek presented revised budget numbers that included the SRO position, sharing that the additional funds for town patrolling could come out of the Part Time Officer line item. There was discussion regarding the legal opinion obtained from the Mass Chief Association regarding MOU and the impact on the town if the funding mechanism (rural aid) was to go away. R. DeAngelis stated that 224 students from Cheshire go to school in the district and discussion turned to the Town of Adams involvement in the process. The Town Administrator is to reach out to the Superintendent to get a sense of their support for the SRO position long term. She shared that she spoke with the Adams Town Administrator, and they are not interested in the discussion for the FY25 budget process, she will reach out again regarding Fiscal Year 2026 and will also inquire to see if they have a cruiser, they are replacing that could go to the SRO position.

D. Budget Next Steps

The Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen will meet separately to review the budgets and will meet again on May 14, 2024.

Finance Committee Adjournment

A motion was made by J. Chaput and seconded by P. Pettit to adjourn at 8;15 p.m.

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

Motion Carries: 5-0

Town Administrator Updates

A. Planning Board – Short Term Rental Bylaw

The Town Administrator shared the concerns of counsel regarding the DRAFT bylaw. The Planning Board is meeting tomorrow night, and the bylaw is on the agenda. R. DeAngelis stated that if the Planning Board doesn't act on the bylaw, he will start a citizen's petition.

Announcements from Board Members

M. Francesconi gave an update on Memorial Day Parade Planning, the ceremony will be at the Community House in the circle. The parade will stop to leave a wreath at the memorial on Church Street.

Public Comment

Peter Traub inquired about the Annual Meeting Date and Time, SRO Costs, and the Boom Mower Costs.

Liseann Karandisecky shared that the Hoosac Lake District Annual Meeting is Saturday June 1st at 1:00 p.m.

Adjournment

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by R. DeAngelis to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m.
Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis – Yes; R. Killeen – Yes; J. Levesque – Yes; M. Francesconi – Yes; S. McGrath – Yes
Motion Carries: 5-0

Respectfully Submitted:
Jennifer Morse
April 29, 2024

Document List

1. Agenda – April 23, 2024
2. Section 5 - Personnel Policies
3. Short Term Rental Bylaw information from counsel
4. Expense Report 4/19/24

Approved: May 4, 2024