TOWN OF CHESHIRE

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes –August 20, 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 August 20, 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; Adam O'Neil, Northern Berkshire EMS; Tom Francesconi, Fire Chief; Michael Alibozek, Police Chief; Lynn Melchiori; Peter Traub; Bob Tetlow; Art Kaufman; Tammy Daniels, IBerkshires.

S. McGrath called the meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order at 6:34 p.m.

Summary of Votes:

Vote to appoint Dave Tarjick as the School Resource Officer	5-0
Vote to appoint Aaron Goodell to the Full-Time Officer position	5-0
Vote to appoint Don Poirot as a Special Police Officer	5-0
Vote to approve Cheshire Rod and Gun Club One Day Liquor Licenses	4-0-1
Vote to approve the Consent Agenda as presented	5-0
Vote to adjourn the meeting	5-0

Northern Berkshire EMS (NBEMS) Update

NBEMS Assistant Chief Adam O'Neil joined the board with Fire Chief Tom Francesconi to give an update on EMS operations since taking over ambulance services on January 1, 2024. NBEMS has responded to 211 (911) calls with a 16% no transport rate and a response time of 12.17 minutes, mutual aid has been utilized six times (5 – Lanesborough Ambulance and 1 – County Ambulance). Since January 1, 2024, NBEMS has responded to a total of 6,585 calls with an average response time of 7.40 minutes and with 3% mutual aid, this is for the entire service area. Asst. Chief O'Neil shared that the busiest time of day in Cheshire is during working hours.

Asst. Chief O'Neil was asked about the challenges, he stated that staffing continues to be a challenge as it is nationwide, NBEMS has programs in place to recruit EMT's and is currently running classes. He shared that busy times can be challenging however they are able to utilize trained office staff, Chief and Asst. Chiefs during very busy times referencing a call recently where they had five ambulances rolling at once. Asst. Chief O'Neil was asked about future which including hiring, additional EMT classes, adding more trucks acknowledging that there is space in the Cheshire Fire Station to house an additional vehicle.

Chief Francesconi added that the there have been no issues with the transition to NBEMS. The Town Administrator added that Fire Fighters have mentioned that trainings and professionalism with NBEMS is much improved. Chief Francesconi shared that all First Responder and medical trainings are being done by Asst. Chief O'Neil, NBEMS is familiar with Cheshire Fire Department equipment and vice versa. Asst. Chief O'Neil shared that he had met with Chief Francesconi and the Town Administrator recently to discuss the use of mutual aid to ensure no delay in patient care.

Asst. Chief O'Neil was thanked for the update and his time.

Discussion/Decision Items

Fire Chief: OSHA Standards and Engine Repairs

Chief Francesconi presented information regarding the proposed changes to OSHA regulations, he wanted the board to be aware of the changes as it will decimate volunteer fire departments across Massachusetts. Information from the NVFC (National Volunteer Fire Council) and MCVFA (Mass Call Volunteer Fire Association) were shared with the board. The proposed standards will affect truck maintenance certification, brake testing, administrative tasks, fire fighter fitness requirements that will eliminate exterior fire fighters. The Chief will continue to update the board on the changes if they move forward.

Engine 1 is out of service while it is being serviced for a foam pump issue, the cost of the repair is estimated to be $12,000. The Chief informed the board that the funds were available in his budget and that dispatch and mutual aid are aware until Engine 1 is returned to service.

School Resource Officer Position

A motion was made by J. Levesque and seconded by R. DeAngelis to assign the School Resource Officer to Sergeant David Tarjick.

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

Full Time Police Officer

Chief Alibozek shared that Officer Goodell has worked hard for the past 6-7 months, he has been completing courses including SRO courses, he would like to recommend the appointment of Officer Goodell to the full-time position.

A motion was made by J. Levesque and seconded by S. McGrath to appoint Aaron Goodell as Full Time Police Officers.

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

Special Police Officer

Chief Alibozek explained that he added qualifications to the detail policy as he was getting a lot of requests for positions. Currently, he is recommending the hiring of Don Poirot as a Special Police Officer who is the former Police Chief in Adams and currently works for the Berkshire County Sherriffs department as a detail officer.

A motion was made by M. Francesconi and seconded by S. McGrath to hire Don Poirot as a Special Police Officers.

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

Cheshire Rod & Gun Club Licenses – September 11, September 14, September 21 and September 28

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by R. Killeen to approve the One Day Liquor Licenses for the Cheshire Rod and Gun Club.

Roll Call Vote:

Motion Carries Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis – Yes, R. Killeen – Yes, J. Levesque – Abstain, M. Francesconi – Yes, S. McGrath - Yes
Motion Carries: 4-0-1
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Special Town Meeting Follow-up

Shawn McGrath shared that with the failure of Article 1 at the Special Town Meeting on August 12, 2024, to support the Hoosac Valley Regional School District there will be a combined meeting of the Towns of Adams and Cheshire. The HVRSD School Committee is meeting on Monday August 26th , after that meeting a joint meeting of both boards will need to be held to work out logistics and appointment of a moderator. J. Levesque shared he is disappointed that after the voters have spoken that there is not willingness from the school committee to work on a common goal. If the combined meeting of the towns passes the budget the Town of Cheshire will then need to hold a Special Town Meeting to fund. There was a question if the Town votes again to reject the budget, what are the next steps, the Town Administrator will work with counsel on a response to the question.

Classification and Compensation (Wage and Salary) Review

The Board will put the topic on the next agenda to allow for ample time for review of the plan and job descriptions. The Town Administrator shared that the job description has been reviewed by employees after interviews were conducted with the UMASS Collins Center. S. McGrath questioned why the Building Commissioner is on the Classification Structure and none of the other inspectors, the UMASS Collins Center provided market data for the positions as they are paid a stipend and suggested that the town evaluate the positions to determine if they should be stipend or part time hourly believing that the Building Commissioner would be a F on the wage scale due to the complexity of the position.

S. McGrath would like the Supervision Received to clearly identify the reporting authority and require CORI checks for all positions.

Consent Agenda

- Minutes July 22, 2024, and August 6, 2024
- Accounts Payable, Payroll Warrants
- Cheshire Food Pantry – Facilities Request Form
- Conservation Commission Appointment – Brett Gelinas

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by R. Killeen to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.
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

Online Sales - There is a Unibank link on the website under Transfer Station to purchase Permits, Tags and Additional Tags. The Town Clerk is working to have vital records available online as well, this process is not live yet.

Transfer Station Hotspot - The hotspot purchased with funding from the Digital Equity Grant arrived and is active, the attendants will be able to accept credit/debit payment for demo in the coming weeks.

Senior Center Internet - For several months the Senior Center as having internet issues. Charter (Spectrum) increased the speed of the service last week, but they are still having issues, NEIT will be coming out to remedy.

An RFP for auditing services has gone out with a deadline of September 16, 2024.

The Town Administrator inquired if a private property owner on Farnum's Road must obtain a Special Permit Application to host a free movie night for the community. There was discussion and it was determined that not in this case however it would be helpful to have the information to share with departments. This led to discussion on the requirement for the motor bike races on private property needs a permit which started due to complaints about noise and traffic. The board discussed the need for the Planning Board to review the bylaw pertaining to racing and other bylaws such as the livestock bylaw. There was an email in the packet from the Planning Board Chair read by S. McGrath that stated, "we will not be adding any items to the agenda regarding 3.2 until a reasonable explanation is given by the select board as to how changing the bylaw would be good for the town.". S. McGrath then stated that common sense changes could be made that would allow for consistent application of bylaws, right now residents are feeling targeted because they have caged chickens that are being threatened and imposed with fines while other residents have chicken in the R-1 area that are free range. The Town Administrator will investigate various language options to present to the Planning Board.

Announcements from Board Members

J. Levesque shared that the Open Space and Recreation Committee has reviewed the survey results, noting that the senior population has identified youth having the most important needs. He also noted a desire for a Farmers Market which is not something that has to wait for a plan. The Town Administrator shared that she briefly spoke with an agriculture commission member about a farmers market in Cheshire. It was shared that there will be a fall meeting with input from the Board of Selectmen, the report will be compiled and turned into the state for approval by the end of the year.

J. Levesque asked if the board would consider an exemption for Town Properties and Buildings from Chapter 135, Section 124 of the Acts of 2024 as granted by Section 124(2)(i).

Public Comment

Art Kaufman inquired about paving on Curran Road, he was informed it will be done by early next week.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by J. Levesque and seconded by R. DeAngelis to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 p.m.
Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis – Yes, R. Killeen – Yes, J. Levesque – Yes, M. Francesconi- Yes, S. McGrath – Yes
Motion Carries – 5-0

Document List

1. Agenda, August 20, 2024
2. NVRC OSHA Proposed Rules
3. MCVFA OSHA Proposed Rules
4. PD Detail and Events Assignment Policy
5. Email Aaron Dean/Jay Green: HVRSD Budget Next Steps
6. Classification and Compensation Study
7. Job Descriptions (Building Dept, Police Dept., Senior Center, Town Clerk
8. Draft Minutes - July 22, 2024
9. Draft Minutes – August 6, 2024
10. Facilities Use From – Tag Sale
11. Senior Center Report
12. DPW Director Certificate
13. Email Aaron Singer re: Next Planning Board Meeting Date
14. Highway Department Bi-Weekly Report

Approved: September 3, 2024