TOWN OF CHESHIRE

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen
Finance Committee
Board of Assessors

Meeting Minutes –December 10, 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 December 10, 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

Board of Assessors Members Present: Barbara Astorino, Chair
Nancy Delorey, Member
Kellie Lahey, Member

Finance Committee Members Present: Jeff Chaput, Member
Michael "Mickey" Biagini, Member
William Rech, Member
Patrick Pettit, Member
Kathy Levesque, Member

Finance Committee Members Absent: Denise Gregoire

Others Present: Jennifer Morse, Town Administrator; Robin Wadsworth, Assessors Administrator; Rebecca Herzog, Treasurer/Collector; Whitney Flynn, Assistant Treasurer/Collector; Bob Tetlow; Lynn Melchiori; Liseann Karandisecky; Peter Traub; Tom Francesconi, Fire Chief.

Summary of Votes

Vote to earmark remaining ARPA funds for the Public Safety Complex Exploration	5-0
Vote to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting at 7:15 p.m.	5-0
Vote to approve all 2025 licenses except for Saldo's Auto Repair	5-0
Vote to approve the 2025 Auto Licenses for Saldo's Auto Repair	4-0-1
Vote to appoint Berkshire Health Alliance Inspectors as Animal Inspectors	5-0
Vote to approve and sign the IMA – Opioid Settlement Funds	5-0
Vote to sign the request from the Youth Center for the EEOST Grant Support Letter	5-0
Vote to approve the accounts payable and payroll warrants	5-0
Vote to adjourn the Board of Selectmen meeting at 8:22 p.m.	5-0

S. McGrath called the meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order at 6:30 p.m.
J. Chaput called the Finance Committee to order at 6:31 p.m.
The Board of Assessors was previously called to order

Joint Meeting – Board of Selectmen, Board of Assessors Finance Committee
Semi Tax Billing to Quarterly Tax Billing & General Budget Discussion
R. Wadsworth started the discussion by reading a prepared statement regarding the transition from semiannual tax billing to quarterly tax billing which addressed concerns about the process for transitioning in Fiscal Year 2026. S. McGrath stated that the meeting was to discuss the transition and that nothing has been set in stone that the board is looking at ways to streamline revenue. There was discussion by all boards about the process and what it means for the various departments. B. Rech shared that the transition would make sense for steady revenue throughout the year but also for residents on fixed incomes, stating that ¾ of the state already bills quarterly and other communities who have transitioned can be contacted. S. McGrath asked B. Rech if he would set up a subcommittee to explore the issue and B. Rech agreed to begin work after the holidays.

L. Karandisecky stated that the town has received more grants than ever which is fantastic and as a resident looking in transitioning to a quarterly tax billing system makes sense. R. Herzog shared that the Treasurer/Collector will need additional hours to handle quarterly tax collections, she was asked how many people pay online and through escrow accounts, W. Flynn shared that residents like to pay in person.

Budget Updates
The Town Administrator shared that budget requests went out to department heads, boards and committee last week with a due date of February 11, 2024. The budget memo and example of the budget form was emailed to the Finance Committee.

Public Safety Complex Committee Update and Request for ARPA Funds – Chief Francesconi
Chief Francesconi shared that the Public Safety committee has been exploring various options for a site location and has determined that the best location is the grounds of the community house. He shared that the committee has discussed space needs and is now ready to discuss procurement for engineering and feasibility. The Town Administrator reached out to a procurement specialist to meet with the Public Safety Complex committee meeting which will include the Board of Selectmen as well. A request was made for the remaining ARPA funds to be used towards procurement and design.
A motion was made by S. Mcgrath and seconded by J. Levesque to earmark unused ARPA funds for the Public Safety Complex.
Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis – Yes; R. Killeen- Yes, J. Levesque – Yes, M. Francesconi- Yes, S. McGrath- Yes
Motion Carries: 5-0

A discussion ensued on the impacts of new OSHA regulations.

Finance Committee Adjournment
A motion was made by M. Biagini and seconded by J. Chaput to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting at 7:15 p.m.
Vote: Unanimous
Motion Carries: 5-0

Discussion/Decision Items

Liquor, Common Victualler, Car Dealer Licenses 2025 - 2025 licenses were in the packet for review along with the ABCC certification and seasonal population certificate.

A motion was by S. McGrath and seconded by J. Levesque to approve all licenses as submitted except for Saldo's Auto Repair.

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

A motion was made by S. .McGrath and seconded by M. Francesconi to approve the auto license for Saldo's Auto Repair

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

Appoint Health Agents as Animal Inspector

A motion was made by J. Levesque and seconded by S. McGrath to appoint the health agents from Berkshire Health Alliance as Animal Inspector

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

Intermunicipal Agreement – Opioid Abatement Funds Agreement

The Town Administrator shared that over the past two fiscal years a total of $1,788.94 has been received by the Town. She contacted the Police Chief, Fire Chiefs who both agreed that joining the alliance would be beneficial to the town. A power point presentation was in the packet for review. The other towns involved are Adams, Clarksburg, Florida, New Ashford, North Adams, Savoy and Williamstown and allows the towns to jointly perform services and share costs with the abatement funds.

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by R. DeAngelis to sign the IMA – Opioid Abatement Funds Agreement

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

Youth Center Inc. request for EEOST Grant support Letter

R. DeAngelis stated that we have not resolved the lease issue and feels as if the Youth Center is "kicking it down the road". The Town Administrator read the support letter clarifying what projects the grant funds would cover if awarded. M. Francesconi wanted to ensure that the Board of Selectmen would have input on the projects as they move forward especially window replacements and flooring. The Town Administrator will request that the Youth Center attend the meeting scheduled for January 7, 2024, to discuss the lease.

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by R. DeAngelis to sign the letter of support for the EEOST Grant.

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

Consent Agenda

Minutes – November 26, 2024, Postponed to next meeting
Accounts Payable, Payroll Warrants

A motion was made by J. Levesque and seconded by S. McGrath to approve the accounts payable and payroll warrants 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

Town Offices will be closed the week of December 23 – December 27, as in previous years employees can use personal/vacation time to be out of office. If a staff member does not want to use vacation/personal time they are welcome to come in and to the offices and work. Furthermore December 24, 2024, will be an early dismissal at noon for all employees, an employee that is working that day will get his/her full days pay without using vacation/personal time. Town Offices will be open on December 30 and December 31 but closed on January 2, the same rule applies.

12 South Street

In consultation with the town attorney a letter will be sent to Patricia Roberts regarding the excavation work on the eastern part of the property which has violated the towns rights regarding the right of way on West Mountain Road. Due to this excavation work the guardrails along West Mountain Road have been undermined and disturbed raising public safety concerns for motorists along West Mountain Road at the junction of Route 8/South Street. The excavation work has also caused damage to the drainage and outfalls that meet Route 8. The DPW Director has been in contact with MassDOT and the guardrail company and has placed jersey barriers along West Mountain Road. This is in addition to the cease and desist issued by the Conservation Commission for the excavation work which violated the MS4 permitting and land disturbance regulations.

Announcements

The Annual Light Parade will be held on Sunday December 15, 2024, starting at the Fire Station, the route will be announced shortly.

S. McGrath shared that he attended a HVRSD Chairs meeting which is made up of the Superintendent of Schools, Adams Board of Selectmen Chair, School Committee Chair and himself. There are some developments that are out of the control of the district relating to out of district special education placement. The first district agreement meeting is coming up on December 17, 2024.

J. Levesque shared that the Open Space and Recreation Plan is in its thirty-day comment period, comments should be directed to Seth Jenkins from BRPC and will be incorporated in the final plan which will be sent to the state for review.

Adjournment

A motion was made by M. Francesconi and seconded by J. Levesque to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 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
Town Administrator
December 30, 2024

Document List

1. Agenda December 10, 2024
2. Liquor License Renewal Certification
3. 2025 Licenses

4. IMA - Opioid Abatement Funds
5. North County HEAL Coalition Information
6. Email Youth center regarding Grant dated December 4, 2024
7. Email Youth Center regarding lease extension Dated December 6, 2024
8. Highway Bi-Weekly Report

Approved: 1/8/25