TOWN OF CHESHIRE

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes –January 21, 2025

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 January 21, 2025, at 6:00 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; Peter Traub; Whitney Flynn; Rebecca Herzog.

Summary of Votes:

Vote to enter executive session and return to regular session at the conclusion	5-0
Vote to create a Semi-to-Quarterly Tax Billing Subcommittee	5-0
Vote to appoint members to the Semi- to Quarterly Tax Billing Subcommittee	5-0
Vote to approve the consent agenda	5-0
Vote to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 p.m.	5-0

S. McGrath called the meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order at 6:00 p.m.

Executive Session- M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a), Reason 6 – Youth Center Lease
To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate, if the chair declares that an open meeting may have detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.

Executive Session – M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a), Reason 3 – Warners vs. Town of Cheshire
To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if any open meeting may have detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.

S. McGrath declared that the board would be entering executive session according to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a), Reason 6 Youth Center Lease and MGL Chapter 30A, section 21(a), Reason 3 Warner vs. Town of Cheshire. The board will return to the open session at the conclusion of the executive sessions.

A motion was made by J. Levesque and seconded by M. Francesconi to enter executive session according to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a),Reason 6 (Youth Center) and MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a), Reason 3 (Warner vs. Town of Cheshire).
Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis – Yes; R. Killeen – Yes; J. Levesque- Yes; M. Francesconi – Yes; S. McGrath- Yes
Motion Carries: 5-0

The Board of Selectmen re-entered the regular meeting at 6:58 p.m.

Discussion/Decision Items

Lease spaces – Stafford Hill Armory Office Space – Annex

Jason Levesque, owner of Stafford Hill Armory, moved to the presenting table to discuss with the board the possibility of leasing the small office on the ground floor of the Cheshire Athenaeum (former Town Hall). Jason stated that he had contacted the state ethics commission regarding the potential conflict if he were to lease space as he is a member of the board. He was informed that because he left the room during the last meeting when lease amounts were discussed that was not a conflict, however due to the last lease discussion being within 12 months he would have to fill out a disclosure form. M. Francesconi questioned if a firearms retail office could be in a municipal building and asked for counsel opinion in addition to questions about special permitting and zoning. She stated that with the library and Grace Note Guitars in the building she was not comfortable with the potential lease. Jason explained that all firearm deliveries would be made to his residential address and that there are very strict rules regarding firearms on premises. M. Francesconi asked for information regarding insurance to be obtained in addition to counsel opinion.

R. DeAngelis shared that he had spoken with a real estate agent and they typically charge one month rent to list leased properties. R. DeAngelis will work with the Town Administrator on the next steps.

Lions Club Donation to Leland Park (Cheese Press) - $5,000

The Cheshire Lions Club has donated $5,000 to be used for the Leland Park project. A bench will be installed in the park with a plaque, additional funds will be used for planting and other potential projects including signage and solar lighting. A letter of thanks will be drafted to send to the Cheshire Lions Club for their support and generosity.

Ice Skating Rink Donations

The DPW Director shared that Village Truck Sales/Berkshire Pittsfield Septic donated the porta potty for the skating rink and is loaning use of their Bambini to groom the ice. A letter of thanks will be drafted to send to the Szczepaniak family for their support and generosity.

Semi to Quarterly Advisory Group

S. McGrath shared that the group looking into semi-to-quarterly tax billings needed to be either created by and advised by the Town Administrator or a sub-committee needed to be created. The Town Administrator shared that she was good with either approach, however a sub-committee would take additional planning off her already busy plate. The Town Clerk shared Open Meeting Law information pertaining to the composition of subcommittees, information was also provided in the packet. The Town Administrator shared that first the board must create a committee and then handle the appointments, the potential committee members designated were Kellie Lahey, Assessors; Robin Wadsworth, Assessors; Rebecca Herzog, Treasurer/Collector; Jennifer Morse, Town Administrator; Bill Rech and Jeff Chaput, Finance Committee; Ray Killen and Shawn McGrath, Board of Selectmen.

A motion was made by M. Francesconi and seconded by J. Levesque to create a Semi- Quarterly Tax Committee.
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 J. Levesque to appoint the following to the Semi to Quarterly Tax Committee; Robin Wadsworth, Kellie Lahey, Rebecca Herzog, Jennifer Morse, Bill Rech, Jeff Chaput, Ray Killeen and Shawn McGrath.
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 – January 7, 2025 – Postponed
Accounts Payable, Payroll Warrants

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by J. Levesque to approve the consent agenda except for the minutes of January 7, 2025
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

HVRSD Preliminary Budget Meeting – The Town Administrator confirmed that she reached out to Superintendent Dean regarding a preliminary budget meeting.

Joint Meeting – Conservation Commission/Board of Selectmen – 12 South Street - A joint meeting of both boards will be held on January 29, 2025, to discuss the guardrails and land disturbance/MS4 permitting of the property.

Announcements

R. Killeen shared that he is still working to determine where the funds have gone from the meals excise tax at Dunkin Donuts. He would like to present the meals tax option at the Town Meeting again with more information.

M. Francesconi asked that Exemption 22H for Gold Star Families be placed on the warrant. The Town Administrator shared that the Assessors Office will be presenting information on exemptions including the Hero Act for the board to consider placing on the warrant.

Public Comment

The Town Clerk stated that she will be sending out Open Meeting Law documents to all board/committee members as it was recently updated.

Adjournment

A motion was made by R. DeAngelis and seconded by R. Killeen to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 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
February 14, 2025

Document List:

1. Agenda January 21, 2025
2. DRAFT Lease Stafford Hill Armory
3. Email Alisha Hamton re: Annex Rental
4. Bi-Weekly Highway Report

Approved: February 18, 2025