TOWN OF CHESHIRE

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen
Conservation Commission

Meeting Minutes –February 18, 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 February 18, 2025, 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; Berkshire Village Residents; Lynn Melchiori; Peter Traub; Art Kaufman; Bob Tetlow; Bill Moreau, Berkshire Village Spokesperson.

Summary of Votes:

Vote to utilize special counsel for resolution in Adams Fire District outstanding tax	5-0
Vote approve the consent agenda with corrections to the minutes	5-0
Vote to approve Cheshire Rod & Gun Club one day liquor licenses	4-0-1
Vote to move into executive session according to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21, Reason 6 and Reason 3 and not to return to regular session at 7:45 p.m.	5-0

S. McGrath called the meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order at 6:31 p.m.

Berkshire Village Resident Concerns

Bill Moreau, Resident of Berkshire Village, started by reminding the board that a petition was submitted in November and at that time it was withdrawn in hopes that the new property manager would be successful in addressing the concerns. Mr. Moreau stated that since that time they have faced more changes in management, no definitive progress and worsening conditions. This past weekend there was no attempt to maintain the roads during the ice, snow and wind event, the roads were finally cleared by Condron on Monday afternoon at that point a loader was needed. Mr. Moreau did state that the property maintenance tech is doing his best in the difficult situation and he thanked the Town Administrator for her help. Mr. Moreau was asked if there were other concerns and he verified that concerns still include the failing septic system and electric poles.

The Town Administrator read a section of a letter from owner of Berkshire Village, Heath Biddlecome regarding updates to the failing septic system and has confirmed with the Board of Health that eleven title V inspections were done in late fall and more are scheduled for spring along with some repairs to the system. She also shared that she has spoken with new property manager Karen Green of M. Shapiro real estate who stated that a plow truck was on site awaiting a plow and sander. Additionally, the Town Administrator

verified that the Police Department, Fire Department and Wiring Inspector have all been contacted for support.

Several residents spoke about their concerns regarding unmaintained roadways, septic issues and electrical issues. M. Francescon shared that petitions could be filed by the residents according to the Rent Control Board procedures, in the past the Rent Control Board ordered an escrow account until repairs were made, helping to hold the owner accountable. The Town Administrator will share the document with Mr. Moreau who agreed to be the spokesperson. Mr. Moreau shared that a group of tenants will be starting a tenants association with its first meeting in a few weeks, he also shared that he had contacted the Attorney Generals Office with the complaints.

Board of Selectmen Discussion/Decision Items

- Adams Fire District Tax Payments – Special Counsel
  The Town Administrator shared that the recommendation from the Department of Revenue is to contact counsel.
  A motion was made by J. Levesque and seconded by M. Francesconi to engage special counsel to work on a resolution for the Adams Fire District tax payments.
  Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis- Yes; R. Killeen- Yes; J. Levesque- Yes; M. Francesconi- Yes; S. McGrath- Yes
  Motion Carries: 5-0

12 South Street

- A proposal was submitted by Attorney Hamel that an exchange occur, the property owner is willing to give the town a 15' easement for the cost of the jersey barriers and replacement guardrails. The board is not in favor of the "trade" as engineering will need to be done to build the bank back up and re-create the swale that takes stormwater to the DOT stormwater system on Route 8. It was noted that the removal of the soil on the embankment caused a larger problem, additionally the property owner had filled in a pipe which was cleaned out by the fire department. DPW Director, Corey McGrath, shared that the Water Department is not in favor of removing the hydrant as it is still tied to the water system and abutting properties on West Mountain Road, the Water Department will be investigating by shutting off gates in spring how many properties are connected.

DLTA – ADU Bylaw Assistance for Planning Board

- The Executive Assistant has prepared a request to Berkshire Regional Planning for ADU Assistance through the DLTA program. The grant application was approved by signature.

Consent Agenda

- Minutes - January 21, January 29, February 5
- Accounts Payable and Payroll Warrants

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by J. Levesque to approve the consent agenda with minor corrections to the minutes.
Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis- Yes; R. Killeen- Yes; J. Levesque- Yes; M. Francesconi- Yes; S. McGrath- Yes
Motion Carries: 5-0
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Town Administrator Updates

- FY26 Budget Updates - Most budgets have been turned in and the board should see the draft budget at the next meeting.

- Union Negotiations will begin on March 4, 2025. The Town Administrator asked for a member of the board to attend, R. DeAngelis volunteered.

- Cheshire Rod and Gun Club submitted dates for the month of March over the weekend.
  A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by M. Francesconi to approve the Cheshire Rod & Gun Club liquor licenses.
  Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis- Yes; R. Killeen- Yes; J. Levesque- Abstain; M. Francesconi- Yes; S. McGrath- Yes
  Motion Carries: 4-0-1

Announcements
M. Francesconi made a shout out to the Highway Department for the excellent job they have done this winter and especially during the last storm.

R. DeAngelis inquired about the highway department clearing the sidewalk on Route 8 from the Common Table to the Bank for students who must get on the bus.

S. McGrath shared that he had a HVRSD Chairs meeting on Monday night at which he expects to have budget numbers.

Public Comment - None

Executive Session – M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a), Reason 6
To consider the purchase, lease, exchange, 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- Youth Center Lease

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

S. McGrath stated that the Board of Selectmen would enter executive session according to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a), Reason 6 and Reason 3 as an open session would have a detrimental effect on the negotiating and litigating public body and would not return to open session.
A motion was made by M. Francesconi and seconded by J. Levesque to enter executive session according to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a), Reason 6 and Reason 3 as declared by the chair and adjourn the meeting at 7:45 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 23, 2025
Document List

1. Agenda - February 18, 2025
2. Rent Control Board Letter from William Moreau/Kurt Haswell
3. Email DOR re: Adams Fire District

4. Email Thomas Hamel re: 12 South Street
5. Draft Minutes - January 21, January 29, February 5
6. Highway Update 1/24-2/14

Approved: 3/4/25