TOWN OF CHESHIRE
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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes –May 6, 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 May 6 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

Board of Selectmen Members Present: Shawn McGrath, Chair
Jason Levesque, Vice Chair
Ray Killeen, Member
Michelle Francesconi, Member
Ron DeAngelis, Member

Finance Committee Members Present: Jeff Chaput, Chair
Michael Biagini, Member
Kathy Levesque, Member (remote)
Denise Gregoire
Patrick Pettit

Finance Committee Members Absent: Austin Alibozek
William Rech

Others Present: Jennifer Morse, Town Administrator; Liseann Karandisecky; Michael Alibozek, Chief; Erin Carney; Robert Tirrell; Art Kaufman

S. McGrath opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. with one recording device (iBerkshires)

Meeting with Potential Retail Marijuana Establishment

Erin Carney and Robert Tirrell joined the board to introduce themselves and their marijuana establishment retail business plan. Erin shared that she and her partners recently purchased the Otis Self Storage facility on North State Road which is within the approved marijuana zoning area. They are looking to making the investment and providing employment and revenue to the Town. There is a vacant large office within the building that faces the road, has a good layout with mutliple egress, separate entrances, individual rooms, and plenty of square footage.

They discussed other cannabis competitors within the proximity of Cheshire and provided a document for the board to review. They were asked if they were concerned with the number of facilities in Pittsifield and North County and they shared that they plan on having a more upscale clientelle and are considering

working with a consultant as they are not yet experts. Security was discussed and the Chief will be working with them on a plan that will include parking/traffic. They plan to hire a manager and employees.

The business plan was submitted today and board members will review and send questions to the Town Administrator who will forward them on to the owners. The Town Adminstrator will also work on drafting a Host Community Agreement to be reviewed at a future meeting. R. Killeen made it known that he does rental a storage unit and J. Levesque stated that a consultant for the town should be involved in the process.

Joint Meeting with the Finance Committee – Budget Discussion

Jeff Chaput called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Cruiser - Chief Alibozek discussed the need for a new cruiser as the oldest a 2017 , has 83,000 and is is presenting issues. The 2021 has 73,000 miles . He shared that a bid was submitted to the Town of Clarksburg for their 2022 cruiser however the Town is not the only bidder. A 2025 Ford Interceptor will cost $64,131 with an additional $9,581 for radios, radar and graphics. The Chief is requesting that the cruiser be added to the fleet. At this time there is approximately $12,000 in the cruiser revolving account which will pay for the additional items.

Executive Assistant - M. Francesconi left the meeting at 7:19 p.m. S. McGrath explained the need for the additional hours for the assistant noting that the position currently works with the Conservation Commission, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. Additionally she does limited work with the Board of Health and Water Commissioners. The Town Administratornoted that it doesn't matter if the Town has 400 residents or 10,000 the state requirements are the same. With the expanded hours the Executive Assistant will be doing more clerical work of the boards. R. Killeen noted that the position is critical as most board/committee members do not have the time that it takes to complete tasks. M. Biagini stated if that the Board of Health stipend should be discussed as a lot of the responsiblities are now being taken over by the Public Health Alliance or the Administrative Staff referring to Transfer Station Permit sales. The Town Administrator noted that the Transfer Station Permit sales are now processed online and through the administrator offices to ensure that the enterprise funds appropriations are being accounted for according to the financial policies. D. Gregoire asked if the admin staff had to be bonded to which the Town Adminstrator explained that only the Town Clerk, Collector and Treasurer are bonded, all other employees including adminstrative staff are covered under the professional liability insurance. M. Francesconi returned to the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

Town Clerk - The increase is based on increasing from 20-24 hours per week with a 2% increase plus a dollar amount to bring the position closer to the average.

M. Francesconi left the room at 7:49 p.m. and returned at 7:51 p.m.

Fire Department - The increase is due to a third Assistant Chief position.

Stablization Accounts - The Treasurer recommended putting at least $30,000 into the account to yield a higher interest rate.
Custodian - M. Francesconi inquired if the Facilities Maintenace position could take on the custodial role. The DPW Director did not feel he had the capacity due to the amount of outdoor work the job entails.

Highway Department - S. McGrath left the meeting at 8:05 and returned at approximatley 8:25 p.m. There was discussion regarding highway department operations. It was noted that $12,500 was taken from road repairs and put in the DPW seasonal laborer line. The DPW Director explained that quotes were obtained for the mowing town owned grounds (community house, senior center, former town hall and various other lcoations). The cost last year was $12,500 and the estimate this year was $17,000. He explained that the "cemetery" DPW Laborer will now mow in addition to the cemetery ultimately saving the town money. R. DeAngelis stated that Highway workers should not be mowing when there is so much road work to be completed in a season. The DPW Director stated that the only time he would ask the Highway to bridge a mowing gap is prior to Memorial Day or if there was another significant event. There was a lengthy discussion on the amount of road work including ditches that are planned for the fair weather months.

Hoosac Valley Regional School District - It was noted that the budget documents were easier to follow. Also that the grant funded positions should be identified by the line with a date that the funding expires. The Town Adminsitrator hoped to have the warrant ready to review at the next meeting with Finance Committee recommendations going on the final version.

Finance Committee Adjournment

A motion was made by M. Biagini and seconded by D. Gregoire to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting at 9:19 pm.
Roll Call Vote: M. Biagini – Yes, D. Gregoire – Yes, Patrick Pettit- Yes, J. Chaput – Yes, K. Levesque – Yes
Motion Carries: 5-0

Announcements

M. Francesconi shared that the Memorial Day Parade will be on Monday May 26, 2025 at 1 p.m. The route will be the same as what had been planned for last year, starting at the community house and ending at the community house with a ceremony.

Board of Selectmen Adjournment

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by J. Levesque to adjourn the meeting at 9:26 p.m.
Roll Call Vote: M. Francesconi – Yes, J. Levesque – Yes, R. DeAngelis – Yes, R. Killeen – Yes, S. McGrath- Yes
Motion Carries: 5-0

Respecfully Submitted;
Jennifer Morse
Town Administrator
May 21, 2025

Document List

- Board of Selectmen/Finance Committee Agenda – May 6, 2025
- Retail Marijuana Business Plan

Approved: 5/27/25