TOWN OF CHESHIRE

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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes –May 13, 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 May13, 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

Others Present: Jennifer Morse, Town Administrator; Peter Traub; Sabrina Damms, IBerkshires; Corey McGrath, DPW Director; Robin Wadsworth, Assessors Administrator; Kellie Lahey, Board of Assessors; Barbara Astorino, Board of Assessors.

Summary of Votes:

Vote to nominate S. McGrath as Chair and J. Levesque as Vice Chair	5-0
Vote to approve the Consent agenda except for the minutes	5-0
Vote to enter into the Rent Control Board Meeting at 7:20 p.m.	5-0
Vote to increase the Rent Control petition fee	5-0
Vote to leave the Rent Control Board Meeting at 7:25 p.m.	5-0

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

Reorganization of the Board

R. DeAngelis and M. Francesconi were re-elected to the Board of Selectmen at the Annual Town Election on May 12, 2025. There was discussion on keeping the current structure intact.

A motion was made by R. DeAngelis and seconded by R. Killeen to nominate S. McGrath as Chair and J. Levesque as Vice Chair.

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

Motion Carries : 5-0

Discussion/Decision Items

FY26 Budget and Draft Warrant

Discussion on the FY26 budget and draft warrant included the following;

- Having all Free Cash proposals put into one article
- Radio Communications Stablization and the need to start funding in June 2026, the Town Administrator will speak to the company about the first payment being due on July 1, 2026 for Fiscal Year 2027. Currently there is one full year of the lease amount in stablization plus interest, the Town Administrator shared that the purpose of the stablization fund was to off set the large impact to the operating budget.
- M. Francesconi suggested not funding the Radio Stablization Account and putting money into engineering a heating design for the Community House, estimates for engineering have come in around $50,000.
- J. Levesque brought up moving money from the roads account to the highway salary account to hire a per diem laborer to support the highway department in the summer months. He explained that there is a lot of work including ditch work and road side mowing and a lot of vacation hours can not be taken. He then suggested a "buy back" of vacation time be offered as the work needs to be completed and vacation can not be taken in the winter months. There was a lenghty discussion about adding "buy back " for town employees which will be a change in policy.
- The Board of Assessors joined the meeting and Veteran exemptions were discussed. R. Wadsworth shared that she does not know of any towns that are addressing the Hero Act which increases the amount of the veteran exemption with no additional reimbursement from the State. She felt it was too new this year and that we should keep it on the radar for the future. The Board will be moving forward with the local option to adopt the Gold Star exemption.
- S. McGrath proposed a debt exclusion for the Police Cruiser noting that a three year borrowing note starting in FY26 would stablize the levy within the budget after losing two large items.
- The Town Administrator will obtain current reserve balances prior to the next meeting. Revisions will be made to the warrant in hopes of recommendations at that meeting as well.

<u>Consent Agenda</u>

- Minutes
- Accounts Payable and Payroll Request

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by J. Levesque to approve the consent agenda exept for the minutes.

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

Motion Carries : 5-0

<u>Rent Control Board</u>

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by J. Levesque to call the Rent Control Baord to order at 7:20 p.m.

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

Motion Carries : 5-0

The Town Administrator shared that there is a Rent Control Baord hearing next Tuesday May 20, 2025 with three presented petitions. Each of the peitions is currently $10. The legal notice which is required within 5 days of the posting was $91. The Town Adminsitrator asked the Baord to approve a new fee of $100 for the first petition with the total to be collected of $100.

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by M. Francesconi to have the fee for a Rent Control Board petition be $100 to cover the cost of the legal posting.
Roll Call Vote: M. Francesconi – Yes; R. Killeen- Yes; J. Levesque – Yes; R. DeAngelis – Yes, S. McGrath – Yes
Motion Carries : 5-0

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by J. Levesque to leave the Rent Control Board meeting at 7:25 p.m.
Roll Call Vote: M. Francesconi – Yes; R. Killeen- Yes; J. Levesque – Yes; R. DeAngelis – Yes, S. McGrath – Yes
Motion Carries : 5-0

Public Comment

The Town Administrator shared that two applications have been received for the Collector position, they will be interviewed next week, there was a third inquiry with no response to date. The job posting was placed on the Massachusetts Treasurer/Collector Assocation, emailed to the Berkshire County Treasurer/Collector Assocation and posted on the website on May 6, 2025.

The Town Administrator shared the Berkshire Mobile Farmer Market will be coming to Cheshire on Tuesday afternoons beginning on June 17 th from 3-5 p.m. until October 17th. They will set up on community house grounds (rain or shine). They offer a three tiered system of payment and source locally grown foods. She also shared that the intent is to have Cheshire Farmers and Crafters join.

Adjournment

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by J. Levesque to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 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

1. Agenda- May 13, 2025

Approved: 5/27/25