TOWN OF CHESHIRE
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OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Rent Control Board
Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes –May 20, 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 20, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

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

Others Present: Jennifer Morse, Town Administrator; George Sweet, Wiring Inspector; Valerie Bird, Berkshire Public Health Alliance; Corey McGrath, DPW Director; Justin DaMore, Berkshire Village Engineer (remote); Heath Biddlecome, Berkshire Village Ownership (remote); William Moreau, Berkshire Village Tenants Association; Art Kaufman; Peter Traub; IBerkshires; Berkshire Eagle; David Icardi; Katrina Malloy; Daniel Chapman; Joe Provencher; Kevin Tibbetts; Marcus Whitman-Hillard; Kurt Haswell; Alison Mulcahy; Christel Massaconi; Phyllis Anderson; Barb Tremblay ; John Manley; Christine Manley; Pete Willey; Alyssa Richard; KC (remote)

S. McGrath called the Rent Control Board to order at 6:30 p.m. stating that the Rent Control Board will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday May 20, 2025, at 6:30 pm. at the Cheshire Community House located at 191 Church Street. The purpose of the hearing is to hear three petitions submitted by William Moreau on behalf of the Berkshire Village Tenants Association (legal notice published in the Berkshire Eagle on May 13, 2025).

S. McGrath then asked anyone who would be providing testimony in addition to the Berkshire Village Tenants Association and Ownership to sign up with the Town Administrator. He then swore in all those testifying and moved to the first petition.

Petition regarding Upgrades to the Septic System

William Moreau started by saying that this process has been a learning curve and requested that the board bear with him as he presents. He shared that many of the issues being presented have been ongoing from previous ownership. He shared the “rumor mill is killing them” and expressed that there are differing opinions on the work being done and that there needs to be open communication. Mr.

Moreau shared that the septic system is in failure and DEP is involved in the upgrade, there are numerous complaints from residents one which cost the tenant more than $760 to repair.

Heath Biddlecome, one of the owners of the property, introduced engineer Justin DaMore to give an update on the progress of the septic upgrades. Mr. DaMore shared that there has been zero health code violations associated with the septic system. The water table is very high and the system being installed is a state-of-the-art peat moss filtration system. He stated that Berkshire Village MHC is updating the DEP every five days on the progress. He shared that all Title V inspections have been completed and several repairs were done last week. Berkshire Septic is doing the installation of the main system and Webster Electric will be handling the electrical upgrades.

Valerie Bird, Berkshire Public Health Alliance noted that she has been involved for the Board of Health and knows that Berkshire Septic is scheduled to be on site Tuesday May 27, 2025, after the rain delayed the project. She shared the DEP has oversite of the project however the Board of Health is the feet on the ground. DEP will be handling the final inspection and updates which are currently happening on a weekly basis.

William Moreau said that DEP was notified in November 2021 that the community was not in compliance and that none of the system has been hooked up.

Justin DaMore stated that was incorrect several homes are being connected with the rest in the next four weeks, weather permitting, he explained the system and the schedule for completion noting that the contractor has been pre-paid.

William Moreau stated that there is a breakdown in communication and that there are currently 24 failed septic systems which are affecting 38 homes, he said the system drains slowly, there are restricted pipes and tanks need to be pumped. Justin DaMore shared that every line will be scoped as part of the DEP's inspection. He was unaware of any ongoing issues with the system and stated that when issues occur they should be reported and they will get Berkshire Septic to investigate.
S. McGrath asked what the preferred method of communication is and Mr. Biddlecome responded that the tenants should contact the on-site property manager who works for M. Shapiro, the property manager.

Petition – Electrical Upgrades

William Moreau again said that is a breakdown in communication, poles are slated for replacement, he has been unable to contact the correct department at National Grid for confirmation.

Justin DaMore shared that there are 32 electric services that are being set on new pedestals , the work is set to begin next Tuesday May 27, 2025. He shared that National Grid has not been in touch, and that only services that require replacement will be done at this time, he also shared that they spent $250,000 in new meters and equipment which is all stored on site and is ready for installation pending the electrical contractor.

George Sweet, Wiring Inspector, has been in contact with National Grid and the electrical contractor. Currently they are looking at 28 pedestals to be installed, he also said that National Grid is not in a hurry to do this project all at once.

Health Biddlecome noted that this is another project that was inherited from previous ownership that is costing a lot of money to fix, he has not asked for an increase in rent since taking ownership and said that once all the projects are complete that he will be approaching the Rent Control Board for a rent increase.

Petition regarding Road Conditions

William Moreau understands that the roads cannot be repaired until the system is done, however potholes are causing disrepair to vehicles.

Heath Biddlecome said that once the septic is complete and no further trenching needs to be done they will work on the roadways which he expects to have completed within sixty days of completion of the projects. He also confirmed that a four-wheel drive truck, plow and sander were purchased to be used by the onsite manager.

William Moreau also suggested that the Water System be assessed stating that there has been evidence of leaks. This was rebutted by ownership who noted that if the system was leaking, they would know immediately as the water pumps are read daily and would show if they was a great deal of additional water usage.

S. McGrath suggested that the meeting reconvenes when the projects have been completed and both the Tenants Association and Ownership agreed that better communication was needed . Heath Biddlecome reiterated that the best way for tenants to report issues is through the onsite property manager who handles maintenance of the mobile home community and bookkeeping.

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by M. Francesconi to adjourn the Rent Control Board Hearing at 8:18 p.m.

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

Board of Selectmen Discussion/Decision Items

FY26 Warrant - The FY26 warrant was reviewed, the Town Administrator informed the board that the Finance Committee will be meeting tomorrow night to vote and record their recommendations to the warrant. After discussion it was decided that the Board of Selectmen would recommend the warrant articles and as each article came up on Town Meeting floor for vote, they would recuse themselves from any votes that could be conceived as a conflict of interest. The Town Administrator shared that she would like to get the warrant signed after it is reviewed by the town attorney at the end of the week so voters have plenty of time to digest the information.

Minutes – Tabled

Announcements

Memorial Day Parade and ceremony is set for Monday May 26th at 1 p.m. with the same parade route that was planned for last year.

Cheshire Museum - The Cheshire Museum located at the Cheshire Anthenaeum will be open for the first time on Monday May 26th from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. and features a Cheshire Veterans display.

Adjournment

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by J. Levesque to adjourn the meeting at 8:38 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 27, 2025

Document List

1. Agenda- May 13, 2025

Approved : 5/27/25