TOWN OF CHESHIRE

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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Board of Selectmen

MEETING MINUTES –AUGUST 19, 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 August 19, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

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

Others Present: Jennifer Morse, Town Administrator; Lynn Melchiori; Barry Emery; Rick Salvi; Matt Chaput; Peter Traub.

Summary of Votes:

Vote to enter executive session MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a), Reason 3	5-0
Vote to re-enter regular session at 6:11 p.m.	5-0
Vote to approve the consent agenda	5-0
Vote to adjourn at 7:10 p.m.	5-0

Open Regular Meeting and Pledge of Allegiance
S. McGrath called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

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

S. McGrath stated that the board would enter executive session according to M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a), Reason 3 as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the board.
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 3 at 6:01 p.m.
Roll Call Vote: M. Francesconi- Yes; J. Levesque- Yes; R. Killeen – Yes; R. DeAngelis- Yes; S. McGrath- Yes
Motion Carries: 5-0

The audience was asked to leave the room for the executive session which was estimated to last approximately 15 minutes.

A motion was made by M. Francesconi and seconded by S. McGrath to adjourn the executive session and re-enter into regular session at 6:11 p.m.
Roll Call Vote: M. Francesconi- Yes; J. Levesque- Yes; R. Killeen – Yes; R. DeAngelis- Yes; S. McGrath- Yes
Motion Carries: 5-0

The regular meeting reconvened at 6:11 p.m.

Board of Selectmen Discussion/Decision Items

- **Fire Truck Legislation/Lease**

The Town Administrator shared that she spoke with Kali from Representative Barretts office earlier in the day. The bill is on the Governor's desk for signature and is being reviewed by her legal team. She has until Friday August 22, 2025, to sign the bill. The Treasurer has confirmed the timeline for the borrowing and is ready to go when the bill has been signed.

- **Annex Request for Branding**

A potential tenant requested that the Board consider window branding for the Annex, a photo was shared with the board. R. Killeen spoke about the historic value of the building, stating that the window branding did not seem appropriate. M. Francesconi agreed with R. Killeen and suggested a bracket be installed on the building to allow for signage that fits with the zoning requirements. R. DeAngelis shared that previous discussions put no exceptions on signage in windows of town buildings. There was discussion on the use of the building and request for a slop sink with concerns about what chemicals or waste would be disposed of affecting the septic system. The Town Administrator will reach out to the real estate agent regarding the board's decision not to allow window branding and request additional information about the products being disposed of in the slop sink.

- **Pickleball Court – Request for fencing**

An email was received from resident Matt Chaput requesting a 5' fence to be installed at the ends and sides of the pickleball court for liability reasons. R. Killeen spoke about his concerns with the statement liability and it was noted that the court is play at your own risk and there is a sign on the building stating so. The Town Administrator shared that last year a quote was obtained for a 38' fence that was 4' tall on each end of the court with an estimated cost of $4,000. She stated that the fence was not budgeted for and that she spoke with the Council on Aging chair regarding the use of formula grant funds. The formula grant is to be used to benefit every senior in the Town of Cheshire, she then read an email from the Senior Center Director with some of the other needs including renovations to both bathrooms, ceiling tiles in the main room, building insulation and HVAC needs. There are also events including

concerts, graduation parties and wedding that are held in the outdoor space so permanent fencing may not be feasible. She shared that she discussed with the DPW Director and Council on Aging chair and the recommendation is that black snow fencing be installed when the court was in the parking lot at St. Mary's. The Town already has black snow fencing. R. DeAngelis suggested that portable fencing be considered and the Town Administrator will get a quote. Barry Emery shared that snow fencing would be an improvement and R. Salvi requested stone be placed around the exterior of the court which would help with weed control and the ball rolling. The topic will be on the next agenda.

Consent Agenda

- Minutes August 5, 2025
- Accounts Payable and Payroll Warrants

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

Town Administrator Updates

- **Financial Management Meeting**

The Town Administrator reminded the board that Financial Management Meetings were a recommendation within the Financial Management Review. Meetings were held in the past and all participants agreed that the meeting was helpful and would continue quarterly. The Financial Management Team includes the Town Administrator, Treasurer, Assessor, Collector, Accountant, Board of Selectmen Chair and Finance Committee Chair. Sean Lydon from the Hoosac Lake District was also present to discuss the tax rate recap. The Assessor and Accountant were unable to attend this meeting.

- **Treasurer Updates** - The Treasurer reviewed the timeline for borrowing once the legislation is approved; the FY25 balance (cash)sheet has been sent to the Accountant for reconciliation; cash flow is an issue as tax revenue will not be coming for a couple of months with large quarterly and beginning of the fiscal year bills due, he discussed that notice would be sent if he had to borrow internally from the stabilization fund; water receivable reports are not matching which may be an issue with the new software. He discussed with the HLD Chair reporting that could be provided, having checks payable to the Town of Cheshire and payment to the Collector office for services provided.
- **Collector Updates** - The Collector shared that the new Water Collection software has glitches with demands and interest charges, she is working with the company on a resolution. The Town Administrator asked for an outstanding tax report to share with the Board. There was discussion about the issues from the start with the new Water

Utility billing software and the recommendation to have all collections interface with the Treasurer and Accounting software.

- **Tax Rate Recap** - This function is overseen by the Assessor; all departments are aware of the various forms that are needed. It was noted that the excess capacity number should be provided to the Town Administrator as soon as possible so the board can determine if they want to hold a Special Town Meeting prior to the setting of the tax rate.
- **Semi- Quarterly Tax Billing** - The Treasurer and Collector will set up the Lock Box system for payments prior to the mailing of the tax bills and will include information regarding lock box and the new quarterly tax billings. An article will be placed in the Cheshire Chatter and on the website.

The Town Administrator asked the Treasurer about Tax Title and Tax Taking procedures which according to the auditors have not been done since 2021. He will reach out to the Tax Title attorney about the town owned property on Shadowland Cove as the board has previously expressed a desire to sell the property and there is interest. Tax Title and Takings will be pursued once the end of year and tax rate process is completed.

R. DeAngelis noted that quarterly tax billing will not completely fix the cash flow issues it needs to be monitored. The Town Administrator will send an email out to all staff regarding Cash Flow and spending.

- **No Pets Allowed/Certified Service Animal Only – Town Buildings**

Recently Town Office staff dealt with a pet who defecated in the office spaces, this is not the first incident. Additionally, staff/public safety and pet dander/allergies are also concerns. After consulting with legal counsel, it was determined that the best course of action is to hang signs in town buildings stating that no pets are allowed/certified service animals only. Staff have been informed of the new policy.

- **MIIA Grant Award- $10,000**

The grant was awarded for a trench box that will support the DPW (Water, Highway and Cemetery) department. The trench box has been ordered and the invoice will be paid directly from MIIA to the vendor except for the additional $2,000 which will be paid from the highway account.

- **CCC Legal Updates**

The Town Administrator attended a legal update about the CCC Equity plan and forwarded the power point to the board. She reported that she also contacted Adam Costa, special counsel, for support, it was noted that many municipalities in the state are not in compliance with the new mandate.

- **All Board/Committee Meeting**

According to the bylaws a All Boards/Committee Meeting will be held on the 2nd Wednesday in October at 7 p.m. A notice will go out to all boards/committees this week.

- **Cheshire Sign**

The Town Administrator pointed out the Cheshire sign at the back of the room that was refinished by the Historical Commission and delivered today. The sign is from the old trolley station and was at the Senior Center for many years. It has been refinished and input has been requested as to the placement. The Board decided they would like it placed on the Cheshire Atheneum over the current "Town Hall" wording, this will be relayed to the DPW Director.

- **MEMA – ICS-402 Class**

As previously emailed to the board, an ICS-402 for elected Chief officials will be held on September 19, 2025, in Lenox. M. Francesconi has signed up and the Town Administrator will also be in attendance.

- **What's New in Municipal Law Seminar**

The Town Administrator shared that she will be attending the seminar and sent the information to the Assessor and Treasurer as there are changes within the tax title and assessing laws.

Public Comment

None

Announcements

M. Francesconi spoke to the Veterans Agent who would like to introduce himself and meet with the Board of Selectmen in the future. The Town Administrator will reach out to put him on a future agenda.

R. Killeen shared that Peter Lefebvre had approached the Town Clerk about the document banning a flag at the Stafford monument. R. Killeen spoke to the DPW Director and the flag now has a mechanism to lower it during high winds. It was noted that the flag is a 3x5' nylon flag and recently a proposal was obtained for work to the monument, the contractor was not concerned about a flag flying.

R. Killeen also shared that the Conservation Commission met with the property owner of the former Country Charm building and that he has 15 days to remove the debris. R. Killeen shared that the property owner has plans to turn the space into commercial use.

R. DeAngelis shared that he had spoken with the Assessor about the storage containers at Casella inquiring if they are charged a personal property tax. He also inquired about the Adams Fire District and the Town Administrator shared that special counsel continues to work with the DOR on an answer, he stated that they should be billed regardless. R. DeAngelis inquired about the surety bond for the solar array on East Harbor Road, the Town Administrator will follow up with the Treasurer who handles that to ensure that the bond is in place.

M. Francesconi shared that the Bill Lewis Memorial Fishing Derby and Picnic will be Sunday September 28, 2025.

Adjournment
A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by J. Levesque to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m.
Roll Call Vote: M. Francesconi - Yes; J. Levesque – Yes; R. Killeen – Yes, R. DeAngelis – Yes; S. McGrath- Yes
Motion Carries: 5-0

Respecfully Submitted;
Jennifer Morse
Town Administrator
August 20, 2025

Document List

1. Agenda - August 19, 2025
2. Email – Nocher Realty
3. Email – Matt Chaput

Approved: 9/5/25