TOWN OF CHESHIRE

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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Board of Selectmen

MEETING MINUTES –SEPTEMBER 16, 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 September 16, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Board of Selectmen Present:	Jason Levesque, Vice Chair Ray Killeen, Member Michelle Francesconi, Member Ron DeAngelis, Member
Board of Selectmen Absent :	Shawn McGrath, Chair
Finance Committee Present:	Jeff Chaput, Chair Patrick Pettit Kathy Levesque Mickey Biagini
Finance Committee Absent:	Austin Alibozek

Others Present: Jennifer Morse, Town Administrator; Lynn Melchiori; Peter Traub; Sabrina Damms, I Berkshires; Whitney Flynn; Superintendent James Brosnan, Northern Berkshire Vocational Regional School District; Melanie Medon; Business Manager Northern Berkshire Vocational Regional School District; William Craig, Cheshire Representative Northern Berkshire Vocational Regional School District.

Summary of Votes:

• Finance Committee: Vote to adjourn at 6:40 p.m.	4-0
• Vote to approve the Consent Agenda, minus the minutes of 9/5/25	4-0
• Vote to approve a one day liquor license for the Hoosac Hose Co. 9/28/25	3-0-1
• Board of Selectmen: Vote to adjourn at 7:20 p.m.	4-0

Open Regular Meeting and Pledge of Allegiance

J. Levesque called the meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order at 6:01 p.m.
J. Chaput called the meeting of the Finance Committee to order at 6:01 p.m.

Northern Berkshire Vocational Regional School District – Debt Authorization

Superintendent James Brosnan and Business Manager Melanie Medon joined the boards to discuss the letter sent on September 8, 2025. The letter reported that the Massachusetts

School Building Authority (MSBA) voted to approve the proposed accelerated repair project for a new roof, window and door replacement and ADA compliance improvements.

The Superintendent shared that the district for the past thirty years has invested $20,000,000 on improvements while asking for assistance from the towns only for the roof project in 1997 at $1,200,000 and in 2010 for locker room and gymnasium updates costing $750,000. The Superintendent noted that some of the twenty million in repairs included boilers, heating systems, ventilations improved parking lots and sidewalks, field improvements, vocational education equipment, computer, software and grant funding the $3,300,000 new HVAC building in 2024.

The Superintendent gave an in-depth presentation on the project which is designed to replace the 28-year-old roof, replace the single pane glass from 1961 and making the facility handicap accessible. They noted that the energy savings alone will be significant and the safety of the students and staff will be enhanced with the glass replacement project. The Superintendent shared that the school committee voted on September 3, 2025, to incur debt in the amount of $16,779,269 for the project. MSBA approves paying 64% of the costs leaving an estimated $7,409,281 to be borrowed by the district towns over a fifteen-year term. He noted that the packet of information contained the estimated borrowing schedule.

J. Levesque inquired the rates would change based on student enrollment and the Superintendent responded that it locks in for the duration of the project. In Fiscal Year 2027 the assessment will be interest only, Cheshire percentage of the borrowing will be 8.9% for fifteen years for an estimated total of $863,000.

R. DeAngelis inquired if the cost of the engineers and architect are in the borrowed funds – the response was that McCann put money up front and will be seeking reimbursement from MSBA who negotiated the project manager and engineering firms.

P. Pettit inquired about the abatement process and was informed that the engineers have done the complete study.

The Town Administrator shared that she had spoken with the Department of Revenue Legal Director, Ken Woodland regarding the debt authorization as the Town does not have funds available without a debt exclusion. She outlined the three choices;

1. The Board can choose to forego a Special Town Meeting within 60 days, have the question on the Annual Town Election Ballot and then vote it at the Annual Town Meeting (election before appropriation)
2. The Board can choose to forego a Special Town Meeting within 60 days, have the Annual Town Meeting and then have a Special Election by September 15th.
3. The Board can choose to hold a Special Town Meeting, however that sparks a Special Election to be held within 90 days.

William Craig, Cheshire Representative and taxpayer stated that as the only representative ever from Cheshire to the district and serving on the facilities subcommittee that the Superintendent and the School Committee have the best interest in the quality of education for the children. He noted that yes, this project is expensive but highlighted all the efforts of

the Superintendent to keep the cost to the taxpayer low. He discussed maintaining the building and the great success of the HVAC building which is in its third year with no expense to the towns.

R. Killeen stated that it would be a mistake not to support this project and the trade school.

M. Francesconi said that it is comforting as an elected official and taxpayer that the Superintendent is so involved in the project and noted that positive impacts of McCann on Cheshire students and families.

J. Levesque noted the financial prudence of the district and noted that they have not come to the town for capital projects for a long time.

Superintendent Brosnan thanked the board for their time and left the meeting at 6:36 p.m.

The Board and Finance Committee discussed briefly having the question proposed to the voters at the Annual Town meeting when Superintendent Brosnan can be present followed by a Special Election, no decisions were made and the topic will be added to the next Board of Selectmen meeting for further discussion.

Finance Committee Adjournment
A motion was made by J. Chaput and seconded by P. Pettit to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting at 6:40 p.m.
Vote: Unanimous

Appointment – Veterans Agent Kurt Durocher
Kurt Durocher , Veterans Agent, joined the board to explain his role as regional Veterans Agent sharing that most of the work he does for Cheshire is Chapter 115 benefits. He shared that he is trying to reach out to widows of veterans as they benefit from the Chapter 115 program. Mr. Durocher gave explanation of the various Federal and Sate benefits noting that his office also issues ID cards for Veterans a very popular service. Discussion turned to the Hero's Act exemptions which Mr. Durocher is not currently recommending adoption of the exemptions to towns as the additional expense is not reimbursed by the state as other programs are at a rate of 75%. Mr. Durocher noted that he is working with some towns to incorporate Veteran Only parking at town buildings. He also shared that he will be speaking with the Flag Keeper regarding flag etiquette and purchasing full size flags at a lower price. The Town Administrator shared that Sandra Sloane was looking for a return call regarding hometown hero banners and he stated that he is hoping to create a "Friends of Veterans" to raise money for such projects. The Town Administrator offered private space within town offices for Mr. Durocher to meet with veterans as needed.

Board of Selectmen Discussion/Decision Items

- **Special Town Meeting – Set Date/Discussion Potential Articles (FY25 Invoice, W. Mountain Bridge Easement, HVRSD Regional Agreement Amendment, NBVRSD Debt Authorization)**

The Town Administrator stated that she didn't believe the board was ready to set a Special Town Meeting date, however there are several topics to be addressed this fall.

- FY25 Board of Health Invoice for Water Testing
- West Mountain Road Bridge Easement - In order to move forward with the West Mountain Road project a temporary easement (200 sf) owned by Mark and Wendy Warner will need to be taken, the appraisal is in the packet and town counsel if working on the draft warrant article.
- HVRSD Regional Agreement Amendment – Superintendent Dean shared last week that the agreement has been reviewed and will be forwarded to town counsel soon for review, he indicated that the amendment should be ready for town meeting in the next sixty days.
- NBVRSD Debt Authorization

Consent Agenda
Minutes – September 5, 2025 (Postponed)
Accounts Payable/Payroll Warrants
Whitney's Farm Market One Day Liquor Licenses

A motion was made by M. Francesconi and seconded by J. Levesque to approve the consent agenda minus the minutes of September 5, 2025.
Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis – Yes; R. Killeen- Yes; M. Francesconi – Yes; J. Levesque- Yes
Motion Carries: 4-0

Public Comment
None

Announcements
R. DeAngelis shared that he had attended the MPO meeting in Dalton which through BRPC on the TIP program for large infrastructure projects. He noted that water can be included in the road project.

Any other business not anticipated 48 hours prior to the meeting
The Town Administrator shared that she had a request for a One Day Liquor License for the Hoosac Hose Company – Bill Lewis Fishing Derby.
A motion was made by J. Levesque and seconded by R. Killeen to approve the one-day liquor license for the Hoosac Hose Company.
Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis – Yes; R. Killeen- Yes; M. Francesconi – Abstain; J. Levesque- Yes
Motion Carries: 3-0-1

Adjournment
A motion was made by J. Levesque and seconded by M. Francesconi to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m.
Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis- Yes; R. Killeen – Yes; M. Francesconi- Yes; J. Levesque – Yes
Motion Carries: 4-0-0

Respecfully Submitted;

Jennifer Morse
Town Administrator
September 18, 2025

Document List

1. Agenda - September 16, 2025
2. NBVRSD Letter dated September 4, 2025
3. 231 West Mountain Road Appraisal Report
4. Adams Fire District Invoices
5. CMRK, Inc – New Clothing Bins
6. DEP – 2024 "how much Trash did we throw away"
7. Highway Department Activity Report
8. Veterans Services Presentation

Approved: 9/30/25