TOWN OF CHESHIRE

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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Board of Selectmen

MEETING MINUTES –February 17, 2026

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 February 17, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.

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

Others Present: Jennifer Morse, Town Administrator; Timothy Garner, Interim Chief of Police; Whitney Flynn, Town Clerk; Corey McGrath, DPW Director; Erin Paris, Administrative Assistant; Breanna Steele, iBerkshires; Bob Tetlow; Peter Traub; Irene Bator; Christine Emerson, Library Trustee; Karen Drain, Library Trustee; John Bianchi, Library Trustee.

Summary of Votes:

- Vote to waive 120 day waiting period, Gwozdz APR Project 5-0
- Vote to deny funding request for Gwozdz APR Project 5-0
- Vote to approve one day liquor licenses for Cheshire Rod & Gun Club 3-0-2
- Vote to appoint Erin Paris as Administrative Assistant 5-0
- Vote to approve the consent agenda 5-0
- Vote to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:39 p.m. 5-0

S. McGrath called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with two recording devices (iBerkshires and Town Administrator)

Appointments

- **Town Clerk, Whitney Flynn**
  Whitney Flynn, Town Clerk shared the Annual Town Election Date (May 4, 2026)and positions, nomination papers and deadlines. The Town Clerk also shared that the Annual Town Census was mailed to all residents. The Town Administrator inquired as to how the town report dedication was selected having been presented with a name. The Town Clerk said that she was thinking Rebecca Herzog as she worked for the town for thirty years, she also mentioned Willliam Furey. S. McGrath suggested the late Reverend William Furey and the Town Administrator shared that was the name that was presented to her as well. S. McGrath felt that Reverend Fureys involvement in the community and as a Chaplain to the Fire and Police departments he was a good fit. S. McGrath pointed

out Rev Furey would be more suitable for such recognition and the Town Administrator suggested an acknowledgement for Rebecca Herzog. The Town Clerk will draft the dedication and present it to the board to review prior to printing. The Town Clerk then shared details and ideas for "Vote Today" Lawn Sign Campaign to gain awareness and participation in town voting. The Town Clerk then shared the Rabies Vaccination Clinic on April 8, 2026, at the Cheshire Police Station.

- **Police Department Updates, Interim Chief of Police**
  Interim Chief, Tim Garner, discussed the lack of coverage in town, stating that the Massachusetts State Police will try to be available as much as possible but we cannot depend on that alone, the town needs to look at properly staffing our Police Department with qualified candidates. The Town Administrator shared that it took the State Police an hour and twenty minutes to respond to a call last week at Town Offices. Chief Garner presented a proposed budget moving forward indicating the substantial increase needed to be aligned with other Police Departments within Berkshire County. He provided information from neighboring towns with salary comparisons along with a proposed work schedule of what is needed in town. The police department responded to 3,456 call last year. He shared that the new cruiser is in town getting prepped for radio and laptop installations needed prior to being put into the fleet. The Chief provided sample picture of the new lettering and graphics for the cruiser. Chief Garner shared that three (3) new AED's obtained for the Police Department from a grant have arrived and will be in service soon. The Police Department has worked diligently in making sure they are up to date with the Police Department Policies & Procedures. The Chief is continuing to work on delinquent payments from vendors for details and is happy to see some progress in the amount of outstanding funds.

- **Cheshire Library, John Bianchi**
  John indicated the library has been diligently working to make sure they are taking books out of circulation that are not being utilized and ensuring we have a wide variety of reading materials for all ages and generations. Mr. Bianchi discussed the youth collection and importance of getting the younger generation into reading and the hopes of the trustees to expand the library, which will include a reading nook. He then discussed leasing one of the two spaces available upstairs to expand said Youth Area in the Library, the space would be used for storage freeing up room in the larger room. Mr. Bianchi said the library could afford and is offering $150.00 monthly for a lease term of 3 years. The Town Administrator shared that the space is currently under contract with Nocher Real Estate, however she will reach out to see if removing that room is allowable. M. Francesconi spoke about the importance of the library expanding allowing for a children's section. There was a brief mention of the concern with the heating cost of that building. The Town Administrator will follow up with Mr. Bianchi to work out details for a possible lease after speaking with Nocher Real Estate.

Board of Selectmen Discussion/Decision Items

- **Rod and Gun Club One Day Liquor Licenses - March 7, March 14, & March 21**
  A motion was made by M. Francesconi and seconded by R. DeAngelis to approve the one-day liquor licenses as requested.

Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis – Yes; R. Killeen – Yes; J. Levesque- Abstain; M. Francesconi – Yes; S. McGrath – Abstain.
Motion Carries: 3-0-2

- **APR Project John J Gwozdz Project Id# 26A01**
  The Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) application for property located on Fales Road in Cheshire owned by John Gwozdz was reviewed. The request to waive the 120-day notice period was approved.
  A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by R. DeAngelis to approve the 120-day notice period.
  Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis – Yes; R. Killeen – Yes; J. Levesque – Yes; M. Francesconi-Yes; S. McGrath – Yes
  Motion Carries: 5-0

  Co-holder Funding Request – APR Gwozdz
  In addition to the 120-day notice there was a request for funding from the Town for the project in the amount of $30,500. The Town Administrator spoke to the Assessor's office and they have never seen such a request, the property record cards were included within the packet. The APR value of the property has been determined to be $610,000. Discussion regarding the lack of available funds for such projects resulted that the board is not willing to seek approval for this contribution.
  A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by J. Levesque to deny funding portion as the board is not willing to seek approval for this contribution.
  Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis – Yes; R. Killeen – Yes; J. Levesque – Yes; M. Francesconi-Yes; S. McGrath – Yes Motion Carries: 5-0

- **Administrative Assistant to the Boards – Appointment Ratification**
  R Killeen noted that Erin Paris had been interviewed last week and was offered the position of Part Time Administrative Assistant to the Boards. M. Francesconi noted that two members of the board were not aware and that an interview had taken place until the agenda was posted online and that the proper hiring process was not followed. R. DeAngelis expressed his displeasure about the hiring process as well. S. McGrath apologized for the oversight and assured that it will not happen again.
  A motion was made by R. DeAngelis and seconded by J. Levesque to approve the approve the hiring of Erin Paris as Administrative Assistant to the Boards.
  Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis – Yes; R. Killeen – Yes; J. Levesque – Yes; M. Francesconi-Yes; S. McGrath – Yes Motion Carries: 5-0

Consent Agenda
- Minutes – February 04, 2026
- Accounts Payable and Payroll Warrant

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

Town Administrator Updates

- **West Mountain Road Bridge Project** - The Town Administrator shared that the bid opening for the project was earlier today and that the lowest bid was from CD Davenport in the amount of $770,000. The total grant award is $500,000 she will be reaching out to DOT with a request for additional funding.
- **FY27 Budget** - The budget is a slow work in progress; numbers have not been received from the school districts. It was noted that HVRSD is estimated to increase $150,000 or 4.7% higher.
- **Northern Berkshire Community Television** - The Town Administrator shared that Northern Berkshire Community Television would like to start recording and playing the meetings on March 3, 2026. There were questions regarding archives and public records requests that will be followed up on.

Public Comment

Peter Traub inquired about why the Senior Center not available for events on Holidays. It was indicated that this was already discussed in prior meeting and due to state and local town holiday closings there was not staffing available for possible event preparation breakdown and/or safety concerns.

Events and Upcoming Agenda Items

Hoosac Hose Company Annual Pancake Breakfast, Sunday February 22, 2026, 8:00-11:30
Ice Skating Neon Party February 27, 2026, 6pm-9pm

Adjournment

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by J. Levesque to adjourn the meeting at 7:39 p.m.
Roll Call Vote: J. Levesque- Yes; R. DeAngelis – Yes; R. Killeen – Yes; S. McGrath – Yes; M. Francesconi – Yes
Motion Carries: 5-0

Respecfully Submitted;
Erin Paris
Administrative Assistant to the Boards
February 25, 2026

Document List

1. Agenda – February 17, 2026
2. Town Clerk Documents
3. Police Chief Budget
4. Cheshire Anthenaeum Expense Ledger
5. APR Project Packet-John Gwozdz
6. Draft Minutes – February 4, 2026
7. Aggregation Program Rate Increase Notification
8. Pancake Breakfast Flyer