TOWN OF CHESHIRE

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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Board of Selectmen & Finance Committee

MEETING MINUTES –March 24, 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 March 24, 2026, at 6:15 p.m.

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

Others Present: Jennifer Morse, Town Administrator; iBerkshires; Lynn Melchiori; Bob Tetlow; Peter Traub; Art Kaufman; Corey McGrath, DPW Director; Tom Francesconi, Fire Chief; Tim Garner, Interim Police Chief.

Summary of Votes:

Vote to transition the boat to the Fire Department	4-0
Vote to approve the minutes of March 5, 2026 with a correction	4-0
Vote to allow the OSRC to investigate funding options for trails	4-0
Vote to appoint Val Tyska to the Events Committee	4-0
Vote to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 7:19 p.m.	4-0

S. McGrath called the meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order at 6:15 p.m. with one recording device (iBerkshires)

The Finance Committee did not have a quorum and did not call to order.

Appointments

- **Fire Chief/Police Chief regarding Harbormaster Position and Boat**

Interim Chief Garner and Chief Francesconi joined the board to discuss the harbormaster boat. Chief Garner explained that the boat was obtained through a grant in 2009 to be used

as a police/fire rescue boat and for community policing. At that time a police officer took interest in placing the buoys and monitoring the lake, when the officer retired another individual was interested in the same however was not a police officer. Harbormaster was placed on the side of the boat replacing the rescue lettering as the new individual did not have police powers. Chief Garner stated that the Police Department does not need a harbormaster or the boat and that it would be better suited with the Fire Department who will maintain, train and use the boat as a rescue vessel. Chief Garner stated that the lake is state owned and the Environmental Police Officers (EPO) have the enforcement. There was question about the current dock permitting and the Town Administrator will reach out to the EPO's for guidance on proper dock permitting. There was discussion about re-lettering the boat again to Fire/Rescue and M. Francesconi stated it should be re-lettered as there is a perception that it is a law enforcement boat. Chief Francesconi noted that many members of the department have the required boating safety course and the remainder will be offered the free course. The Fire Department will continue to place the buoys for safety reasons.
A motion was made by S. McGrath and second by R Killeen to transition the boat to the Fire Department, eliminate the harbormaster role and clarify dock permitting requirements with the state.
Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis – Yes; M. Francesconi – Yes; S. McGrath –Yes; R. Killeen – Yes
Motion Carries: 4-0

Joint Meeting of Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee

- **Fire Chief – Reserve Fund Transfer Request**
  The Finance Committee was unable to act on the request due to no quorum, this will be added to the next Finance Committee agenda. Chief Francesconi reminded members present that due to a clerical error by the town clerk office when borrowing, that $13,906.94 was removed from his expense account to pay for the storage/loan/interest on the new fire engine before the town could take ownership. Two members of the fire department who are interior fire fighters need Personal Protection Equipment which is more than $4,000 for pants and jackets for each member. The current PPE is ripped and not serviceable, making it a safety concern. Chief Francesconi also shared that he had to replace 2,000 feet of hose which failed during the annual hose testing, the hose was from 1992, the cost to replace the hose was $18,500. The Chief is requesting that the funds from the engine be returned to equip the firefighters with the necessary turnout gear (PPE).

- **Police Department** –
  Interim Chief Garner shared additional salary comparisons with the board. S. McGrath inquired as to why the Part Time Officers were still being proposed. Chief Garner explained to fill the gaps in the schedule that PT Officers are needed, most departments are moving away from the position as training requirements make it difficult for PT Officers. Chief Garner stated that the State Police have really helped the town in the last several months but due to the size of the territory they cover they cannot always be available. M. Francesconi noted that a recent call required police before medical could be deployed and the response was twenty-four minutes. R. Killeen inquired if the proposed budget would allow for incentives for police officers with extra credentials and/or second languages.

- **Department of Public Works**
  Corey McGrath, Director joined the board to discuss the reduction of the budget due mainly to shifts and the restructuring of a position. W. McGovern inquired about the Transfer Station metal/drop-off policy and the Director explained that the town receives funds for metal, a new swap shop will be put into place this spring. The Director also shared that the Snow and Ice account has taken a hit after the rough winter, gravel roads are better this year after a lot of drainage work in the fall.

- S. McGrath shared that the Wiring Inspector submitted a budget yesterday afternoon that was not been added to the budget workbook. The wiring inspector is looking for an 18% increase to his salary and a second assistant. S. McGrath noted that no other building department inspectors have two assistants and the purpose of an assistant is to cover during vacations/absences. M. Francesconi thought that perhaps the assistant was out of town a lot during the summer months and that both are sometimes away at the same time. The Town Administrator will notify the wiring inspector of the discussion. There was discussion about the expense line and training requirements. R DeAngelis suggested a training line within the entire budget to cover all training costs, the Town Administrator will reach out to all departments to get the details of training within their current expense lines.

- School Districts – S. McGrath inquired about the movement within the HVRSD budget stating it would be helpful to have worksheet by expenses showing how each is funded stating it would be a more transparent picture of education. The Town Administrator will email the Finance Committee and ask them to formulate questions for both school districts and the Board of Selectmen members will email a list of questions to the administrator to be reviewed at the next meeting.

- It was noted that the total deficit amount stands at $360,608.

Board of Selectmen Discussion/Decision Items

- **Consent Agenda- Minutes - March 5, 2026**

M. Francesconi noted that one correction was not made to the document, which was a correction to the motion on page 4.

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by R. DeAngelis to approve the minutes with the correction.

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

Motion Carries: 4-0

- **Open Space & Recreation Update – ATV Trails Grant**

S. McGrath read the letter from Patriot All Terrain riding club. It was noted that the creation of trails was outlined in the survey when updating the Open Space and Recreation Plan. An audience member inquired on the location of proposed trails which is Town owned water department land off of West Mountain Road. Art Kaufman, Open Space and Recreation member shared that the trails would be multipurpose allowing hiking, biking, ATV's and snowmobiles.

A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by R. Killeen to allow the Open Space and Recreation Committee to investigate funding options for trail maintenance and development.
Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis – Yes; M. Francesconi – Yes; S. McGrath –Yes; R. Killeen – Yes
Motion Carries: 4-0

- **Events Committee Appointment - Val Tyska**

A motion was made by M. Francesconi and seconded by S. McGrath to appoint Val Tyska to the Events Committee
Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis – Yes; M. Francesconi – Yes; S. McGrath –Yes; R. Killeen – Yes
Motion Carries: 4-0

Public Comment
The Town Administrator shared that she had received a check today from the Adams Fire District in the amount of $25,972.75 for the assessed PILOT tax in Fiscal Year 2023, 2024 and 2025. The remaining payment will be received by June 30th for Fiscal Year 2026.

The DPW Director shared that the Town will be hosting a Massachusetts Water Works Class on Thursday March 26, 2026.

Upcoming Agenda Items & Events
M. Francesconi shared that the Hoosac Hose Company fundraising letters have gone out in the mail. The 125th Fireman's Ball is scheduled for April 25, 2026.

Board of Selectmen Adjournment
A motion was made by S. McGrath and seconded by M. Francesconi to adjourn the meeting at 7:19 p.m.
Roll Call Vote: R. DeAngelis – Yes; M. Francesconi – Yes; S. McGrath –Yes; R. Killeen – Yes
Motion Carries: 4-0

Respecfully Submitted;
Jennifer Morse
Town Administrator
March 25, 2026

Document List
1. Agenda – March 25, 2026
2. Draft Budget Workbook
3. Police Budget
4. NBVRSD Budget
5. HVRSD Budget
6. DRAFT Minutes – March 5, 2026
7. Patriot All Terrain Letter