

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING HELD
ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2025, 6:30 P.M., COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 84 SOUTH MAIN
ST., CHESHIRE, CT 06410**

Present:

Peter Talbot, Chair; Jim Jinks, Vice Chair; Fiona Pearson, John Milone, David Veleber; Greg Wolff, Tricia Cramer, Deena Allard

Staff/Guests: Sean M. Kimball, Town Manager; Andrew Martelli, Assistant Town Manager; Frederick Jortner, Acting Police Chief

Absent: Don Walsh

Peter Talbot called the special meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Noelle Shepard called the roll, and a quorum was present.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

3. REPORT AND ACTION

Peter Talbot read a statement that included the timeline of the case and the Town's contracting the independent investigation.

Sean Kimball read a statement thanking everyone for being in attendance. He mentioned the investigation report that was released. He reviewed some of the actions taken to rebuild the facility and trust. He discussed training, animal intake, cleanliness, regular pest control measures, progress reports monthly, surveillance cameras and body worn cameras, restructuring the Animal Control division. He thanked the advocates, media, and he introduced Acting Chief Jortner.

Acting Chief Jortner read his statement regarding next steps. He explained that in July, he was honored to be appointed Acting Police Chief. He further explained that the timing of departmental contract negotiations allowed for restructuring the division and included several layers of supervisory oversight at the Animal Shelter. He expressed that Lt. Miller will remain a part of the solution and that he wants to partner with the community and those with good ideas, open to partnerships. Recruitment for a new ACO will start on Monday.

John Milone read a statement from Councilor Walsh.

Town Councilors all made statements.

Sean Kimball and Acting Chief Jortner reviewed the status of the consent order - facility improvements are the final remaining items which should be completed in October.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT.

Jeen Melendez thanked the Acting Chief Jortner and everyone who met and talked with her.

She expressed her belief that the findings of the investigation were not a surprise, and there is more evidence than it covered. She asked that the Town Council not suspend communication moving forward. She explained that she

is working with Acting Police Chief along with the Assistant Animal Control Office, sharing their ideas and best practices. She thanked various individuals including the volunteers.

Lori Barnes expressed her gratitude that the Town Council is talking to the group and discussed moving forward. She expressed that she is impressed with what Acting Chief Jortner has done so far.

Holly Fontaine, Vernon, CT, thanked Mel and Rob as well as Jeen Melendez. She further thanked the volunteers at the rallies and meetings.

Marina Bagliore, Southington, CT, expressed that she is surprised that the Town Council is taking accountability. She expressed that she has questions, and that there is a lot of work to do. She mentioned that she is thankful for the new Chief.

Peter Talbot read a public comment received electronically from Jim Block.

Maura Murcko, 91 Lynwood Dr Ext., thanked the Town Council for their heartfelt sentiments. She quoted the Town Attorney Donofrio from the July 8th meeting. She feels that the residents elected the Town Council, not the attorney.

Lisette read quotes from the independent investigation report. She read the definition of animal cruelty in the Connecticut General Statutes. She expressed her belief that the ACO exercised animal cruelty.

Michelle Regunis, 315 North Brooksvale, thanked the animal advocate groups for attending every meeting. She commented that the report does not discuss the ACO's alleged timecard and salary discrepancies. She asked if the town is seeking reimbursement, and if arrest warrants would be pursued.

Kathy Regunis, 60 Clintonville Road, Northford, CT, mentioned that there were countless people who worked tirelessly and two deserve recognition – Jeen Melendez and Kristine Cormier. She asked for clarification as to when vet care will be given moving forward.

Lorraine Sarno, 321 South Cherry Street, Wallingford, commented about the ACO receiving a pension and asked where the justice and accountability is. She expressed her belief that the ACO's license should be revoked.

Cari DeLorenzo, introduced herself as the former ACO for Waterbury, expressed that she could take care of the number of dogs by herself. She mentioned she had volunteered to come down to the Cheshire Animal Shelter.

Melissa Thompson, 14 Oak Lane, Prospect, mentioned that she talked with Attorney Dagostine in May 2024. She commented that she told him that all the dogs need to be groomed and asked him to see the dogs or send someone else.

Kathy Regunis, 60 Clintonville Road, Northford, CT, alleged that in May 2024, legal representation knew that there was abuse was going on.

Linda Pleva, 23 Norton Place, Plainville, inquired whose responsibility it is to see that the ACO is brought to justice and arrested.

Marina Bagliore, Southington, CT, inquired what would happen if the advocacy group never came out.

Lorraine Sarno, 312 South Cherry Street, Wallingford, inquired how the ACO can retire with a pension.

Michelle Regunis, 315 North Brooksvale, asked if the Town of Cheshire can issue a warrant.

Janis Copes, 25 Salem Road, Prospect, expressed concern that the ACO could go elsewhere and was not fired.

5. ADJOURNMENT.

David Veleber motioned to adjourn the meeting, and Jim Jinks seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion passed unanimously by those present, 8-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Attest:

Noelle Shepard, Management Specialist