

CHESHIRE PERFORMING AND FINE ARTS COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, January 20, 2026, 6:15 PM

Cheshire Public Library

104 Main Street

Cheshire, CT 06410

Roll: Kristy Endriss, Susan Fenaughty, Katie Giampietro, Joyce Karklel, Donna Lodynsky, Denise Lohr, Donna Myjak, Ilona Somogyi, Youchung Torok

Committee Members Present: Kristy Endriss, Susan Fenaughty, Joyce Karklel, Donna Lodynsky, Denise Lohr, Donna Myjak, Ilona Somogyi, Youchung Torok

Others Present:

Joan Pilarczyk (Director, Artsplace)

Donna Mark (President, Friends of CPFA/Artsplace, Inc.)

Greg Wolff (Cheshire Town Council Liaison: Cheshire Performing and Fine Arts Committee)

Jill Veiga

Absent:

Katie Giampietro (CPFA Committee member)

John Gawlak (Director Cheshire Parks and Recreation)

1. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM - A quorum was present for this meeting.

2. CALL TO ORDER AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG - Chairwoman Lodynsky called the meeting to order at 6:25 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. WELCOME REMARKS – Ms. Lodynsky welcomed members and guests Lynn Gannon, Jane Leukart, Diane Calabro, Ray Bennet and Ron Gagliardi.

4. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Cheshire Town Players

a. Guest Lynn Gannon, from *Cheshire Town Players*, mentioned that the Fall production of 'Blithe Spirit' sold 223 tickets for 4 performances. She said that the group learned a lot and are planning more shows. Kristy Endriss built and designed the set for this first production. The group used the Set Shop costumes and set pieces, and received advice from Dana Sachs, who may direct a future play.

b. Moreover, the group hopes to have an art gallery display at the *ReRead Books Reading Room*. They would like to use the Cheshire Public Library public rooms for some rehearsals. Ms. Lodynsky recommended contacting Ms. Sandy Hernandez.

c. Ms. Gannon mentioned that *Cheshire Town Players* is actively searching for a local playwright for the Spring. Ms. Pilarczyk recommended contacting the new Town Coordinator of Grants and Community Engagement, Savannah Blantz-Maria, who will be unveiling the *Cheshire Town Square*. This newsletter will include an event corner, a civic corner and a spotlight corner. Ms. Lodynsky recommended sending information about Artsday to be

included in this newsletter. Mr. Wolff mentioned that by signing up for the newsletter, subscribers get updates about events.

d. Ms. Gannon mentioned that *Nelson Hall* had offered their complete staging system, which will be used in the *Reading Room* and help with viewer stage visibility.

e. Ms. Gannon reported also that the group will be hosting theater games, that Lyman Orchards has reached out to work together on some events, and that there will be a February Open House.

f. There is a plan for a one act play in April, perhaps using a Jack Levine play, or another local playwright. A cabaret fundraiser is planned and “Shakespeare in The Park” is planned for August, perhaps *The Tempest*.

America 250 Celebration and Steering Committee

- a. Guest speakers included Mr. Ray Bennett, Town Historian Diane Calabro, and Mr. Ron Gagliardi
- b. Diane Calabro related that there were three projects proposed for community engagement in the America 250 Celebration this July:

1. July 4th Declaration Signing Event – Mr. Bennet

The Bennet family has been reading the Declaration of Independence on the Cheshire Green since 2013. In 2026, the ceremony will be held in Bartlem Park. Mr. Bennet recounted one of the stories about the signers. He showed the commission a website that has stories about all of the signers. He asked if there is anyone who would like to volunteer and take part in preparing the event.

2. Time Capsule – Ron Gagliardi

In 1976 a time capsule was created by Norton School. It will be unearthed this year. Mr. Gagliardi is hoping that perhaps there will be a smaller capsule created this year and put into a safe. He also mentioned an idea of Cheshire residents creating their own time capsules at home. He recommended pizza boxes that can be stored at home. Mr. Gagliardi has asked Cheshire Pizza if they might donate boxes for residents to use. One could also use something as small as an *Altoids* box.

3. Graphic History Book of Cheshire – Diane Calabro

Ms. Calabro mentioned that his project is adhering strictly to the State and Connecticut Humanities guidelines. There will be opportunities for residents to speak with the team on Saturdays at the Cheshire Public Library.

It is intended to not only include known Cheshire historical figures but to highlight lesser-known figures as well, people’s memories of Cheshire from the last century, including personal events and locations that may not exist in town anymore. Residents can provide eight photographs of a story from their life in Cheshire and have a local artist create the images and book page. Local civic groups and businesses can have a page created for them, as well.

The public is also asked to create images of the Cheshire Cat. Those images will be anonymous and miniaturized as a collage on one page which will be used to separate chapters in the graphic history book. All images will be reviewed by Arnet Talbot and the Cheshire Attorney for content. The entire project will not be finished by July. Ms. Calabro has been in contact with Margaret Kimball, and recommends viewing her graphic novel which has maps of Cheshire and references to the town. She also mentioned the book “Feeding Ghosts” by Tessa Hulls.

All the information about these projects is available with examples on the Cheshire Town page: <https://www.cheshirect.gov/628/America-250-Celebration-and-Steering-Com>

5. Approval of December 9, 2025 Meeting Minutes

1. Ms. Lodynsky asked whether it had been announced formally at the last meeting that Ms. Jane Bate had resigned from the Committee. Ms. Somogyi said that it had not. Mr. Wolff mentioned that the freed position is shown on the Town webpage.

Ms. Karklel made a motion to accept the minutes, Ms. Lohr seconded the motion.

6. Treasurer’s Report: Donna Myjak

- a. Ms. Myjak reported that 58.1% of the budget has been used and is on target.

Ms. Karklel made a motion to accept the report, with Ms. Fenaughty seconding.

7. Secretary’s Report: Denise Lohr

- a. Ms. Lohr read out a thank you card from the Cheshire Town Human Services staff for the donation of \$100 collected for the holiday season by the committee.
- b. She also mentioned that Mary and Eric Hyson made a donation to *Connecticut Food Share* in the name of the committee.

8. Friends of CPFA Report: Donna Mark

- a. Ms. Mark reported that Friends held their three-member board meeting earlier that day. The Friends will have four yearly meetings, going forward, however, the committee can contact Friends with any matters any time.
- b. Thanks to the success of the Mahjong Tournament there are enough funds to continue the *Arts Heals* program. There will be no new planned fundraising this year.
- c. Ms. Mark stipulated that she will be meeting with Cheshire Parks and Recreation staff to discuss the History of Cheshire artwork for the *Rails to Trails* site. She stipulated that their permission is necessary to get this project accomplished. Permission was asked and received from the State of Connecticut. The free standing 4x5 foot art pieces would stand along the trail. The first two pieces are sponsored by Friends and they have artists in mind. Further pieces can be sponsored by residents or businesses and they can pick the artist of their choice from a list of artists approved by Friends. The idea is to have an art gallery along the trail.

9. Parks and Recreation Report: John Gawlak

- a. No report.

10. Artsplace Report: Joan Pilarczyk

- a. Ms. Pilarczyk reported that she had submitted the 2026 Artsplace budget last Friday. \$180,000 will need to be brought in.
- b. She mentioned that 245 students are attending 31 weekly classes in this session and 41 attending 6 workshops, which is about the usual number.
- c. There will be a children's art show offered at the Cheshire Public Library in June. Money from the Shalvoy Account will be used for matting artwork.
- d. Ms. Pilarczyk reported that the *Holiday at the Factory* was a great success with warm cider and coloring pages made available for participants upstairs at Artsplace. Town Historian Diane Calabro was present with pages for participants to draw a Cheshire Cat for the Cheshire Graphic History book as part of the *America 250 Celebration*.
- e. Ms. Pilarczyk updated the committee about the "Original Works" fundraiser and that it brought in \$700.00.

11. Old business

- a. *Artsday Report:* Ms. Endriss mentioned that Artsday will take place March 15th with a morning session from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon, and another from 1:00pm to 3:00 pm. The same artists will be available for both sessions. She asked for volunteers to sign up on paper or on Signup Genius online. Members will be needed for setup as floaters, for a lunch team and an Artsplace table. The yarn craft table will be working on Gods Eyes. She also reported that the box city will not be part of the program but that small boxes are needed for Deb Carter's box puppets. And that Ms. Giampietro needs paper towel tubes for making instruments. Ms. Leukart mentioned that she has mailing tubes that she could donate. Ms. Endriss will check with Ms. Giampietro whether their size would be effective.
Small pieces are needed to be cut for the *felt wall* and volunteers are needed for that project. Ms. Fenaughty reported that she will be using burlap and needs buttons and yarn for the craft. Ms. Endriss mentioned that 10 volunteers are needed to assist artists, and that Emily Lennon has already contacted current Artsplace volunteers.
Ms. Somogyi reported that yarn will be needed for the yarn table to make yarn dolls, she will bring in an example for the next meeting.
Ten tables will be available for 8 children at one sitting for the event.
Ms. Lodynsky mentioned that bags used to be provided for participants to take their crafts home but that there may not be any this year. She also mentioned that a bull horn would be good to announce intervals of time and 10-minute warnings.
There will be a charge for children ages 5-11, with no charge for sibling 5 and under.
Ms. Endriss mentioned that flyers will go out to Cheshire schools on February 15th, and be on the Cheshire Parks and Recreation sign, at Artsplace and at the Cheshire Public Library.
- b. Ms. Lodynsky mentioned that the artist to display their artwork in the Mary Baldwin Room this January 2026 is Maryam Hilliard. For the month of February, the Cheshire High School art students will show their work. Ms. Lodynsky mentioned that the calendar is full for the year but encouraged artists to apply online with jpg examples of their work.

12. New Business

- a. Ms. Endriss made a nomination for the 2026 board members:

I nominate Donna Lodynsky for President, Katie Giampietro for Vice-President, Donna Myjak for Treasurer and Denise Lohr for Secretary. Susan Fenaughty seconded and all were in favor.

b. Ms. Myjak reported the timeline for the Cheshire High School Scholarship process. On January 28th the students will receive the scholarship booklet, they submit their applications by February 22nd, the applications are sent to sponsors March 13th who must submit the recipient's name[s] by March 27th. The CPFA Scholarship subcommittee Results must be must be at the school offices by April 1st. The CPFA meeting when members will vote on the recipient is on April 21st, the subcommittee will send in the name[s] after that.

c. Ms. Pilarczyk explained the various current accounts. It is proposed that the Gift Account be dissolved and the monies to go towards the CPFA Scholarship.

Ms. Endriss made a motion to move the money, \$36.47 from the gift account to the scholarship line, seconded by Ms. Torok, all in favor.

Ms. Somogyi moved that \$94.80 be transferred to the Artsplace facility line, Ms. Karklel seconded and all were in favor.

It was proposed that the \$445.11 in the Artsplace Facility Line be used to purchase security cameras for Artsplace.

There was money raised, through concessions during Youth Theater plays, years ago for the building of an amphitheater. Since the amphitheater is up these funds could go to a sound system.

Ms. Fenaughty made a motion to donate the \$4382.08 to Cheshire Parks and Recreation and Mr. John Gawlak, Ms. Torok seconded the motion, all were in favor.

d. Ms. Lodynsky mentioned that there are two spaces available for new members due to recent changes. She introduced the two people stepping up to become members. One is known to the committee, Ms. Jill Veiga, while the other is new to some members, Ms. Jane Leukart. Ms. Leukart introduced herself as a long time Cheshire resident and currently on the Cheshire Education Foundation and working at Barker Specialty. She is interested in handcrafts.

e. The next CPFA meeting will take place at 6:15 at the Cheshire Public Library on February 10, 2026.

Motion was made by Ms. Torok to close the meeting and seconded by Ms. Endriss. The meeting ended at 7:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted by A.Wnuk