

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL HELD ON WEDNESDAY,
MARCH 11, 2026, 7:00 P.M., COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 84 SOUTH MAIN ST., CHESHIRE, CT 06410**

Present:

Peter Talbot
Jim Jinks
Fiona Pearson
Greg Wolff
Lou Todisco
David Veleber
Don Walsh

Staff/Guests: Sean Kimball, Town Manager; Andrew Martelli, Assistant Town Manager; Jim Jaskot, Finance Director; Gina DeFilio, Deputy Finance Director; Jeff Solan, Cheshire Public Schools Superintendent; Emily Taylor, Cheshire Public Schools Chief Operating Officer

Absent: Patricia Cramer, Deb Manke

1. Roll Call.

Peter Talbot called the meeting to order at 7:53 p.m. Noelle Shepard called the roll, and a quorum was present. Deb Manke recused herself from the Board of Education budget discussions and left the meeting.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Proposed FY 2026-2027 Operating and Capital Budgets.

a. Education.

Dr. Jeff Solan, Superintendent of Cheshire Public Schools, presented the FY 26-27 Board of Education approved budget request. He reviewed the state of the two new schools currently. Cheshire ranks 8th on district performance index for the entire state. He reviewed the per pupil spending.

He went over the unified sports program and how Cheshire is recognized as a top community for music in America. There are currently 4,482 students. The BOE adopted proposed budget is \$100,149,080.

He reviewed some external and internal factors – minimum wage has increased 69.4% since 2019. The educational cost sharing grant has stayed relatively the same and has not increased year over year. Contractual wage and benefit costs are also factors along with the budget for snow removal, which will likely diminish any overages that they may have had.

Since June 2025, there was an increase of 225 students. There are 831 new units possible and 91 students to date with the new developments/multifamily homes.

Dr. Solan explained that they are not adding services in this requested budget, only maintaining current services. He discussed redistricting. He reviewed the net certified staffing changes – total net increase of 8 positions due to enrollment increases.

He reviewed historical class size trend data and explained that they cut positions including a Transportation Scheduler, 3 secretary/clerical positions, 1 nurse, 5 paraeducators.

Tuition outplacement is a major budget driver along with medical benefits. He explained 2026-2027 projected revenues. He discussed the energy performance contracts.

Don Walsh asked where Cheshire falls in terms of special education spending in DRGB. Jeff Solan mentioned that he would gather this data.

Fiona Pearson asked if they were to move forward with the Town Manager's recommended cut to the BOE budget of \$300,000, what areas would they have to cut. Jeff Solan explained that, while he feels that the schools are as budgetarily lean as they can be, some areas that they may have to consider would be middle school sports, freshman athletics, electives at Cheshire High School, etc. She further mentioned that the Town Manager along with Town Councilors will be meeting with legislators to speak about educational cost sharing.

4. Public Comment.

Maria Ecke discussed that Norton Farms was approved to be subdivided into lots. She inquired how many more students would be in the schools if this went through. Peter Talbot asked her to forward her questions to him.

5. Adjournment.

Don Walsh motioned to adjourn, and Jim Jinks seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Attest:

Noelle Shepard, Management Specialist