

**MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION
AND SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 2018, 7:00P.M. IN
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410**

Present

Timothy Slocum, Budget Committee Chairman; Committee Members Jeff Falk and Sylvia Nichols. Council Chairman Robert J. Oris, Jr., Vice Chairman Paul A. Bowman, Council Members Patti Flynn-Harris, Thomas Ruocco, Peter Talbot, David Veleber. Staff: Michael A. Milone, Town Manager; James Jaskot, Finance Director; Arnett Talbot, Assistant Town Manager.

Dept. of Education: COO Vincent Masciana; BOE Members Ms. Fabiani, Ms. Sobel and Mr. Grippo.

1. ROLL CALL

Chairman Oris called the meeting to order, and read the emergency notice into the record.

The clerk called the roll and a quorum was determined to be present.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

**3. DISCUSSION AND PUBLIC COMMENT RE: TOWN COUNCIL PROPOSED
FISCAL YEAR 2018-2019 OPERATING BUDGET**

Budget Committee Chairman Slocum gave a short presentation on the proposed operating budget. A copy of the power point presentation is attached to these minutes.

Slide #2 – Total proposed budget: \$11,802,832; increase of 2.92%; proposed mill rate 33.19 mills or 1.25 mills or 3.91%; Annual tax increase for average homeowner \$291 or 3.91%; budget impacted by loss of over \$3.2M in state aid in the last two fiscal years; the budget is mostly a maintenance budget with few exceptions; projected/estimated surplus of \$1.49M due to position and spending freezes.

Slide #3 – FY 2019 Budget Components include General Government \$31,894,127, increase of \$1,208,549, 3.94%; Education \$72,108,781, increase of \$1,982,493, 2.83%; Debt \$6,547,924 (\$16,859) -.26%; CNR \$1.1M; Contingency \$125,000.

Slide #4 – Five Year Budget Comparison – average \$1,981,243; 1.93%.

Slide #5 – Five Year History-Annual Tax Increase – Average assessment \$233,288; mill rate of 30.33; Taxes \$7,069; Increase \$146; 2.09%.

Slide #6 – Five Year Revenue Comparison – FY 2019 recommended \$3,174,183, 2.9%.

Slide #7 – Tax Payment Average Taxpayer FY 2019 – Total assessment (real estate and two cars) \$7,736; tax increase of \$291, 3.91%.

Slide #8 – Proportionate Budget Revisions/BOE and Town. BOE-62.13% or \$1,982,493; Town 37.87% or \$1,208,549. Total \$3,191,042.

Slide #9 – Revenue Increase/(Decrease) – Total revenue adjustments - \$126,000.

Slide #10 – Expenditures Decrease/(Increase) – Total Expenditure Adjustments - \$297,402.

Slide #11 – Proposed Budget Revisions – General Government Expenditures -\$297,402; General Government Revenue Revisions \$126,000; Dept. of Education \$487,921.

Slide #12 – Using the model based on \$300,000 Town and BOE \$487,000, budget adjustment of \$911,323; Revised mill rate (from Town Manager's mill rate) 32.86 mill.

Slide #13 – Goals and Challenges-to stimulate and support economic growth and development, ongoing initiatives.

Slide #14 – Meeting schedule – April 18th, April 19th, April 23rd, April 24th (Budget Adoption).

Council Chairman Oris stated that the budget process is ongoing; no final decisions have been made; there are potential rearrangements and cuts to be made in the proposed budget; everything is open for discussion

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Cathleen Devlin, 61 Lanyon Drive, said she has attended the budget meetings, and recognizes that each budget item cut would result in a lower mill rate. She asked the mill rate affected by a \$50,000 cut...assuming it is very little. Ms. Devlin is a proponent of the Cheshire Public Library, frequents the Library, and questioned who frequents the Library during Sunday hours, especially when there are Friends events taking place. She is unsure these people are all Cheshire residents, and would like a counting of who uses the Library on Sunday. Ms. Devlin was unaware of the \$24,000 cost for Sunday hours, which she thinks is extravagant. Regarding the town's leaf collection service, Ms. Devlin relies on this service, did not know it cost \$15,500 to pick up leaf bags, and asked that it be looked at again as she questions its necessity. The issue of professional fees for town employees paid by the town was raised by Ms. Devlin, who said the State does not pay these fees for its employees. The amount budgeted is extravagant.

Marlena Sobel, BOE Member, 25 Flagler Avenue, thanked the Council for the time spent going through the Town department and BOE budgets. The BOE took \$400,000 out of the proposed Superintendent's budget. She said the BOE is cognizant of what the town needs, how the budget affects citizens, home values, and people want to come to Cheshire for the school system.

Mr. Talbot asked for the calculation on the effect of the \$50,000 reduction on the mill rate.

According to Mr. Milone this is .0182 of a mill; a mill = \$232; it would be about \$4.60 per taxpayer.

It was stated by Mr. Ruocco that the Council is reviewing the proposed budget which has increases in many areas. He cannot support a 4% budget increase. Mr. Ruocco commented on \$728,000 overtime costs in the budget that must be looked at, and expressed concern about the situation with the State which will not get better. He does not want to go to taxpayers to make up the shortfall of state revenue.

Chairman Oris commented on the hard work of the Council on the budget, dealing with the issues from the State budget reductions, and the serious management of the financial side of the town by the Council, BOE and Town Manager. The Council is taking time to find efficiencies where possible without cutting services, i.e. vacant positions not being filled. Mr. Oris hopes no department or department head takes budget discussions personally as the Council acts on what it must do.

4. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Slocum; seconded by Mr. Veleber.

MOVED to adjourn the Public Information Session at 7:25 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk