

**MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION AND SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2019 AT 7:00 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION AND ROOM 207 (FOR AGENDA ITEM #5), TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410**

Present

Robert J. Oris, Jr. Chairman; Paul A. Bowman, Vice Chairman; Jeffrey Falk, Sylvia Nichols, Thomas Ruocco, Timothy Slocum; Peter Talbot; David Veleber.

Absent: Patti Flynn-Harris

Staff: Sean Kimball, Town Manager; Arnett Talbot, Assistant Town Manager; James Jaskot, Finance Director.

Dept. of Education – Supt. Jeffrey Solan; COO Vincent Masciana; BOE Members Kathy Hallen, Anne Harrigan, Adam Grippo.

The Town Council adjourned the public information session, and convened the Special Town Council/Budget Committee meeting in Room 207-209.

Budget Committee Chairman Slocum opened the meeting at 8:08 p.m.

**1. ROLL CALL**

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 RE: PROPOSED FISCAL YER 2019-2020 OPERATING BUDGET.**

Revenue Increase/Decrease /Adj. GL \$7,845.

The overall increase/decrease is \$90,345.

Police Department - \$25,000\*

Building Official - \$25,000

Recreation - \$15,000

Police Department - \$13,000

Public Works - \$ 2,500

Police Special Duty - \$ 5,000\*

\* CPD Extra Duty & Car Rentals.

The issue of tax appeals was raised by Mr. Oris and its effect, if any, on the budget numbers.

Mr. Jaskot has not compiled the tax appeal information, and said there has never been an allowance in the budget for tax appeals. He will get the information for the Council to review at the next meeting.

Town Manager Kimball stated the Recreation Dept. has a good trend for 9 months and the \$15,000 extra revenue is attainable. Fees for the Town Clerk's Office are governed by State statute. Mr. Jaskot does not see potential for revenue increase in the Town Clerk's office.

<u>Expenditures/Increase/Decrease</u>	
Employee Benefits/Medical	\$102,067
Retirement/Town Pensions	(\$78,910)
BOE Pension Adjustment to ARC	\$ 66,795
NW Public Safety	(\$ 5,113)
Chesprocott	(\$ 22,135)
Full pension actuarial contributions	(\$ 78,910)
Electric	(\$ 16,800)
TOTAL	\$1,243,009

Mr. Jaskot stated there must be some adjustments to get to the \$2.250M proposed budget increase. Tax collection rate assumption is 99.72%.

#### MILL RATE COMPARISON

The proposed (new) mill rate is 33.08 mills with all the adjustments, or a 0.50 mill rate increase. Revenues and expenditures have the ability to reduce the mill rate to the 33.08; the mill rate started at 33.85 mills. \$1,983,659 is the number needed to reach the \$2.250M budget increase.

Under a 33.08 mill rate, the average tax increase for a house and two cars would be \$9 per year, a 0.11% increase.

Out of the needed \$1,983,659, the ratio for adjustments is 33% Town and 67% BOE.

The total teacher pension contribution remains in the proposed budget, and Council agreed this number should stay in the budget.

CPD Dispatchers – The Council discussed CPD having ten (10) Dispatchers; one(1) Dispatcher is already approved in the current budget; total CPD Dispatchers would be six (6); and four (4) more Dispatchers are requested by Chief Dryfe.

Based on the CPD presentation to the Council, Mr. Talbot cited there are three (3) Dispatchers on several shifts; and he is comfortable with adding two (2) Dispatchers to CPD staff, for a total of eight (8), without touching the current police officer staffing.

Mr. Kimball said he discussed this with Chief Dryfe, who will attend the April 16<sup>th</sup> meeting to review the issue with Council.

With regard to CPD, Mr. Oris does not want a police officer position to impact the SRO positions. With two (2) less Dispatchers, the revenue effect is +\$142,774.

The new number to reach \$2.250M budget is \$1,840,895.

Mr. Ruocco talked about position enhancements proposed in the budget, with higher salaries and benefits affecting the budget over a period of time. As for bulky waste pickup, he can do without this program this year.

Council members stated they do not support elimination of the bulky waste collection.

In the ten (10) Dispatcher positions, Mr. Kimball said one (1) would have supervisory duties. With eight (8) Dispatchers this position would be eliminated. Overtime adjustments to the CPD budget would be made. Chief Dryfe will have a proposal and explanation of CPD overtime for the April 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. For the police officer doing Dispatch duties, Mr. Kimball advised he is paid straight time, no overtime. In the overtime line item of CPD budget, Mr. Kimball said it was for police officer overtime as a result of the break-in problems in Town.

Handout, April 8<sup>th</sup>, page 2 – The Council reviewed the summary from Town Manager Kimball.

Finance Dept. Intern, part-time \$6,270 – the Council supports this request due to the heavy workload in this department.

Deputy Town Clerk position reclassification would be additional expenditure in the budget.

Page 9 – Personnel Changes NOT in the TM recommended budget -

Mr. Oris mentioned the vacant PW Maintainer position, which is budgeted to be filled, and vacant since November 2018. He cited the size of PW staff being based on winter months and need for snow plowing, and summer months less staff is needed. Mr. Oris asked about sub-contracting some of the snow plowing work as something to be looked at again.

For special events, Ms. Nichols asked about Maintainers assisting the Parks crews. She said during the school year the BOE maintains the school fields, and during the summer months the Town takes care of these fields.

Mr. Kimball replied that Maintainers do assist for special events. The BOE maintains its fields during the school year, and when school is out for the summer, the Town takes care of these fields.

It was pointed out by Mr. Oris that it is relevant to discuss positions in the budget, and where necessary, do more with less.

In that regard, Mr. Kimball noted that things change week to week with positions, and he will provide a list of open positions to the Council.

Handout, Page 2 – Councilors reviewed the summary.

CPD – four (4) Dispatchers will be reduced to two (2) - \$142,774

Tree Trimming - \$30,000; review this expenditure with PW Director Noewatne.

Bike Signage - \$1,500 – this is not a critical expenditure; it would be for signage on town roads suitable for bike riding (around schools and neighborhoods); the signage would designate roads through town, and promotion of bike safety.

Non-Critical/Discretionary Services/Deferred Maintenance - \$115,100 less \$30,000 Tree Trimming expenditure = \$85,110.

Personnel Service Enhancements – CPD eliminate two (2) Dispatchers = \$142,774 reduction.

Human Services Family/Marriage Counselor – hiring at lower rate, with cost possibly supplemented by the reorganization costs.

Deputy Town Clerk – the salary and benefits for this position reclassification from TH-7 to TH-8 or TH-9 is not in the budget; estimated cost is \$3507 to \$4,500 in FY 19-20 budget.

Use of Reserve Funds – Mr. Kimball used the assumption of \$40,000 from Heart & Hypertension Fund and additional \$40,000 from Medical Trust Fund Balance.

Mr. Jaskot cited his concerns about using H&H fund revenue, as this fund could run out of revenue at its current rate of use and claims. The H&H fund should be at \$500,000.

The Town and BOE medical benefits trust funds are healthy, and Mr. Oris asked Council to take another look at both funds for discussion purposes. The \$40,000 is low, and more of this funding could be used.

Town Manager Kimball pointed out that last year \$200,000 was used out of the medical trust fund; he allocated \$160,000 this year; so, another \$40,000 could be used, getting back to \$200,000.

Finance Dept. Non-Union Upgrades – Mr. Talbot asked about these two positions and upgrades.

Mr. Jaskot explained the Asst. Treasurer will be an exempt position, non-union, with no overtime. The Budget Analyst position has assumed newer technical work with the department accounting system.

Mr. Oris commented on the good fund balance of the Town, and using more of these funds.

There has been more surplus in recent years, and the Council discussed using additional fund balance without further eroding the balance.

Mr. Kimball talked about the fund balance, and +\$800,000 surplus over the last 6 or 7 years. He is comfortable with using \$1M for FY 19-20 budget, but noted there could be risks.

Page 110 Summary Book – General Fund Balance Analysis.

Councilors reviewed and discussed the analysis. % of estimated FY19 GF Expenditures – 10.15%. Projected Fund Balance July 1, 2019 - \$11,299,967.

BOE Special Excess Cost Grant – Mr. Jaskot said this grant may be \$110,000 less than projected. Mr. Masciana pointed out that the projects change.

In the current year Governor's budget, Mr. Kimball noted that conservative numbers are used.

ECS – 25% funding reduction, but the Governor could provide additional funding.

Once the Council gets to a comfortable number, Mr. Oris said the Council will review and discuss funding with the BOE.

\$1,810,885 of budget reductions – pro-rata between BOE and Town; these are cuts from the proposed \$2.250M budget. After total cuts are determined, there will be a discussion with BOE on the revised budget. The Council is working on reductions on the Town side, and will inform BOE of their portion of the reductions. It is not known what the cuts will do to the BOE side, and if necessary, modifications can be made. There can be percentage reduction adjustments for the Town and BOE.

The Council discussed upcoming budget workshops. Following discussion, the dates were decided.

April 16<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday), April 17<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday), April 23<sup>rd</sup> (Tuesday) and April 24<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday). The adoption of the budget will be Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>.

4. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Talbot; seconded by Mr. Falk.

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MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

VOTE           The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

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Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk