

MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2019, AT 7:00 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410.

Present

Robert J. Oris, Jr. Council Chairman; Paul A. Bowman, Vice Chairman; Jeffrey Falk, Patti Flynn-Harris, Sylvia Nichols, Timothy Slocum, David Veleber, Peter Talbot.

Absent: Thomas Ruocco

Staff: Sean Kimball, Town Manager; Arnett Talbot, Assistant Town Manager; James Jaskot, Finance Director; Gerald Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Public Hearing Subject Matter

Consideration of a proposed amendment to Revisions to the Code of Ordinances Sections 2-85 and 2-121 regarding Youth And Human Services Committee

1. ROLL CALL

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

2. EXPLANATION OF HEARING PROCEDURE AND AGENDA

3. READING OF LEGAL NOTICE

The clerk read the legal notice into the record.

4. PRESENTATION ON HEARING SUBJECT

Ms. Flynn-Harris was the Council liaison to the Youth and Human Service Committees in the past, and there was discussion about merging the two committees. A workshop was held, mission statements were discussed, but the merger was not considered at that time.

Times have changed, and Human Services Director Michelle Piccerillo generated discussion with the Ordinance Review Committee (ORC) about merging the two committees. She cited changes in the visions and mission statements, difficulty getting volunteers to serve on the committees, as the basis for the merger. Ms. Flynn-Harris noted there was much discussion with Ms. Piccerillo about this merger.

With the assistance of the Town Attorney, the ORC came up with a new ordinance for the "Youth and Human Services Committee".

5. QUESTIONS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR.

6. PROPONENTS AND OPPONENTS STATEMENTS ALTERNATELY EXPRESSED.

James Jenks, 244 Academy Road, read a prepared statement in to the record. As an 18-month member of the Youth Services Committee, he stated his opposition to the merger of the two committees. Mr. Jenks requested the Council table the merger pending further review and public input. A copy of the statement is attached to the minutes.

Anne Harrigan, 720 Ward Lane, asked about overlap of the two committees and what this entails.

In response, Ms. Flynn-Harris said that question can be answered by Director Piccerillo.

Kathy Yacavone, 15 Copper Valley Court, commented on the differences in needs of youth and senior citizens, overlap and specific needs. She said two committees makes sense; there can be deliberation on who serves on the committees; determine how to resolve and improve the committees and have a quorum to conduct business.

Chairman Oris expressed appreciation to those who serve on committees, and commented on the town's 22 committees that function well with volunteers. Mr. Oris stated that Director Piccerillo supports the merger of the two committees. He stated Ms. Piccerillo is a professional, does great work for the youth and seniors, and Council relies on her recommendations, trusts her, and she does a phenomenal job. The Council is willing to work with Ms. Piccerillo and the committees on what is in the best interests of the two groups.

Mr. Jenks said the Youth Services Committee met and does not support the merger.

Judy Villa, 1020 Danard Place, was former liaison to the Youth Services Committee and Committee for People with Disabilities during her Council tenure (now Human Services Committee). Ms. Villa commented on Director Piccerillo going an excellent job. She asked if the Senior Center BOD and Senior Agent have assumed concerns of the senior citizens. She asked about the interconnection and collaborative work between Youth Services and the public school system. Ms. Villa asked that the public hearing remain open for more information on the areas she cited.

Chairman Oris stated Director Piccerillo works closely with the Senior Center and Dept. of Education staff and school system. The Council is not looking to change this, but to enhance it. The public hearing will not be kept open. During the regular meeting, Council will decide on whether to merge the two committees.

Ms. Villa requested Council to make the public more aware that unaffiliated voters can be appointed as members of boards, committees, commissions.

Breina Schain, 62 Hilltop Road, sees both sides of the issue, and said the town should look to find members for Youth Services Committee based on what is going on in the schools and give better focus. She asked about a newspaper article informing people about serving as volunteers, and a trial merger of six months.

Ron Gagliardi, 5 Dover Court, served on the Youth Services Committee, and commented on the difficulty of having people expert in youth and senior area of issues with a merged committee.

7. REBUTTAL AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Oris adjourned the public hearing at 8:50 p.m.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk