

**MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING JOINT WITH YOUTH SERVICES COMMITTEE AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE FOR AGENDA #4 ONLY, HELD AT 7:00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2019 IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410**

Present

Chairman Robert J. Oris Jr.; Vice-Chairman Paul A. Bowman;  
Council Members – Sylvia Nichols, Thomas Ruocco, Peter Talbot, David Veleber:  
Absent: Jeffrey Falk, Patti Flynn-Harris, Timothy Slocum  
Staff: Town Manager Sean Kimball; Asst. Town Manager Arnett Talbot; Human Services Director Michelle Piccerillo.  
Guest: Steve Durkee, PBC Member

Chairman Oris called the meeting to order at 7:00 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 AND POSSIBLE ACTION RE: ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR THE HIGHLAND GOVERNMENT FREEZER REPLACEMENT PROJECT.**

MOTION by Mr. Bowman; seconded by Ms. Nichols.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council Approves Resolution #092419-1

RESOLUTION #092419-1

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes an increase of \$57,145 in the funding for the Highland Government Freezer Project, increasing the total project appropriation from \$127,000 to \$184,145, the additional funding to be allocated from the following sources:

FY 19-20 Food Services Reserve Account -	\$22,145
FY 19-20 BOE Operating Budget for Building Repairs and Maintenance	\$35,000

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Council appropriates up to \$35,000, if needed, from the Board of Education Capital Non-Recurring Maintenance Fund to the FY 19-20 BOE Operating Budget for Building Repairs and Maintenance.

Discussion

Mr. Durkee, PBC Project Chairman, informed the Council that funding was developed for replacement of the existing freezer with the same model unit. The present function of the unit does not have a walk-in door system; there is a difference in elevation; and a slab is needed for a straight walk-in, with the pallet through to the floor, and enlargement of the door. Based on the life expectancy of these units, this project is well needed right now. Two bids were received (one high, one low); interviews were held and John L. Simpson of Bridgeport CT was selected to do the project. The extra funding is needed to finish the project, which will be done under the prevailing wage pricing.

BOE COO Mr. Masciana displayed photographs of the Cheshire freezer unit and the model unit seen at Law High School in Milford CT. He explained that deliveries made to the government freezer are usually large in bulk. With installation of a sliding door mechanism the pallet can be installed quickly and anytime during the day. This pallet delivery process has a safety advantage for staff.

The funding was explained by Mr. Masciana. \$22,000 out of the Food Services Budget; \$35,000 allocation out of the BOE operating budget; and \$35,000 contingency from the BOE CNR fund.

Mr. Bowman asked about the energy efficiency of the new unit versus the current unit.

In reply, Mr. Durkee stated the new unit is much more energy efficient. The new unit has an energy efficiency management system (+\$2,000) which keeps record of the unit energy usage.

Mr. Bowman asked if the unit is exclusively used by the school system...i.e. other users, like the food pantry or the general public.

In a town emergency, Mr. Masciana said the freezer could be used by other entities such as the food pantry.

Regarding the government food delivery, Mr. Bowman asked about cheese and other products used by the community at large.

The USDA has a program for Cheshire to receive an allocation of \$100,000 to purchase different commodities (cheese, fruit, meats, chicken, vegetables etc.). These food products are delivered and stored in the government freezer.

Chairman Oris noted there is a timing issue with this freezer replacement to get the project done before the winter weather sets in. This freezer is needed and he will support the project.

**4. DISCUSSION RE: MERGER OF YOUTH SERVICES AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEES, JOINTLY WITH THE YOUTH SERVICES AND THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE.**

Chairman Oris thanked the members of the two committees for attending this meeting for discussion on merger of the Youth Services and Human Services Committees.

Mr. Oris noted there are issues with attendance and a quorum for the two committees. This matter came to the Town Council in June, but more discussion was required before Council made a decision. The two committees serve the Youth and other segments of the community, and the Council relies on Ms. Piccerillo, her staff and the committee members for their expertise.

Ms. Piccerillo introduced her staff members in attendance - Stephanie Farrell and Kristen Schechter - to the Council. She explained that the merger discussion began in 2011 when the Human Services Department was reorganized due to attendance issues, and planning sessions were held on the issue. Due to the attendance issues and lack of a quorum the committee meetings were unofficial and unproductive.

The Human Services Department oversees youth, social and senior services, and Ms. Piccerillo said it makes sense to have a unified committee to address these services. She noted the youth voices are needed, they should remain on the committee, and with a merged committee it takes an "intergenerational" approach. With one committee, there is a more comprehensive approach on mental health issues, substance abuse, meeting the basic needs of the community. The goal for the community is to look at human services as "intergenerational" with the voice of seniors and youth speaking to each other's issues, addressing social needs in a unique way.

Forty Developmental Assets – Ms. Piccerillo said this approach is being introduced to the community, and the merged committee is the ideal group to launch this program.

Ms. Piccerillo commented on the recent Council meetings about the opioid crisis in the community and nationwide. One of the things to be done is to apply for a drug free community grant to address substance abuse and other issues in the community. The federal funds require the town to have a "coalition" which represents various sectors of the community. This merged community would be the perfect foundation for this "coalition", and will represent various community sectors in applying for the federal grant program.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**

Stephanie Farrell, Senior Center Director, addressed the Council, stating the merged committee would be good for the community, seniors and youth with understanding and

sharing some of the same issues and problems. It would be a more diverse group, and Ms. Farrell supports the merger into one committee.

Sherry Stekloff, Chair of the Human Services Committee, reported on many discussions about merging the two committees, and she supports the merger. With one committee they can address and tackle issues such as the opioid crisis, social media, what kids, parents/grandparents know about what is going on, and do good things for the community.

Eric Gunther, member of Youth Services Committee, said the merger of the two committees has been discussed at meetings. He noted Ms. Piccerillo has done a good job bringing forth the merger of the two committees, and he supports the recommendation to merge Youth and Human Services into one committee.

The committee membership was raised by Ms. Piccerillo for discussion with the Council. The open recommendation is for seven (7) adult members, five (5) youth members (non-voting), and two (2) alternate members. This change in committee membership could be included in the proposed ordinance.

As a former member of the Youth Services Committee, Ms. Nichols pointed out there were issues in finding jobs for the committee to undertake. She asked about this changing with a youth and adult membership.

Ms. Piccerillo stated the "mission of the committee" will be the same. She supports merging the committee and calling it a "coalition". A strategic plan could be set up with community health, student depression, opioid and vaping use as some of the targeted issues.

Ms. Piccerillo commented on the Human Services Department and Chesprocott forming a collaborative relationship. Chesprocott, Cheshire Police Department and Dept. of Education will all be part of the collaborative relationship with the committee. There is a plan to reinforce liaison with the Senior Center Board of Directors.

Jim Jinks, Youth Service Member, reported on the committee having a lengthy discussion on the merger, and coming to the conclusion that one committee made sense. He cited the "alternate members" as being key to a quorum, the committee wanting to get work done, and insuring consistency with the number of meetings...which will be helped with alternate members.

Ms. Piccerillo advised the youth members are not included in the quorum count.

As Council liaison to the Youth Services Committee, Mr. Veleber said he sees a renewed sense of involvement with the committee members. He noted there are some

attendance issues. He supports merging the two committees, and believes the common goal and voice will bring renewed energy to their work in a collaborative and collective manner.

With regard to the youth members, under 18 years old as non-voting members, Ms. Talbot explained that, by law, they are not allowed to vote.

Chairman Oris stated the importance of serving all the individuals in the community. He commented on the wonderful job done by Ms. Piccerillo and her staff, making sure everyone works together to serve the groups as best as can be done. He noted there is a consensus at this meeting to merge the two committees, and to be diligent about the scope of work to be pursued. Mr. Oris likes the intergenerational interaction which will be available and beneficial to everyone in the community. He supports the merger of the two groups into one committee. There will also be Council support. Mr. Oris cited the difficulty in finding volunteers to commit to the time and effort involved in community service work.

Two Alternate Members – The Council briefly discussed this recommended ordinance change. If this change can be made to the ordinance, with possible legal opinion required, the ordinance can be referred back to the ORC to be amended. Council would have the amended ordinance on its next meeting agenda for approval.

#### PUBLIC

Mr. Jinks stated this change with alternate members should result in having good attendance, a quorum present, and regular meetings held. He commented on the committee being a strong group, getting things done, and attracting volunteers.

Mr. Bowman commended Ms. Piccerillo, her staff and the volunteers serving on the two committees – Youth and Human Services. He said the merger into one committee makes sense, with a hyper focus on what is going on in the community, which is important for the health and quality of life we all enjoy.

At this time, Mr. Bowman questioned why the amendment to the ordinance must be referred back to the ORC before Council votes on the change. He stated the Council could vote on the ordinance change, and request the ORC to amend the ordinance at its next meeting.

Ms. Talbot advised that a public hearing would not be required for the proposed ordinance change – “alternate membership”. The Council can make the amendment to the resolution without a requirement of going back to ORC.

MOTION by Mr. Bowman; seconded by Mr. Veleber.

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Town Council approves Resolution #092419-2

RESOLUTION #092419-2

BE IT RESOLVED, that, per the recommendation of the Ordinance Review Committee, the Town Council approves the proposed amendments to the Code of Ordinances, Sections 2-85 and 2-121, merging the Youth Services Committee and Human Services Committee, as amended.

VOTE           The motion passed unanimously by those present.

(a copy of the amended Ordinance, Sections 2-85 and 2-121, is attached to these minutes).

**5.     ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Mr. Bowman; seconded by Mr. Veleber.

MOVED to adjourn the special meeting at 7:45 p.m.

VOTE           The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

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Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk