

MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M. VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE (PER EXECUTIVE ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR OF CONNECTICUT)

Public access made available through live steaming on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4_xey3QiJmwe57R_6K94Dw
Public comments accepted at Comments@cheshirect.org and at 203-271-6638.
Video will be available on Channel 14 and on demand at www.cheshirect.org as soon as possible.

Present

Robert J. Oris, Jr. Chairman; David Borowy, James Jinks, Sylvia Nichols, Timothy Slocum, Peter Talbot, David Veleber, Donald Walsh.
Staff: Sean M. Kimball, Town Manager; Arnett Talbot, Asst. Town Manager; Town Attorney Al Smith; James Jaskot, Finance Director; Fire Chief Jack Casner; Police Chief Neil Dryfe; Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator; George Noewatne, PW Director, and Maura Esposito, Director, Chesprocott Health District

Chairman Oris called the meeting to order at 7:03 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.

Chairman Oris explained that the Council is accepting comments from residents via e-mail and phone, and will address and respond to these comments.

3. ITEMS FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. Economic Incentives – this agenda item was moved to New Business.**

4. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Public Comments (via e mail)**
Ms. Talbot reported there were no public comments received.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting and Public Hearing of March 10, 2020 and Special Meeting of April 7, 2020.

MOTION by Mr. Talbot; seconded by Mr. Slocum

MOVED that the Town Council approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting and Public Hearing of March 10, 2020 and Special Meeting of April 7, 2020 subject to corrections, additions, deletions.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

6. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

MOTION by Mr. Borowy; seconded by Mr. Jinks.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #041420-1

RESOLUTION #041420-1
CONSENT CALENDAR FOR APRIL 14, 2020

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves the Consent Calendar for April 14, 2020 as follows:

- A. Acceptance and appropriation of a \$9.70 donation from CAF America to The Parks and Recreation Gift Account to be used for the dog park.
- B. Acceptance and appropriation of a \$50 donation from an anonymous donor To the Human Services Gift Account to be used for general purposes.
- C. Acceptance and appropriation of a \$78,211.09 PEGPETIA grant for technical enhancements to meeting facilities and television and internet broadcasting capabilities.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

7. **ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT CALENDAR**

8. **OLD BUSINESS**

9. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **COVID-19 response update**

Chairman Oris reported that Public Safety Officials are on-line and will provide an update on the COVID-19 pandemic in Cheshire.

Chairman Oris read a brief statement into the record. On behalf of the Town Council, Mr. Oris assured the Cheshire community is working collaboratively with the State government, State and Local health officials, public safety personnel, and Town staff in addressing this pandemic to best support and protect Cheshire residents. The Council and staff are communicating messages with the public by posting on the Town website, Facebook, Twitter, and numerous print media outlets. Elected officials are speaking in

a unified manner, and all elected officials have input with communication coming to the community. Mr. Oris noted that social distancing is working, and is important inside and outdoors. Playgrounds and parks are closed. The Linear Trail and Town open space areas remain open as long as social distancing is being done...people at least 6 feet minimum apart. This is a small price to pay for the greater good. Mr. Oris recognized the kindness, support, creativity, generosity and compassion of the residents and businesses in Cheshire. He expressed deep gratitude to those on the front line...health care providers, public safety personnel, truckers, warehouse workers, and everyone going above and beyond. By working together to address the issues, Mr. Oris said we are protecting the community and providing accurate and current information. Mr. Oris expressed appreciation for the involvement of everyone in the community, and asked for people to stay safe and stay well.

Town Manager Kimball cited updates from the Town Government.

- Memorial Day Parade is cancelled
- Town Hall is open to the public by appointment only; critical business is ongoing
- Senior Center and other Town buildings remain closed
- There is continued work to procure PPE needs to insure the Town has enough equipment during the pandemic
- There is suspension of rental for all Town facilities through May
- Open space and some park areas remain open; others are closed to the public
- Linear Trail is open and being monitored; people have been very respectful

Fire Chief Casner cited CFD updates.

- Call volume is down; there are limited fire responses taking place
- CFD has minimal personnel contact
- PPE requests through the State have not yet arrived; they are in the process, but arrival of the equipment is uncertain at this time
- Conference calls/e-mails continue with hospital systems; hospitals are not yet at serious surge levels; ICU and regular beds and ventilators are available
- There are daily conference calls with Dept. of Emergency Management and Homeland Security
- CFD is monitoring health of staff; no touch thermometers are being used; CFD awaits more thermometers from the State
- Chief Casner communicates with the Town Manager on a daily basis
- Current COVID cases in Cheshire are at 51, with 4 fatalities
- There are many requests for drive-by birthday parties for kids; CFD is doing as many of these parties as possible if drivers are available

Police Chief Dryfe cited CPD updates.

- CPD is status quo; there is no big surge in calls for service
- People are being very cooperative with social distancing

- Police Officers have a directive to pay attention to open areas; all is working well; enforcement is the last resort; officers are looking for reminders to people and soft enforcement
- All CPD personnel who were out sick at various times have been exclusively with family members who have taken ill; they have returned to work; one person's wife is ill with flu like symptoms and he is home taking time to care for his family
- CPD has not implemented an alternate work schedule because no police officer is out sick from self testing
- The hardest thing for CPD officers is turning down calls for things like car seat installation
- The Memorial Day Parade is cancelled, which is a great event for CPD to showcase the department
- CPD officers are reading children's stories on Facebook
- Social Distancing is being monitored; the public is being serviced as needed

Chief Dryfe commented on everyone looking forward to the day when there can be face to face contact between the CPD and the community.

Maura Esposito, Director, Chesprocott cited the update for the Department.

- 148 cases being followed; 61 cases in Cheshire; 36 Males and 25 Females; total of 43 homes; 53 families; one family lost a Mother and Father
- Elim Park has 7 cases; Chesprocott is working closely with Elim Park; testing is limited; Dept. of Public Health and Chesprocott could use more testing materials, and more are expected to arrive on Wednesday
- One retirement home has 2 cases with 1 fatality
- The ages of people with COVID-19 is 16 years old to 90 years old; the virus is affecting all ages across Cheshire, and the highest spike is consistent with ages 20 to 70
- Cheshire has 7 people hospitalized with the virus and Chesprocott follows up on them
- The Chesprocott reports provide data on the cases in Cheshire (breakdown on age demographic of fatalities, group/nursing/retirement homes)
- Public Health emptied out its national stock pile of PPE on April 14th, of which Chesprocott was the lead
- A local business leader, Richard Hilzinger, lent Chesprocott his box truck, and Board members went to North Haven, loaded up 10-12 pallets of PPE; they were brought to Cheshire High School where security was provided; Chief Casner and school workers assisted in unloading the PPE
- These PPE's are not meant to be distributed to hospitals, as they are getting their own PPE supplies
- The PPE's are meant for urgent care not associated with a hospital; they are meant for Hospice, Dialysis, group homes...medical personnel not associated with hospitals and cannot get PPE due to the supply chain

- Home health aides are taking care of people with the virus
- Many requests are coming into Chesprocott for assistance; people are making homemade masks; children are using 3-D printers to make face masks; donations are coming in with plastic containers for around the masks; once these items are received they are provided to local doctors; there are many gloves and gowns available, but there is a need for the face masks

In response to a question on the number of Chesprocott staff, the busy times, and what is happening on a day to day basis, Mr. Esposito advised the staff is small and undertaking many duties. Each case is downloaded off the computer, about 20 cases a day, and work is split between two staff members who check on these people. These people may have little outside communication. Staff works to get them needed services. Group homes are serviced; equipment is moved around; two sanitarians are dealing with takeout food issues as regulations keep evolving, and monitoring is needed. There have been some complaints about illegal activity with places open that should be closed, and Chesprocott works to get them back into compliance.

Mr. Slocum asked about financial reserves being strained, and how this will be addressed...or if it can be addressed down the line.

According to Ms. Esposito, nothing has been purchased. PPE is coming from the stock pile or being donated...there is nothing to be purchased. For salaries, Chesprocott is operating as it is...the plans for purchase of a building are on hold pending financial information. The focus is just on COVID-19; Board meetings have been cancelled; and things are stable.

Mr. Walsh asked about the PPE received today and if someone needs a mask...should they contact Chesprocott.

The Council was informed by Ms. Esposito that the supply is low. Some masks went to Social Services for senior citizens who need a mask, and there are not many to go around. They need to be saved for the medical people. In some cases, a nurse has one mask that must be reused.

If people need something, Mr. Walsh said they should, probably, go through Social Services.

Mr. Oris asked if Ms. Esposito has heard from hospitals about the drugs being used.

The Council was told by Ms. Esposito this issue is not discussed on the calls with the hospitals.

Chairman Oris thanked everyone working so hard on behalf of the community during this COVID-19 pandemic. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.

B. Discussion and possible approval of economic incentive for Viron Rondo Osteria.

MOTION by Mr. Borowy; seconded by Mr. Slocum

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #041420-2

RESOLUTION #041420-2

BE IT RESOLVED, the Town Council approves the Tax Assessment Incentive for VDNKR, Inc. for Viron Rondo Osteria, 1721 Highland Avenue, under the terms as presented, and authorizes the Town Manager to execute an Agreement by and between the Town of Cheshire and VDNKL, Inc. for said incentive.

Discussion

Mr. Sitko informed the Council that Viron Rondo Osteria opened in 2014, recently doubled the size of the building, and is requesting tax assistance under the incentive program. Based on the current assessment agreements, the Town takes 50% of the addition (just the building), with a tax break of \$94,300 over a four (4) year period. The Town will gain a like amount. With completion of the building addition (4,886 S.F.), personal property value will be about \$500,000. The Economic Development Commission has no objections to the requested assistance. The Osteria is a significant employer in Cheshire, with 40 full-time and 20 part-time employees.

Mr. Oris noted this program is available to all businesses in Cheshire. He reported that Viron Rondo has many businesses in Cheshire, and continues to support the community, has a commitment to the community, and invests heavily in the community.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

C. Discussion and possible action of bid waiver for \$26,400 to hire Silver/Petrucelli to design, bid and administer the next round of the Doolittle bathroom renovations.

MOTION by Mr. Slocum; seconded by Mr. Talbot

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #041420-3

RESOLUTION #041420-3

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves a bid waiver for the second phase of the Districtwide Lavatory Upgrade Project at Doolittle School, and further authorizes the Public Building Commission to hire Silver/Petrucelli for the design, bidding, and construction administration for said project for \$26,400.

Discussion

Mr. Slocum explained that the PBC recommended Silver/Petrucci be awarded this contract. The firm's performance on previous phases of this project have been satisfactory.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

D. Discussion and possible authorization to issue an RFP for construction For a precast bathroom building at Quinnipiac Park.

MOTION by Mr. Slocum; seconded by Mr. Walsh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #041420-4

RESOLUTION #041420-4

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes the Public Building Commission to issue an RFP for the construction of a precast bathroom building at Quinnipiac Park.

Discussion

Mr. Slocum explained this facility will be located away from the other facilities and closer to some of the fields, and it is a good option.

Mr. Oris said this facility is needed at this part of the Town. He noted that former Councilor Tom Ruocco supported this project for his constituents in this district, and the project is good for this park.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

E. Discussion and possible approval of the re-allocation of an additional \$95,000 for Library Roof & HVAC Replacement from existing appropriations To be used for both roof and HVAC use, and award construction contract To Gold Seal Roofing.

MOTION by Mr. Borowy; seconded by Mr. Slocum

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #041420-5

RESOLUTION #041420-5

RESOLUTION AMENDING A RESOLUTION ENTITLED "RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$225,000 FOR LIBRARY ROOF REPLACEMENT AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$225,000 BONDS OF THE TOWN TO MEET SAID APPROPRIATION AND PENDING THE ISSUANCE THEREOF THE MAKING OF TEMPORARY BORROWINGS FOR SUCH PURPOSE" AND AMENDING A

RESOLUTION ENTITLED “RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$75,000 FOR LIBRARY HVAC REPLACEMENTS AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$75,000 BONDS OF THE TOWN TO MEET SAID APPROPRIATION AND PENDING THE ISSUANCE THEREOF THE MAKING OF TEMPORARY BORROWINGS FOR SUCH PURPOSE.”

(A copy of the full Resolution is attached to these minutes)

Discussion

Mr. Borowy said this is repurposing funds and not having to find new funds for needed projects, and to maintain our buildings. This is a well used facility in Cheshire and it must be maintained for the residents.

PW Director Noewatne commented on the Library as a well used building. The project is for replacement of seven(7) HVAC units on the roof which are at the end of useful life. With this project there will be a good solid roof and system for many years to come.

The issue of the solar ray not being used was raised by Mr. Jinks.

In response, Mr. Noewatne reported that this is the old solar ray (5.6kw)which was received by the Energy Commission as a gift and installed in 2005-06. It is not cost effective to put it back on the roof. There could be a more elaborate solar ray in the future. The energy source was going into the library.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

F. Discussion and possible approval of award of bid for Code Compliance Improvements – Door Accessibility Upgrades at Cheshire High School. (This agenda item was tabled)

G. Discussion and possible action re: Reassignment of Public Building Commission capital projects.

MOTION by Mr. Slocum; seconded by Mr. Walsh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #041420-7

RESOLUTION #041420-7

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council reassigns the following Public Building Commission capital projects to the Board of Education or Town Staff as indicated:

To Board of Education:

- 1. Unit Ventilator Replacement at Norton School**
- 2. Underground Storage Tank Replacements, Doolittle and Darcey**
- 3. HVAC Improvements at Highland School**

4. **Window Replacement – Two Cheshire High School Projects**
5. **Technology Town and School Security Projects
(with assistance from Apex)**
6. **Stadium Lighting Upgrade at Cheshire High School**
7. **HVAC Improvements at Dodd School**
8. **Boiler Replacement at Doolittle School**

To Public Works Department:

1. **Town Hall Roof Replacement**

To Town Staff (with assistance from Apex)

1. **Technology Town and School Security Projects.**

Discussion

Mr. Slocum stated this has been done to economize the process. After discussion it was determined to be an appropriate measure to make things move faster.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

H. Discussion and possible action re: Adoption of the property tax deferment program and/or the low interest rate program as authorized by the Governor’s Executive Order 7S.

MOTION by Mr. Borowy ; seconded by Mr. Talbot

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #041420-8

RESOLUTION #041420-8

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council, per Governor Lamont’s Executive Order No. 7S, as presented and attached, approves the Town of Cheshire’s participation in the State of Connecticut Suspension and Modification of Tax Deadlines and Collection Efforts;

1. Deferment Program, or
2. Low Interest Rate Program, or
3. Both Programs.

Discussion

Mr. Borowy informed the Council that the Budget Committee met and discussed the EO7S, including cost to the Town in lost interest revenue. If Council agrees to a lower interest rate for 90 days, the estimated loss is \$25,000. With a deferment program, there would be a grace period of 90 days taxes would be due on October 1, 2020, with most of the revenue coming into the Town in September. People who pay taxes

through escrow accounts with banks would still have payments on time, and cash flow will not be affected to meet obligations. There would be no short term borrowing or other measures to pay Town bills. Interest will be almost negligible, and the Town is working to assist residents affected by the current economic devastation.

The Council was informed by Mr. Jaskot that these programs will not affect cash flow. Tax Collector Donlin discussed this matter with the Budget Committee and cited the negligible effect on the Town with a deferment. In July about \$50M in taxes is collected. Escrow payments are about \$17M in July. Late tax payments will be received by the end of September. If taxpayers are late with payment on the deadline of October 1st, they will be obligated for all of the interest for the full period.

Reduction of Interest Program was explained by Mr. Jaskot, who noted the cost to the Town would be about \$25,000 for delinquent accounts. The period would start April 1st for April, May and June. If a tax payment is not made during this time period, the lower interest rate will not apply. From a cost perspective, Mr. Jaskot advised that the Town can accommodate both programs.

There is an application process involved for residents to take advantage of these programs. Mr. Kimball explained there is an application process as a default. The taxpayer must attest to their impact from the loss of income due to the pandemic. The programs can be extended to everyone, and this is Mr. Kimball's recommendation to the Council.

Mr. Slocum asked about a footnote/explanation to the taxpayers posted on the tax bills about the 90-day extension program.

Tax Collector Donlin explained these programs are offered to municipalities. There will be an explanation to taxpayers in the mailings of tax bills.

Ms. Nichols expressed her support of these programs to everyone, as a good way to help those affected by the pandemic.

In the resolution, Mr. Kimball noted it does not specify the programs available to all taxpayers, and this should be officially included in the resolution.

Mr. Borowy (maker) and Mr. Jinks (seconder) approved the following inclusion in the resolution.

“The two programs are available to all residents”.

Town Attorney Smith said the Council must “reaffirm” the eligibility to all taxpayers by act of the Town Council.

Chairman Oris reaffirmed that both programs under EO7S will be extended to all taxpayers, and he supports the programs for residents and businesses.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

I. Discussion and possible approval of multi-year Site License Agreement With AT&T Corp. for cell tower at 751 Higgins Road.

MOTION by Mr. Borowy; seconded by Mr. Slocum.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #041420-9

RESOLUTION #041420-9

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes the execution of a five-year Site License Agreement between AT&T Corp. and the Town of Cheshire for the Town's lease of AT&T Corp. property at 751 Higgins Road for the purpose of installation, construction, operation, maintenance, repair and removal of mobile/wireless communications equipment and facilities, according to the terms as presented and attached, pursuant to the approval by the Town Attorney as to form and function.

Discussion

Mr. Borowy stated this is part of updating the communication system. The lease has favorable terms. If Council approves the lease we can go forward with other necessary locations to improve communications.

Chief Dryfe reviewed the lease and the process. In February, the Council approved the lease agreement for Summit Road with a different company. The original draft proposal from AT&T included a monthly lease cost of \$2,980, and the Council directed Chief Dryfe to seek a reduction in the monthly cost. A letter was sent by Chief Dryfe to AT&T on the issue, and last week a response was received from AT&T reducing the lease cost to \$750 per month plus utility costs. There is a reason for not being ready to move forward completely, without the caveat from the Town Attorney approval of the final language. AT&T's proposal reduced the lease amount to \$750, but language was unclear on exactly what this meant. It is hoped AT&T will still honor their \$570 utility cost. The Town Attorney is working on these issues, and we await AT&T's confirmation on the lease language. From the Town Attorney's update, AT&T has not gotten around to their internal discussion.

Attorney Smith will follow up with Chief Dryfe to get the most current information, review the document, and get back to the Town Council.

Chairman Oris stated the Council will approve the lease subject to the final review and approval from the Town Attorney. Regarding this being a time sensitive nature to the

matter, Mr. Oris said there is one. The Council must approve to get things started for testing at a certain time of the year...when trees are fully vegetated...to insure the communications are operational.

Stating that is correct, Chief Dryfe said the date is September 30th which Motorola recommends for acceptance testing. He explained a Town employee will be in a car with a portable and mobile radio, testing the system in various parts of town. The testing is affected greatly by foliage. By waiting too late, until leaves are falling off trees, there could be a false positive on coverage being stronger than testing when leaves are still on trees. The long time taken by AT&T has delayed any work on the Higgins Road site. This matter is on the Council agenda tonight with the caveat of not waiting until May. Once the lease is signed the Motorola subcontractors are ready to go. Chief Dryfe understands the Council's concerns, but is not willing to pay more than the \$570 for utility costs.

Chief Dryfe explained the language appears to allow the Town to negotiate the lower utility costs, if able to do that. It was not clear the Town could stay on the AT&T backup generator. There could be negotiation with Eversource for a slightly lower kilowatt hour rate for electricity, but the Town would have to pay for its own generator on top of this. The preference is for AT&T to honor the \$570 per month utility cost, which is \$190 per cabinet (3 cabinets) plus the \$750 monthly rent. This is a significant reduction from the February lease. It was pointed out by Chief Dryfe that the lease costs were not the only change; there were other language changes which Attorney McLoughlin was not comfortable with. If AT&T comes back with higher utility costs, there will be no action taken without coming back to Council.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

10. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Monthly Status Report - in Council packets

B. Department Status Reports: Police, Fire, Fire Marshal. In Council packets

C. Other Reports

Mr. Kimball informed the Council that 95% of the work in the last few weeks has been related to COVID-19. He expressed appreciation to Town employees and the Town Council as improvements are made and business gets done.

Budget Meetings – all meetings are on the website; next meetings are at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 21st and Wednesday, April 22nd; public hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, April 28th.

Councilor Walsh requested the Council invite Economic Development Coordinator Sitko to the next meeting to discuss the economic impact of COVID-19 on Cheshire's small businesses. He has concerns that some of these small businesses may go under, and it's important for Council to have an update. Mr. Walsh talked about the loans being offered to small businesses, which could close without changes being seen.

The Council was told by Mr. Sitko that he is checking with businesses on a regular basis.

Mr. Slocum asked about how things are going with Town staff working remotely.

It is a work in progress, and Mr. Kimball reported things are working well with some staff working remotely. Social distancing is in place; the building is being kept clean; and people are safe. The Town staff has alternate shifts/schedules, is available by phone, and there is ongoing re-evaluation with staff.

As a follow-up, Mr. Oris said the Council would appreciate an update on staff, productivity, etc. and continued dialogue with the Town Manager.

Mr. Kimball advised that all departments are prepared with at home and remote operation plans.

11. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL.

A. Chairman's Report - none

B. Miscellaneous

12. MISCELLANEOUS AND APPOINTMENTS

A. Liaison Reports - none

B. Appointments to Boards and Commissions

Ms. Nichols explained there were some corrections to appointments submitted by the RTC on March 10, 2020.

Chairman Oris cited the corrections for the record:

Joseph Cassella Jr. – address should be 8 Brigadoon Drive.

Signian McGeary – “Unaffiliated” voter

W. Dennis Flagg – address should be 441 Sharon Drive

13. TOWN ATTORNEY REPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

No report

14. COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

A. Letters to Council - none

B. Miscellaneous

Before adjournment, Chairman Oris thanked everyone for watching the Town Council meeting...and told them to stay safe and stay well.

15. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Walsh; seconded by Mr. Veleber

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk