

MINUTES OF THE JOINT CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING AND BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M. VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE (PER EXECUTIVE ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR OF CONNECTICUT)

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Public comments accepted at Comments@cheshirect.org and by voice mail message 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; Timothy Slocum, Vice Chairman; David Borowy, James Jinks, Sylvia Nichols, Peter Talbot, David Veleber, Donald Walsh.

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

Chairman Oris called the meeting to order at 7:02 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. ADOPTION OF THE FY 2020-2021 GENERAL FUND OPERATING BUDGET

Budget Chairman Borowy thanked his fellow Councilors for attendance at all the budget meetings, their cooperation and participation in the difficult process this year, and dedication to the Town of Cheshire.

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #052820-1

RESOLUTION #052820-1
FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021 GENERAL FUND OPERATING BUDGET

Noted for the Record: The Governor's Executive Order 7C extended the approval deadline for municipal budgets by thirty (30) days, extending the Town of Cheshire's approval deadline to May 30, 2020.

A. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cheshire Town Council appropriates the following amounts for the Town of Cheshire General Fund Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2020-2021:

General Government	\$32,782,510
Debt Service	\$ 7,581,981

Contingency	\$ 125,000
Capital Non-Recurring Reserve	\$ 1,000,000

- B. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cheshire Town Council appropriates the amount of \$74,593,926 for the Board of Education Budget.
- C. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the sum of all revenues, transfers from other Funds and allocation of general fund equity for the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Town Of Cheshire General Fund Operating Budget will be in the amount of \$116,083,417, and
- D. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the tax rage be set at 33.22 mills which Will generate \$93,033,278 at a collection rate of 99.2% for Fiscal Year 2020-2021; and

That the tax payments for motor vehicles and personal property shall all be due and payable in one payment on July 1, 2020; and

That real estate tax payments shall be paid in two equal payments with the first payment due on July 1, 2020 and the second payment due on January 1, 2021; and

That, pursuant to Section 12-144 of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended, that any real estate tax bill on the 2019 grand list in an amount not in excess of \$100.00 shall be due and payable in a single installment on July 1, 2020; and

That, pursuant to Sections 12-142 and 12-146 of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended, the last date for payment of taxes due July 1,2020 will be August 1, 2020; however, pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order 7S and the Town Council resolution #041420-8, this 30 day grace period has been extended to 90 days. Therefore, payment of taxes due July 1, 2020, which are received after October 1,2020, will be assessed interest calculated from the original due date of July 1, 2020.

Also, that pursuant to Sections 12-142 and 12-146 of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended, the last date for payment of taxes due January 1, 2021 will be February 1, 2021. Payment of taxes due January 1, 2021 which are received after February 1, 2021 will be assessed interest calculated from the due date of January 1, 2021.

Discussion

Mr. Borowy expressed appreciation to Town Manager Kimball, Asst. Town Manager Talbot, Finance Director Jaskot, Town Staff...and Board of Education members, Supt. Solan and COO Mr. Masciana...for their cooperation and collaboration, submission of all the information throughout the budget process which enabled Council to make a good decision.

In the FY 2020-2021 budget, the BOE receives a 1.7% increase, +\$1.2M; Debt Service increases by \$1M; to keep the mill rate level there is \$2M spending of the fund balance; and this \$2M will be a shortfall in the fund balance if the surplus is not again built up in the coming fiscal year. Of the \$2M there is \$1.2M in savings from the current year. The Council did not want to burden the taxpayers with a budget increase and succeeded with a zero (0) mill rate increase...while efficiently maintaining the high level of Town services (open parks/trails, plowing streets, human service needs etc.), The \$1.2M BOE funding increase will continue to provide excellent education to the students, needed supplies, and maintain good class sizes. Mr. Borowy supports the FY 2020-2021 budget.

On behalf of the Town Council Mr. Oris thanked Mr. Borowy for taking on the chairmanship of the Budget Committee this year, and leading the budget workshops and Councilors throughout the process.

Ms. Nichols read a statement into the record. She cited her support of the proposed budget for FY 2020-2020 which is a matter of balance...and delivering services within fiscal responsibility. The Town services (i.e. Library, Senior Center, Parks, Community Pool) will be carefully maintained; Social Services will continue to function for those who need them; fire, police, ambulance will continue to respond; Town Hall and BOE staff will be there to provide needed assistance; and the Town Council and BOE will continue to work together, collaboratively, for the community. The BOE increase is \$1.2M, 1.7% increase, while the tax rate remains stable. Ms. Nichols thanked Mr. Kimball, Ms. Talbot, Ms. Jaskot, Ms DeFilio, Supt. Solan, Mr. Masciana, Ms. Milton and Town and BOE staff for their work on the budget.

Mr.Slocum expressed appreciation to his fellow Councilors, Mr. Kimball, Ms. Talbot, Mr. Jaskot, Mr. Borowy and Mr. Jinks, Supt. Solan, Mr. Masciana, Town and BOE staff...and all who helped so much with the budget process. He commented on the tough times ahead for next year, his comfort with the Council decision on the FY 20-21 budget which is fair and reasonable, maintains Town services and an excellent school system. Mr. Slocum supports the budget.

Mr. Talbot echoed the comments of other Councilors. He thanked his fellow Councilors, Mr. Kimball, Ms. Talbot, Mr. Jaskot, Ms. DeFilio, Supt. Solan, Mr. Masciana, BOE Chairman Perugini and members, and Town and BOE staff for their work during the budget process. This is his 9th and most difficult budget process as a Councilor from both a process and numbers standpoint. He commended Mr. Borowy for a good job as Budget Chairman. The General Government budget remains flat, although good department requests were received which will get another look in the future. BOE received a 1.7% budget increase of \$1.237M. Mr.Talbot talked about these unprecedented times, and the Council doing a good job of keeping next year's budget in focus and in perspective.

Councilor Walsh expressed his appreciation to Mr. Kimball, Ms. Talbot, Mr. Jaskot, Town staff for their work during the budget process and preparation of the budget books. He also thanked Supt. Solan, Mr. Masciana and BOE members and staff for making sure students continue to receive a great education in Cheshire. This is his first budget as a Council member, although he has followed the budget meetings and process in past years, thinking he understood how it works. Mr. Walsh commented on the process being an eye opener; every line item and dollar amount in every budget is reviewed, and decisions are not taken lightly. He thanked veteran Council members for their guidance and wisdom for new members. Currently, the unemployment compensation rate in Cheshire and Connecticut is under-estimated because claims are not being processed, and one (1) in four (4) Americans are unemployed due to the COVID-19 situation. The zero (0) mill rate increase will not burden taxpayers; debt service will increase over the next four (4) years and future budgets must cover this cost; all the town savings cannot be depleted; there must be ideas for generation of revenue; we must watch out for the future, and not have huge increases next year. Mr. Walsh supports the budget.

This is his 3rd budget and Councilor Veleber noted it was a unique budget...COVID-19, school closings, town buildings closed, Zoom meetings, and difficult financial outlook as the process started. Mr. Veleber said everyone had the same goal of working towards what is good for the Town. He thanked Mr. Kimball, Ms. Talbot, Mr. Jaskot, Supt. Solan, Mr. Masciana, BOE Chairman Perugini...and Town and BOE staff for their work and guidance during the budget process. Councilors worked hard to balance the needs...the schools, the town, the taxpayers (residential and businesses), listening to the town departments, BOE, citizens who participated with communication, working together to put out a good budget. Mr. Veleber said he will support the budget which balances the needs of the Town, is sensitive to the financial hardship facing residents and businesses. He expressed appreciation for the zero (0) tax increase during this difficult economic time.

Councilor Jinks thanked Mr. Kimball, Ms. Talbot, Mr. Jaskot, Supt. Solan, Mr. Masciana, BOE members and staff and Town staff who helped Councilors get to the important decisions. He also thanked his fellow Council members for working together, and Mr. Borowy for a good job as Budget Chairman. The Council will face difficulties next year and what the economy brings, and Mr. Jinks supports the budget.

Chairman Oris commented on the budget process as a challenge for everyone, and thanked everyone who helped Council get to this time of budget adoption. Mr. Oris thanked Mr. Kimball, Ms. Talbot, Mr. Jaskot and Town staff, Supt. Solan, Mr. Masciana and BOE staff for working alongside each other during the budget process. The Town side of the budget remains flat; the BOE received a 1.7% or \$1.2M increase which will enable continuation of an excellent school system. There are town projects and services which were planned to be implemented, but will be delayed due to this budget.

The FY 2020-2021 budget preserves basic services to insure Cheshire stays strong and competitive and protects the taxpayers in a difficult time. With unemployment at +5.7%, businesses being closed...the Council does not want to burden taxpayers as they need to be viable going forward so Cheshire can withstand this pandemic and come out strong in the end. The budget will provide town services and the BOE will continue to provide educational services that insure students a top notch education. The proposed budget is a forward looking budget; 8 Councilors and Town staff spent many hours going through budget documents; everyone worked together and collaboratively on the budget. This is a bipartisan budget; the BOE understands the budget, does not like it, but everyone is in this together for a great community. Mr. Oris supports the budget. The people elected the eight (8) Council members and they work together for the people. Mr. Oris thanked his fellow Councilors for their work, particularly Mr. Jinks and Mr. Walsh...new Councilors...for their hard work.

Town Manager Kimball expressed his appreciation to Town staff. He noted the FY 2020-2021 budget changed from January to March with COVID-19 impact and new format for meetings. He thanked Councilors for working with the Zoom meetings and moving along with the budget process in this new meeting format. Mr. Kimball and Town staff look forward to everyone getting to work back together and in person very soon.

Chairman Oris commended Town staff for a great job with the Zoom meetings...which went off without a glitch!

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

4. ADOPTION OF THE FY 2020-2021 WATER POLLUTION CONTROL DEPARTMENT FUND OPERATING BUDGET

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #052820-2

RESOLUTION #052820-2
FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021
WATER POLLUTION CONTROL FUND OPERATING BUDGET

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cheshire Town Council appropriates the sum of \$4,138,686 for the Town of Cheshire Water Pollution Control Fund Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2020-2021, and that the sum of revenues and allocation of Water Pollution Control Fund equity for the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Town of Cheshire Water Pollution Control Fund Operating Budget also be in the amount of \$4,138,686, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cheshire Town Council recommends that the Water Pollution Control Authority consider setting the Sewer Use Charge at \$425 per year, effective December 1, 2020.

Discussion

Mr. Borowy commented on their being some tweaks made to expenditures. This budget helps to keep the sewer use fee level (at \$425 per year) for another year which is appreciated by citizens hooked up to the sewer system.

The assurance of keeping the sewer use fee level was cited by Mr. Oris as protecting the residential and business taxpayers. He said \$100,000 is going towards the debt fund due to the treatment plant upgrade.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

5. ADOPTION OF THE FY 2020-2021 COMMUNITY POOL FUND OPERATING BUDGET.

MOTION by Mr. Borowy; seconded by Ms. Nichols

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #052820-3

RESOLUTION #052820-3
FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021
COMMUNITY POOL FUND OPERATING BUDGET

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cheshire Town Council appropriates the sum of \$933,411 for the Town of Cheshire Community Pool Fund Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2020-2021, and that the sum of revenues and transfers from other funds and allocation of Community Pool Fund equity for the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Town of Cheshire Community Pool Fund Operating Budget also be in the amount of \$933,411.

Discussion

Mr. Borowy explained there was a cut of about \$100,000 in expenses out of this budget; there is also less revenue expected; everything was adjusted and the budget is reasonable for this community asset.

Chairman Oris talked about some expenditures and problems with the Community Pool which were quickly handled in a financially prudent manner by staff. There is some divisiveness in the community about the pool. Mr. Oris pointed out that the town is committed to the pool, is working to insure it stays efficient as it can be, and that investment in the facility will continue to have a good return to the taxpayers. The pool is managed efficiently; staff is working to reduce expenditures, increase revenue...and

prior to COVID-19 everything was on the right track. Mr. Oris said the pool will continue to be a good resource for many people, and less of a financial burden on taxpayers going forward.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Before adjournment, Chairman Oris thanked Mr. Borowy, Mr. Jinks and Mr. Slocum...Budget Committee members...for their hard work on the budget. He also reiterated his appreciation to his fellow Council members for their work on the budget. Now, Council is onto the Capital Expenditure Budget (CEP). Council and staff are working on a plan to reopen town services...dog park/tennis courts/are open. Other sites are not yet open...for protection of those most vulnerable and to insure things are done properly and compliance with executive orders. Openings will be done in a respectful manner; social distancing will continue; and people will be protected.

5. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Slocum; seconded by Mr. Talbot.

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk