

MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE 6:30 P.M. PUBLIC HEARING ON TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 2020 VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE (PER EXECUTIVE ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR OF CONNECTICUT)

Public access made available through live streaming on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4_xey3QjJmwe57R_6K94Dw

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, Sandy Pavano, Peter Talbot, David Veleber, Donald Walsh.
Staff: Sean M. Kimball, Town Manager; Arnett Talbot, Asst. Town Manager; James Jaskot, Finance Director; Don Holley, Tax Collector

Chairman Oris called the meeting to order at 6:55 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. ITEMS FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION (moved to end of the meeting)

A. Contract Negotiations

4. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

A. Proclamation for Flag Day.

Chairman Oris read the proclamation into the record declaring June 14th as "Flag Day" in Cheshire CT.

B. Proclamation in support of AARP Livable Communities.

(postponed pending further information)

C. Public Comments

None

Chairman Oris spoke on the recent events in the United States, and said his thoughts and prayers are with George Floyd and his family. Mr. Oris spoke about the need to stand together against racism of any kind and everyone equal under the law. He stands with the police and dedicated public service professionals who protect and serve with dignity and respect for all...he stands with the Cheshire Police Department. Mr.

Oris stated Cheshire is a great place to raise a family, with everyone working together for the betterment of all.

Chairman Oris welcomed Sandy Pavano as a new Town Council member filling the vacancy of Paul Bowman. He thanked Ms. Pavano for undertaking the commitment to serve on the Council, and highlighted her many years of experience in public service.

Ms. Pavano said she looks forward to working with the Town Council and Town staff and appreciates the opportunity.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Regular Meeting of May 12, 2020; Special Meetings of May 12, 13, 18, 19, 26 and 28, 2020.

MOTION by Mr. Slocum; seconded by Mr. Veleber.

MOVED to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 12, 2020 and Special Meetings of May 12, 13, 18, 19, 26 and 28, 2020 subject to corrections, additions, deletions.

VOTE The motion passed 8-0-1; Ms. Pavano abstained.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION by Mr. Borowy; seconded by Mr. Veleber

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #060920-1

RESOLUTION #060920-1
CONSENT CALENDAR FOR June 9, 2020

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves the Consent Calendar for June 9, 2020 as follows:

- A. Acceptance and appropriation of a \$1,000 donation from Grace Baptist Church To the Police Gift Account for the purchase of personal protective equipment for Police Officers and staff.
- B. Approval to apply for a 2021 Historic Document Preservation Grant in the Amount of \$7,500.
- C. Acceptance and appropriation of a \$50 donation from Michelle Anastasio in Memory of Paul Michalowski to the Human Services Gift Account to be used For the Senior Center.
- D. Acceptance and appropriation of a \$10 donation from Peter and Nancy

McAllinden to the Cheshire Human Services Jitney Bus Fund.
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- E. Acceptance and appropriation of a \$50 donation from John and Janice Leetch In memory of Selina McArdle to the Human Services Gift Account to be used For the Senior Center.
- F. Acceptance and appropriation of a \$1,000 donation from Grace Baptist Church to the Fire Department Gift Account.

VOTE The motion passed 8-0-1; Ms. Pavano abstained.

7. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT CALENDAR

8. OLD BUSINESS

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Acceptance and appropriation of an aggregate of \$800 in donations To the COVID-19 Assistance Program

MOTION by Mr. Borowy; seconded by Mr. Talbot.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #060920-2

RESOLUTION #060920-2

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council accept and approves the following donations totaling \$800 to the Human Services Gift Account for the COVID-19 Assistance Program:

Barbara Christoff	\$500
Anne & David McBain	\$150
George Noewatne	\$150

Discussion

Chairman Oris expressed appreciation for the generous donations to support the assistance program.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

B. Call of public hearing re: 2020 Neighborhood Assistance Act Program Submissions

MOTION by Mr. Oris; seconded by Mr. Veleber.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #060920-3

RESOLUTION #060920-3

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Town Council shall hold a public hearing to consider submissions for the 2020 Neighborhood Assistance Act Program applications; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Manager shall cause a notice of said public hearing to be posted and published according to law, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the date, time, and place or any postponements thereof shall be determined by the Town Manager with the approval of the Chairman of the Council.

VOTE The motion passed 8-0-1; Ms. Pavano abstained.

C. Discussion and possible action re: Board of Education request for a \$200,000 appropriation to the recently established non-lapsing account.

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #060920-4

RESOLUTION #060920-4

BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Council appropriates \$200,000 of unexpended funds from the FY 2019-2020 operating budget into the non-lapsing Unexpended Education Funds Account.

Discussion

The BOE saved \$200,000 and Mr. Borowy said they want to put this money into the new account. The funds would be spent in the next fiscal year for COVID-19 additional expenses during the summer. The majority of the funds will be used for special education along with the other expenditures.

VOTE The motion passed 8-0-1.

D. Discussion and possible action re: approval of transfer of uncollectible property taxes to the Suspense List.

MOTION by Mr. Borowy; seconded by Mr. Walsh.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #060920-4

RESOLUTION #060920-4

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves the transfer of uncollectible taxes, as presented and attached, to the Suspense Tax Book.

Discussion

Mr. Borowy noted this transfer is done annually for uncollectible items off the tax rolls and into the suspense list. The transfer enables the town to keep its books in order and have a truer picture of the financial situation. The information is recommended to the Town Manager and requires Town Council approval.

Mr. Slocum pointed out that the reasons for the uncollectible taxes is cited, i.e. bankruptcy.

Mr. Donlin informed the committee that the Tax Department keeps track of individuals who have moved out of town or passed away, and staff culls through the list. There will be no pursuit of bankrupt individuals or owners of a closed business. The transfer must be done once a year, and Cheshire approves the transfer at the June Council meeting. The list of uncollectible taxes is turned over to a collection agency.

Mr. Donlin said the value is consistent. 2019 - \$61,000; 2018 - \$48,000; 2020 - \$50,000 to \$60,000. Most of these are motor vehicle taxes.

Regarding the list, Mr. Walsh asked about how someone finds out they are on the list, i.e. on the web site.

The Council was told by Mr. Donlin that all records in the tax office are public information and anyone can view what is on file. After Council approval the list is in the Town Clerk's office for the public to see.

Ms. Talbot noted that the entire meeting packet is posted for virtual meetings.

VOTE The motion passed 8-0-1; Ms. Pavano abstained.

E. Discussion and possible action re: Registrars of Voters salary request.

MOTION by Ms. Nichols; seconded by Mr. Walsh

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #060920-5

RESOLUTION #060920-5

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves a 0% salary increase for the Registrars of Voters for the period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021, for an annual compensation of \$24,186 to be paid on a bi-weekly basis, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOVLED, that the Town Council approves a 1% salary increase for the Registrars of Voters for the period January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022, for an annual compensation of \$24, 428 to be paid on a bi-weekly basis.

Discussion

Ms. Nichols stated this is a fair representation of what the Council requested of all Town employees...to accept a 0% salary increase this year, and 1% increase next year. The Registrars' indulgence in this matter is requested by the Council.

VOTE The motion passed 8-0-1; Ms. Pavano abstained.

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

Town Manager Kimball submitted his June written report prior to the meeting, and reviewed highlights of the report with the Town Council.

Town Council Adopted Operating Budget – Total FY21 - \$116,083,417; increase of \$1,862,622, 1.63%. Dept. of Education - \$74,593,926, +\$1,237,415, +1.69%.

Town Manager's Recommended Capital Budget – Mr. Kimball stated the CEP was the subject of a 6:30 p.m. public hearing; there will be CEP budget meetings on June 16th and June 23rd at 6:30 p.m.

Bartlem Park/Kids in Motion Playground Improvements – The playground is receiving much needed improvement thanks to the capital budget appropriation last year. Failed fencing is replaced; upgrades to the playground equipment; surface material is being replaced with ADA compliant pre-engineered wood fiber mulch; new equipment will be installed next week by DPW, and the park will be opened shortly thereafter.

Tennis and Basketball Court Upgrades – Photos of the court upgrades were in the packet; upgrades are progressing well and completed by this weekend.

Cheshire's Expansion of Service Plan – Mr. Kimball read the plan into the record of the meeting.

Highlights:

- Town employees returned to work with accommodations for those who need them; face coverings, gloves, hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes and thermometers are provided to everyone; social distancing is in place; visitors must wear face coverings and adhere to social distancing.
- Town departments – Fire, Police, Recreation are open for services with doors locked to monitor entry; visitors call from the door area for entrance by a staff member; there is limited number of visitors per office; people are encouraged to continue electronic means of transactions.
- CPD lobby doors are unlocked during business hours; Records Div. is open to the public; fingerprinting services available for pistol permits by appointment.
- Senior Center is available on limited basis by appointment; home visits are suspended; transportation is available for in-town medical appointments.
- Library, Pool, Arstplace, Yellow House remain closed to the public until further notice.
- Community Pool will reopen once all required procedures and installation are finalized; pool liner project is near completion; pool will be filled on June 10th; Sector 2 guidelines allow the pool to open on June 17th; staff and lifeguards are returning to work w/additional training, sanitizing schedules, protocols, capacity allowance. Pool could open by the end of June.
- Restrooms in facilities and outdoor areas remain closed to the public.
- Daily cleaning and disinfecting and weekly deep cleaning are being done.
- Town parks are open with restrictions; playgrounds and basketball courts remain closed until guidance changes; Mixville Park is open with 50% parking capacity, all other areas are closed at this time.
- No facility rentals until June 30th, and this date could be extended.
- Rec Department not offering summer camps this year due to lack of available space and adequate indoor space, areas of refuge for outdoor camps, PPE and social distancing requirements, significant costs for required staffing versus limited enrollment.
- Town Government meetings will be held virtually until at least June 30, 2020; when meetings open face coverings, etc. will be required.

Current Road Paving/Milling Information – the information from the PW Dept. shows the first round of road work for summer 2020.

Upcoming Meetings

Tuesday, June 16, 2020, 6:30 p.m. Joint Town Council and Budget Committee meeting;
Tuesday, June 23, 2020, 6:30 p.m. Joint Town Council and Budget Committee meeting;
Wednesday, June 17, 2020, 7:00 p.m. School Modernization Committee Meeting.

Mr. Talbot commented on the zero COVID-19 cases in Cheshire; first time since March 26, 2020; and said this is encouraging news.

The closing of bathroom facilities in parks, including the Linear Trail, was raised by Mr. Slocum who stated this seems “absurd” to him. Mr. Slocum commented on public safety and sanitary bathrooms as important, and cited the need for things to move on. With parks open, these services are needed, with consideration of every aspect of public health...bathrooms being one of them.

For now, the bathrooms are closed, and Mr. Kimball said there is a Wednesday meeting to review everything resulting from the pandemic. The need for bathroom facilities being opened is also impacting sports leagues and Mr. Kimball noted everything is consistent with the health district and the Governor’s orders. One challenge is cleaning and sanitizing parks and bathroom facilities. The Town is looking into the anti-fogging devices.

The issue of Mountain Road designation as a bike path was raised by Mr. Slocum. He commented on Mountain Road from Cornwall Avenue (north) indicated as a bike path, when we all know it is a thoroughfare. On a Sunday morning, pre COVID a car could be blocked by many bikers using this road. Mr. Slocum questioned how this type of road was designated a bike route with painting on the road, and said cars had better watch out.

It was stated by Mr. Kimball that Mountain Road is the highest speed road in Cheshire, with many complaints received at the police department. The indicators on the road are called “share roads” with bikes permitted with cars on the road. The painting is a reminder for cars to share the road. CPD does receive many complaints about speeding on Mountain Road, but wanted to try this bike route as a possible way to slow down vehicles.

According to Mr. Jinks the shared road is a great addition to that route; it is a road where people drive faster than conditions; the bike indicator is not a bike lane; it makes drivers more aware of bikers on the road. He bikes on this road and notices drivers being more careful...it is speed mitigation strategy.

Stating he is a bike fan, appreciates biking, and biked in the past, Mr. Slocum said he also appreciates cars, and talked about the control of speed of vehicles on the roads. When roads must make way for other types of traffic, i.e. bicycles, there can be confusion...and this is troubling. He does not support the signs in the middle of the road, has passed careless biker groups, age 16 to 60, and public education on riding on town roads is needed.

Mr. Walsh mentioned Mixville Park being closed because of the executive order. He asked if the water has been tested, when the park would open, if there are goose droppings on the sand, and people not being allowed into the water.

The Council was informed by Mr. Kimball that the water is being tested this week; bathrooms and changing rooms are not worked out yet; they must be maintained and sanitized; the pond is open for fishing; there are goose droppings and this is being addressed. Everything is being done in compliance with State guidelines...interior water areas and water holes are not permitted to be open.

With regard to town hall reopening to all staff, Mr. Veleber asked how this is going, any changes, rethinking of realities, and if employees are comfortable with the plans outlined in the bulletin.

June 3rd was the day for staff to return to work at town hall, people to come to the building for town business with all precautions in place. Mr. Kimball advised all is going well in accordance with the guidelines. For town business, someone can come inside to a department (limited number allowed), get roadside service, on-line service, or mail in tax payments or license fees. The Library opening will be done with all appropriate precautions in place, and employees understand the realities. There is communication one on one with town employees.

Mr. Veleber commented on the vandalism at Cheshire High School supposedly done by Southington High School students...with big/blue "S" paint in areas of the campus.

Mr. Kimball knows about this incident, and reported it is under investigation and there is camera footage.

Chairman Oris expressed appreciation to town staff, especially Mr. Kimball, Mr. Talbot and Mr. Jaskot for their phenomenal work during the pandemic crisis, and knows they will continue this work on behalf of the community.

Mr. Oris commented on the outstanding tennis and basketball court improvements which will have a great return on investment. He thanked Mr. Gawlak and his staff for coming up with the design and working with the contractors. There have been positive comments about these courts.

CHS 2020 Banner – this banner is going across Route 10 in honor of the Class of 2020. People donated to the banner project to recognize the graduating students.

Mr. Oris thanked Town Manager Kimball, PW Director Noewatne, Chief Casner, Chief Dryfe and their department staff for work on installing this banner. He advised that parents of the Class of 2020 appreciated the support of their students. This banner is an example of community support to honor the CHS Class of 2020.

Ms. Nichols commented on the many individual signs throughout town honoring the graduates, and how great it is to see the signs on town roads. She thanked everyone who supports the efforts to recognize the CHS Class of 2020.

11. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL.

A. Chairman's Report

Personnel – Ms. Nichols and the committee will bring items to the Council, and work is ongoing for the Town Manager’s Goals and Objectives.

Ordinance Review – Mr. Veleber plans on meeting soon with many items on the agenda.

Budget – Mr. Borowy reported on upcoming meetings, June 16th and June 23rd on the capital budget.

Solid Waste – Mr. Walsh said the committee would soon meet in executive session.

Economic Development – Mr. Borowy advised the EDC will have the incentive program updates available soon.

B. Miscellaneous

12. MISCELLANEOUS AND APPOINTMENTS

A. Liaison Reports - none

B. Appointments to Boards and Commissions - none

13. TOWN ATTORNEY REPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

No report

14. COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

A. Letters to Council.

Mr. Oris cited a letter to the Council for a committee chairperson about a committee member; the letter and matter will be discussed in executive session at the next meeting.

B. Miscellaneous

3. ITEMS FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION (moved to end of the meeting)

A. Contract Negotiations

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

MOVED that the Town Council enter Executive Session at 7:55 p.m. to include Town Manager Kimball, Asst. Town Manager Talbot, Asst. Town Manager Zullo, Town Attorney Smith, Town Planner Voelker, Economic Development Coordinator Sitko, to discuss contract negotiations.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Chairman Oris left the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

The Council exited Executive Session at 9:54 p.m.

15. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Walsh; seconded by Mr. Veleber.

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:54 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk