

**MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY,
NOVEMBER 10, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M.**

VIRTUAL MEETING

**This meeting can be viewed live at
youtube.com/c/CheshireChannel 14 or on Channel 14**

**Public comments can be made virtually via zoom.us/my/townofcheshire,
via e mail at Comments@cheshirect.org,
and by voice message prior to the meeting at 203-271-6638.**

Present

Timothy Slocum, Vice-Chairman; David Borowy, James Jinks, Sylvia Nichols, Sandy Pavano, Peter Talbot, David Veleber, Donald Walsh.

Absent: Robert J. Oris Jr.

Staff: Sean M. Kimball, Town Manager; Arnett Talbot, Asst. Town Manager; James Jaskot, Finance Director; Town Attorney Al Smith; Louis Zullo, Personnel Director; Police Chief Dryfe, Deputy Chief Jortner; Vincent Masciana, COO, Dept. of Education

Guest: Maura Esposito, Director, Chesprocott Health District

Vice Chairman Slocum 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. ITEMS FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Contract Negotiations

B. Labor Negotiations

C. Land acquisition

Mr. Slocum moved Executive Session to the end of the agenda.

4. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

A. COVID-19 update from Chesprocott Health Director

Ms. Esposito gave an update on the COVID-19, and stated it has been a busy time for the health district staff. Cheshire is surrounded by "red" in the alert system, and is expected to turn red.

Week of November 1st to November 9th – 51 cases in Cheshire; people are testing and more cases are seen with testing available; Cheshire is doing well compared to other to the other two towns in the health district; restaurants and salons are doing well; a group home is in lockdown; many Halloween gatherings resulted in 18-25 year olds testing positive; there are increased cases in health care workers; things got a little loose and we are now suffering for it; Elim Park has exposure in the independent living center; MRC nurses are assisting Elim Park, as needed.

Cheshire Public Schools – The schools are busy with sporadic cases with teachers and students, and the virus is spreading in families and showing up in the workplace. Cases are trickling into the schools; two instances at Highland School, and similar at Doolittle School.

People must continue to wear masks, 6 foot distancing, wash hands, and if symptomatic (sniffles, sore throat, fever, breathing issues etc.) get tested. There are some residents in the hospital. 60 cases were taken in this weekend, and the Health Dept. is still operating and doing the best it can.

Vaccine – The vaccine from Pfizer is an ultra low vaccine; dosage is expected to go first to health care providers, first responders, Fire and Police Officers, and vaccinations will take place outside (not in a building). Chesprocott is gearing up to be a vaccine provider; a medical director has been hired, at a cost, and they are in the process of hiring a nurse; the district will be partnering with Meriden and Wallingford Health Districts for provision of vaccine.

Chesprocott staff is very busy, working to keep everyone informed, quickly responding to many phone calls, and moving towards providing vaccinations.

With regard to college kids coming home and how far in advance they should be tested, Ms. Esposito said they should be tested, as this age group is still getting the virus. Family get-togethers should be no more than ten (10) people; be aware of people who are vulnerable and cannot fight this virus; cases are rising with death rates increasing.

In response to a question from Mr. Walsh on how to alleviate symptoms, Ms. Esposito said people should ramp up their body as best they can, take Vitamin C, Zinc, Tylenol. If the person has breathing difficulty or low oxygen counts these bad signs require medical attention.

With the issue of flu cases going down and those 65 and older getting the senior flu dose, Mr. Slocum asked if the situation remains the same. He noted that CVS staff are training and ramping up for the vaccine.

This is unpredictable, and Ms. Esposito said it is expected people will stay home, wash their hands often, and this is the same for the flu. There are 1 or 2 flu cases; other

cases are virus related; Chesprocott staff had the excellent flu block vaccine; and next year the flu clinics will have the senior dose available. For the COVID-19 vaccine there are three (3) phases; #1 and 1B is hospital and critical care workers and fire and police and teachers; #2 is public outreach with multiple pharmacies.

Mr. Jinks stated the public is frustrated and wants to know where the cases are coming from, and recommends this information be provided.

Ms. Esposito pointed out that information is on the Chesprocott Facebook page, the town forum, town website...and cites the cases by month, those affected with the virus due to various situations (i.e. family illness, and spreading from contact in restaurants, bars, food workers). She said the virus is not being spread in the schools, which are doing an amazing job, and commended school district administrators, teachers and staff. Cases are coming from the house to the child in school, sports events/practices, with parents not practicing social distancing at these events...and entire teams having to be quarantined.

With the testing, Ms. Nichols noted college students are coming home, and asked if every time someone is tested...is it a new test.

Ms. Esposito was uncertain about this, but will get an accurate answer and inform Councilors. The data she has presented does not include college kids...her numbers are just the Cheshire community.

B. Public Comment (none)

Note: Public comments can be made virtually via zoom.us/my/townofcheshire. Participants will be admitted to speak one at a time, and can be seen and heard by Council members. It is recommended that speakers view the meeting on YouTube.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Regular Meeting of October 13, 2020 and Special Meeting of October 27, 2020.

MOTION by Mr. Walsh; seconded by Mr. Veleber

MOVED to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 13, 2020 and Special Meeting of October 27, 2020 subject to corrections, additions, deletions.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION by Mr. Borowy; seconded by Ms. Nichols

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #111020-1

RESOLUTION #111020-1
CONSENT CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER 10, 2020-1

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves the Consent Calendar for November 10, 2020 as follows:

- A. Acceptance and appropriation of a donation in the amount of \$50 from James and Corryne Hamilton in memory of Veronica Coleman to the Library Gift Account for general purposes.
- B. Acceptance and appropriation of a donation in the amount of \$50 from Gerald And Mary Beth Melesko in memory of Bruce Richardson to the Library Gift Account for general purposes.
- C. Acceptance and appropriation of a donation in the amount of \$40 from Lisa Pattin in celebration of Loretta Victor to the Library Gift Account for general purposes.
- D. Acceptance and appropriation of a donation in the amount of \$10 from Timothy Parsons to the Library Gift Account for general purposes.
- E. Acceptance and appropriation of a donation in the amount of \$20 from Martin Cobern to the Library Gift Account for general purposes.
- F. Acceptance and appropriation of a donation in the amount of \$30 from Terry and Robert Grahame in memory of Joy Hostage to the Library Gift Account for general purposes.
- G. Acceptance and appropriation of a donation in the amount of \$10 from Ramona Burkey in memory of Joy Hostage to the Library Gift Account for general purposes.
- H. Acceptance and appropriation of an anonymous \$50 donation to the Human Services Gift Account for general purposes.
- I. Acceptance and appropriation of a donation in the amount of \$100 from Rachel Chiginsky and Rosemary Purdy in honor of Florence Bryant's 100th birthday to the Human Services Gift Account to be used for the Senior Center.

- J. Acceptance and appropriation of a donation in the amount of \$50 from Patricia Dalton to the Human Services Gift Account to be used for the Senior Center.
- K. Acceptance and appropriation of a donation in the amount of \$24 from Patricia Giza in appreciation of digital thermometers being offered by the Senior Center into the Human Services Gift Account to be used for the Senior Center.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

7. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT CALENDAR - None

8. OLD BUSINESS

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion re: Proposals for Legislative Recommendations.

Mr. Slocum reported that the Planning Committee has discussed the legislative recommendations. At the next committee meeting there will be further discussion, decisions made, and forwarded to the full Town Council.

B. Status report Re: Town Attorney Search

Interviews for the position of Town Attorney will be scheduled by Town staff, and will be held by the full Town Council.

C. Discussion and possible action re: waiver of bid and award of sludge disposal contract.

MOTION by Mr. Walsh; seconded by Ms. Pavano

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #111020-2

RESOLUTION #111020-2

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves a waiver of bid for sludge disposal services and authorizes the successor contract with Synagro.

Discussion

Mr. Walsh explained that Synagro has had a contract with Cheshire since 2011. In 2015 an RFP was advertised with one responder (Veolia Water). Terms were negotiated with Synagro based on the 2011 contract in effect when RFP was advertised. The company was the best fit for the Town, and the agreement goes to the

end of 2020. The proposed contract with Synagro is a three-year agreement; 5% price increase in year one; and CPI increases in the out years. Cheshire typically spends between \$120,000 and \$140,000 annually for sludge removal. Mr. Walsh pointed out there are few competitors in this market. He explained the sludge is the solid waste and other materials coming out of the treatment plant

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

D. Discussion and possible approval for authorization to apply for a Municipal Brownfields Grant for Ball and Socket Arts.

MOTION by Mr. Walsh; seconded by Mr. Talbot.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #111020-3

RESOLUTION #111020-3

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes application for a Municipal BrownFields Grant on behalf of Ball and Socket Arts remediation of the former Ball and Socket property.

Discussion

Mr. Walsh advised some of the remediation is done, and the grant funds are for continuation of this work, and getting the building up and running and usable in the near future.

Town Manager Kimball stated this is an application to apply for the grant, a preliminary step, with final numbers to be determined in the next few months. The Council approval is required to move forward with submission of a full application.

It was stated by Mr. Slocum that the Town is the administrator for the grant application and distribution of proceeds. Everything is in the hands of Ball & Socket.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

E. Discussion and possible action re: Cheshire Public Schools Administrative Personnel Collective Bargaining Agreement

Mr. Slocum said this matter is up for discussion, and Council wants it included with the teachers' contract.

Mr. Masciana explained that Supt. Solan was unable to attend this Council meeting due to a prior commitment for a BOE meeting. This is a successor agreement for Cheshire Administrative Personnel which includes Principals, Assistant Principals, Special Education Supervisor, Athletic Director, Curriculum Coordinator, Adult Ed & Teacher

Development Coordinator, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

Mr. Masciana summarized the agreement information. The new contract must be signed before the expiration date of the current contract which expires on June 30, 2021; there are 18 administrators; total value of the contract is \$2.7M per year; on October 18, 2020 the BOE unanimously approved this contract; it is forwarded to the Town Council and Town Clerk according to the law. The Council can approve/reject/or take no action; if no action is taken within 30 days the Agreement becomes effective automatically.

Out of the 18 Administrators there are 14 at the top step; at the end of the contract there will be 17 Administrators at the top step.

Year #1 – 1.75% “all in”; Year #2 – 2.50% “all in”; Year #3 – 2.58% “all in”. Total increase over three (3) years is 6.9%; average increase is 2.3% a year; the agreement is in line with other administrative contracts settled this year; more detail will be forthcoming to the Council.

HSA co-share increases from current 11% to 12.5% and 14%. PPO and HMO plans are dropped in 2022-23; HSA annual deductible remain at \$2K/\$4K; District reduction in medical benefit costs - \$0, \$4K and \$3K.

The agreement has some minor language changes (legal and professional growth); adjustments have been made; the contract was negotiated in good faith by the parties with agreement on a reasonable wage settlement. Mr. Masciana pointed out that these administrators are dedicated staff; they worked aggressively throughout the summer months to get ready for the new school year; they have managed many difficulties with the virus situation; principals are at the center of management of the case load. Supt. Solan endorses approval of this contract.

With the HSA changes, Ms. Pavano noted a savings of about \$7,000.

That is correct and Mr. Masciana said the administrators pay higher in years 2 and 3.

Mr. Talbot asked about the annuity part of the contract and administrators at top step.

This is a standard part of the contract for many years, and Mr. Masciana noted the BOE contribution has been increased to \$6,000 (from \$5,000), and stays at \$6,000 going forward. There is no compounding effect as a result of the wage increases; the numbers include the steps and wage components. At this time 14 of the 18 administrators are at the top step; by year #3 17 of the 18 will be at top step.

Due to changes in learning Mr. Walsh talked about changes being made because of on-line learning.

Mr. Masciana said this is not from a contractual point of view. When a teacher is in quarantine they are teaching remotely, with someone in the classroom with the students. Furniture and equipment have been reduced in the classrooms; social distancing is maximized; there are tents at the schools to separate students; they will be removed on November 20th; principals will have to figure out the continuation of separating students, providing meal services, social distancing to greatest extent possible...and other circumstances not dealt with prior to the pandemic. There is no effect on the teachers' contract, but does affect their day to day operation of a school.

Mr. Walsh extended credit to the teachers and administrators on how they have handled the many changes within the school system and the additional hours they have put in to keep students in the schools and learning.

Mr. Masciana is very impressed by how well everyone has done with the changes, working remotely, doing better from an education and management perspective from September to the present...better than March to June.

Questions were raised by Mr. Veleber about the \$6,000 annuity as an add-on to teacher salaries, and the financial aspects of the annuity.

It was explained by Mr. Masciana that it is a contribution to the 403B contract/retirement plan; it is increased to \$6,000 from \$5,000; the \$6,000 remains going forward; it is common to have an annuity as part of the administrators' agreement.

The total of the new Administrators Agreement is \$2,702,957.

With regard to the number of people in the prior contract, Mr. Masciana will check this number. He noted the prior contract had 2.25% increase each of the three years for a total of 6.75%; the contract under discussion has a total increase of 6.9% over three years; the administrators in the contract total 17 or 18 staff members; and Mr. Masciana will confirm that number.

Following the discussion, Mr. Slocum stated that Council will get back with Supt. Solan and Mr. Masciana to review particulars of this contract and the teacher's four-year contract. A meeting must be scheduled by December 11th. It is possible there will be a meeting the week of November 16th or discussion at the November 24th Town Council meeting.

**F. Discussion and possible approval of a tax appeal stipulated agreement
With 905 South Main Street LLC et al. Possible Executive Session**

MOTION by Mr. Borowy; seconded by Ms. Nichols

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #111020-5.

RESOLUTION #111020-5

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby authorizes the execution of a tax appeal Stipulated Agreement by and between the Town of Cheshire and 905 South Main Street, LLC, et al, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Attorney is hereby authorized and directed to execute on behalf of the Town said Agreement in the form and upon the terms and conditions presented at this meeting.

Discussion

There are two (2) parcels with the entity and Mr. Jaskot said the tax exposure is \$11,744 per year for both parcels for several years.

The new value of the property is \$1.1M, a 29% decrease, and Mr. Walsh asked if this is an unusual decrease and the reasoning for it.

This is not unusual, and Mr. Jaskot noted that the value is sometimes on the high side and cut back with settlements. The tax loss is not significant and the Town staff has professional staff working with them throughout the process. One parcel is a parking lot and the other is the entire plaza and adjacent property.

With the two pieces together, Mr. Borowy said it is less than 4% in decrease in value. In looking at costs of special/legal counsel and tax experts the Town is not losing any money.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

**G. Discussion and possible approval of a tax appeal stipulated agreement
With Cheshire –ILR LLC et al. Possible Executive Session**

MOTION by Mr. Borowy; seconded by Ms. Nichols

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #111020-6.

RESOLUTION #111020-6

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby authorizes the execution of a tax appeal Stipulated Agreement by and between the Town of Cheshire and Cheshire-ILR LLC, et al, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Attorney is hereby authorized and directed to execute on behalf of the Town said Agreement in the form and upon the terms and conditions presented at this meeting.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

**H. Discussion and possible approval of a tax appeal stipulated agreement
With Stop and Shop Supermarket Company, LLC. Possible Executive
Session**

MOTION by Mr. Borowy; seconded by Ms. Nichols

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #111020-7.

RESOLUTION #111020-7

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby authorizes the execution of a tax appeal Stipulated Agreement by and between the Town of Cheshire and Stop and Shop Supermarket Company LLC, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Attorney is hereby authorized and directed to execute on behalf of the Town said Agreement in the form and upon the terms and conditions presented at this meeting.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

**I. Discussion and possible approval of a tax appeal stipulated agreement
With Montowese Industrial Park Inc. Possible Executive Session**

MOTION by Mr. Borowy; seconded by Ms. Nichols

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #111020-8.

RESOLUTION #111020-8

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby authorizes the execution of a tax appeal Stipulated Agreement by and between the Town of Cheshire and Montowese Industrial Park Inc., and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Attorney is hereby authorized and directed to execute on behalf of the Town said Agreement in the form and upon the terms and conditions presented at this meeting.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

10. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Monthly Status Report

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

Town Manager Kimball presented his report to the Council. A copy of the report is attached to these minutes.

COVID-19 Pandemic – The Town is working with Chesprocott Health District on the pandemic and effect on Cheshire. The chart in the report shows a significant increase in cases in Cheshire, and the Town is close to a “red” alert on November 12th.

STEAP Grant Award – The Town received a \$128,205 grant for the renovation and replacement of sidewalks at Curve Hill Road and Highland Avenue. There will be matching funds of \$121,750 from the Town to complete the project.

GFOA Award – The Cheshire Finance Department and Finance Director Jim Jaskot were awarded the GFOA Certificate of Achievement for the 24th consecutive year for the FY19 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. The Town Council congratulated Mr. Jaskot and the Finance Department staff for the award and commended them for their continued commitment to excellence in financial reporting.

Recreation Department Offerings and Updates –

- The 1st Annual Turkey Hunt will be held on Thursday, November 19th, starting at 6pm; participants must register for this program; clues will be e-mailed at the start of the event or picked up at the Youth Center.
- Skate Park Upgrades – the work is finished with enhancement of condition of the ramps, riding surface paint, replacement of rusted railings with galvanized nails.
- Ice Rink – Due to ongoing concerns the ice rink will not be set up at Bartlem Park this year; next year there will be a look at alternative locations for the rink.
- Bartlem South/Chapmen Property Master Plan – the updated concept document will be released later on November 10th by Weston and Sampson; the first public engagement session will be held during the week of November 30th-December 4th; details to follow.

Public Works Updates – Leaf collection has started and will go through December 11th; Free mattress collection on Saturday, November 14th, 9 am to 1 pm at Town Hall.

Capital Budget Referendum Results – Police Station HVAC and Locker Rooms, Road Improvement Program and Road Reconstruction projects were all approved.

Upcoming Town Council and Subcommittee Meetings –
Town Council Special Meeting, November 24, 2020, 6 p.m.

Town Council Budget Committee Meeting, December 8, 2020, 6:30 p.m.

Town Council Regular Meeting, December 8, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.

School Modernization Committee Meeting – November 18, 2020, 7 pm

Options Subcommittee – November 11, 2020, 4pm

Options Subcommittee – November 18, 2020, 4pm

Options Subcommittee – November 25, 2020, 4 pm

Options Subcommittee - December 2, 2020, 4 pm

Communications Subcommittee – November 23, 2020, 6:30 pm

Mr. Talbot congratulated the Finance Department Staff and Director Jaskot for the incredible accomplishment of attaining the GFOA award for the 24th consecutive year.

Mr. Walsh acknowledged two letters in the Council packet about the Cheshire Police Department Dispatcher and Police Officer Gretchen Ovesny for their outstanding efforts in assisting someone following a vehicle accident. Officer Ovesny risked her life getting into the vehicle to assist the occupant...this is a display of the amazing police officers in Cheshire.

11. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL.

A. Chairman's Report

Ordinance Review Committee – Mr. Veleber reported the committee met last week. They are working on the Unsafe Premises Ordinance update or amending the ordinance, a possible new Blight Ordinance and Short-Term Rental Ordinance, and Mobile Vendor ordinance. Another meeting will be scheduled shortly.

Planning Committee – Mr. Slocum stated the committee will be meeting in the next two weeks regarding the Legislative Recommendations.

B. Miscellaneous

12. MISCELLANEOUS AND APPOINTMENTS

A. Liaison Reports

Cheshire Public Library – Ms. Nichols reported the Library is open on regular hours, ramping up programs, and things are going well. Arts Place is holding on-line projects and classes. The CPL Board meets next week.

Economic Development Commission – Town Manager Kimball reported that Mr. Sitko partnered with the Chamber of Commerce on the videos. He advised the EDC coordinated with Bozzuto's and Chamber of Commerce on "Cheshire Open for

Business” videos; and there will be continued expansion of these videos. These are high quality videos for Cheshire businesses.

Retirement Board – Mr. Veleber reported the latest quarterly account report was received with an increase of 7% for this quarter...good news.

Re-Read Book Store – Ms. Nichols attended the ribbon-cutting for this new book store in the Watch Factory. It is a great place for challenged individuals who are enthusiastic to work; it’s a great book store; and thanks to the Council for waiver of the permit fees for this store. Mr. Veleber also attended the opening of the book store, which he said was a great event.

B. Appointments to Boards and Commissions - None

13. TOWN ATTORNEY REPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS – No report

14. COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

A. Letters to Council.

Councilor Talbot read a letter into the record from Ronald and Judy Slisz, 570 Payne Drive; the letter commented on their concerns about unsafe properties in their neighborhood, and lighting for town streets.

At the present time, Cheshire does not have a Fire Marshal to handle issues on unsafe premises and possible blight conditions. Town Manager Kimball advised that Deputy Fire Chief Mike Koslowski is Acting Fire Marshal. It is expected there will be appointment of a new Fire Marshal very soon.

B. Miscellaneous

On behalf of the Council, Mr. Slocum expressed appreciation to the Cheshire voters for their support of the referendum items. In this challenging year, everything at the polls ran very well, and he expressed credit to the residents and those people who assisted with the voting process.

3. ITEMS FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Contract Negotiations

B. Labor Negotiations

C. Land acquisition

MOTION by Mr. Veleber; seconded by Mr. Jinks.
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MOVED that the Town Council enter Executive Session at 8:35 p.m. to include Town Manager Kimball, Asst. Town Manager Talbot, Town Attorney Smith, Chief Dryfe, Deputy Chief Jortner, and Mr. Zullo to discuss contract negotiations, labor negotiations, land acquisition.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attorney Smith left Executive Session at 9:05 p.m.

Chief Dryfe and Chief Jortner left Executive Session at 9:22 p.m.

The Council exited Executive Session at 9:44 p.m.

15. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Talbot; seconded by Ms. Pavano

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:44 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk