

**MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY,
JANUARY 12, 2021, AT 7:00 P.M.**

VIRTUAL MEETING

**This meeting can be viewed live at
[youtube.com/c/CheshireChannel14](https://www.youtube.com/c/CheshireChannel14) or on Channel 14**

Public Comments can be made

Via email at Comments@Cheshiredirect.org

And by voice message prior to the meeting at 203-271-6638

Chairman Oris called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

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; Town Attorney Al Smith, Gerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator; Deputy Chief Donn Youngquist.

Guests: CFD Fire Prevention Poster Winners: Oliva Maturo and Natalia Pepe Ilona Somogyi, Davie Arai, Ron Bergamo, Ball & Socket Arts Project.

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 made a strong statement about the violent acts which occurred on January 6th in the Nation's Capital Building, and shares the concerns of the many people who have contacted the Council with their concerns. This meeting is the first public forum since January 6th for the Council to comment on what happened with this violent event and those that happened over the past months. He stated there is divisiveness throughout the country and it needs to change, and personal attacks and violence cannot be condoned for any reason. Mr. Oris expressed hope that a way forward can be found, working together in a respectful manner to address the many important issues facing our country, state and Cheshire. Our children's future depends on it. Stand together, stand united, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Councilor Talbot made a strong statement about the January 6th violent acts. He thanked the residents who have voiced their outrage of the events at the Nation's Capital. The Town Council members do not condone what happened. His perspective of why it happened is that individuals who perpetrated this act of domestic terrorism have been incited by lies about the election. Mr. Talbot hopes and prays that we can begin a return to national civility.

Ms. Pavano agreed with these statements. She said is appalled and disgusted with the violence in Washington D.C.; and said we must now work together, respect our differences, and do all we can to protect our democracy.

Chairman Oris moved agenda item #3 to the end of agenda item #4.

3. ITEMS FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Labor Negotiations

B. Litigation

4. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

A. Recognition of Fire Prevention Poster Contest Winners – Olivia Maturo, Highland School Grade 4 and Natalia Pepe, St. Bridget School Grade 5.

Chairman Oris commended Olivia and Natalia for their hard work, phenomenal art work, and their participation in the poster contest. He said the youth of Cheshire are the future of Cheshire.

Deputy Chief Don Youngquist thanked the Council for their continued support of the fire poster program. This program promotes fire safety and prevention in the community. Chief Youngquist briefly reviewed the 36 year history of this annual award for Cheshire 4th and 5th graders and their artistic work with fire prevention posters. The theme is “Fire Prevention, Everyone, Every Day”. The two winners are Olivia Maturo, 4th Grade Highland School and Natalia Pepe, 5th Grade St. Bridget School. The winning students will receive Amazon gift cards, and a ride to school in a fire truck. Their local winning posters will go to the county competition and then onto the State competition.

The winning posters were displayed on the screen shot via zoom. They will be displayed in the Town Hall lobby along with all the fire prevention posters.

Chairman Oris and Town Council members congratulated Olivia and Natalia on their awesome posters which will encourage everyone to work towards prevention of fires.

B. Recognition of 2020 Connie Wallace Employee of the Year recipient Jack Casner.

Chairman Oris congratulated Fire Chief Jack Casner on receiving the prestigious award and recognition from his fellow town employees. Chief Casner has served 16 years as Chief of CFD, and many years as a volunteer firefighter, and reflects Cheshire in the highest standards. Chief Casner is also the Town of Cheshire Emergency Manager, and has been working round the clock during the pandemic to service the needs of the community.

Town Manager Kimball said the vote by his coworkers is a great reflection on Jack Casner as Employee of the Year. Jack is a valuable member of the organization for many years, is a guiding hand for the town, especially throughout this year during the pandemic, is involved in all events in the town, keeps the Town Manager informed, and is a key member of the Town staff. Mr. Kimball extended congratulations to Chief Casner on being selected as Employee of the Year.

Mr. Talbot congratulated Chief Casner on his award of Employee of the Year. He noted this past year was incredibly difficult for the Fire Chief. No one put in more effort than Jack Casner and Maura Esposito during the ongoing pandemic. Mr. Talbot stated that Jack Casner embodies why Cheshire has this award.

Chief Casner thanked his Town coworkers/peers for the honor of Employee of the Year, and is humbled and flattered by this recognition. He said Cheshire has one of the best management teams in Connecticut, with everyone working cohesively with the support of the Town Council. Chief Casner expressed appreciation for this recognition.

C. COVID-19 update from Chesprocott Executive Director, Maura Esposito

Maura Esposito, Director of Chesprocott Health District, reported the following statistics and information to the Town Council.

- Cheshire – 1297 cases; 35 deaths
- 15,000 people in Cheshire have been tested; 8% tested positive
- New Haven County has 294 people currently hospitalized
- Contract tracing continues in the health district office
- Interviews continue; cases coming fast and many go to the State
- Many of the cases are due to large gatherings
- In the first week of January the numbers are going up after people testing positive after the holiday
- There is an increase in the younger population which is associated with large gatherings
- Cheshire numbers – ages 6-12 had 7 positive; ages 13-19 had 7 positives; 20 people 20 years old were positive; 12 people 30 years old tested positive; 22 people 40 years old tested positive; 31 people in their 50's tested positive; 12 people in their 60's tested positive; 2 people in their 70's tested positive; 9 people in their 80's tested positive.
- There were two (2) small outbreaks at Elim Park independent living section attributed to gatherings
- There is now an outbreak at Cheshire Rehab Facility, and DPH response team came to the facility; there was a request today for PPE...delivered face shields and masks.

Vaccine Clinic – this clinic at the Community Pool is managed by the local Health Department through VAM assessment. Clinics are operating based on vaccines received. Every Monday an order is placed for the following week. The clinic at the

pool is a great setup. 206 MRC volunteers are operating the clinic, and 127 are Cheshire residents. These clinics are being run primarily by MRC volunteers...doctors, nurses, dentists, non-medical people, retired and not retired people, and others from many walks of life. Two clinics have been held. January 2nd, 1A Phase, 95 people vaccinated; January 6th 192 people vaccinated; another clinic is scheduled for January 30th and February 3rd for people to get the 2nd vaccination. 61 of the Cheshire Fire Department volunteers were vaccinated; Cheshire Police Department, 29 were vaccinated. On December 28, an order was placed for vaccine but none were received. The last large order only received 100 vaccines. Phase 1A is now on a slow roll into Phase 1B. Most of the vaccine is being shipped to hospitals and pharmacies. On January 11th, 1,000 vaccines ordered for Phase 1B, which is front line essential workers, individuals and staff in congregate settings and people 75 years or older.

Sign Up for 75+ People – information about scheduling a vaccine is coming soon, and posted on CT.Gov website. Ms. Esposito does not get advanced notice on how these people will be vaccinated, but they will be vaccinated. The release is slow throughout the country. People must hold strong and be patient. Chesprocott is only getting the Moderna vaccine right now.

If Chesprocott gets the 1000 doses or a good percentage there is planning for the clinics. Over the next two weeks, clinics will be Wednesday and Thursday to accommodate Cheshire Public Schools and essential Town workers. Each appointment is 5 minutes; person then sits for 15 minutes; if any health concerns are identified the person will sit for another 30 minutes. There was one incident in town with a patient reaction, but the person has recovered and is doing well. 95 shots per clinic will be allotted to the schools, and 45 shots to Town Hall staff. The school system has 781 staff members, and information is being gathered on who wants to get the vaccine. Mr. Kimball and Mr. Jaskot will survey workers who want the shot; Cheshire Public Schools will have 380 doses; the Town will have 196 doses.

On Friday, January 15th, Ms. Esposito is holding a question and answer session to help guide everyone. The clinic is a sign of relief...there is light at the end of the tunnel.

With regard to people getting the first dose, there is a hold back on the second dose by the company, and Ms. Esposito said the news is they want the second dose released.

Mr. Walsh asked about a Covid Advisory Committee putting the next phase at 65+ years old and those with pre-existing conditions. The government is talking about unloading everything they have and lowering the age or people with certain conditions.

There is a meeting on January 14th with the State Advisory Committee and Ms. Esposito waits their advice.

Side effects vary with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. Ms. Esposito said the arm is sore and this is expected with the first dose. The second dose has little effects. She

has heard of people getting tired, having a sore arm, slight fever and these are expected. This is the body building up a response mechanism.

For the second dose, Mr. Veleber asked about the 21-28 day time frame and not getting this dose within this time frame.

There is no impact, and Ms. Esposito said people have a few days within the 28 days. The first shot builds immunity, and the second dose boosts the immunity.

Mr. Slocum asked about the statistics on the nursing homes vaccinations being completed. He also asked about when pharmacies will be doing vaccinations.

At Elim Park not everyone took the vaccine and Ms. Esposito advised Elim Park and Cheshire Rehab received the first dose. The doctors and pharmacies could start soon, and they are gearing up for the 75+ people. A computer must be used with email, passwords, etc. and it is hoped doctors and pharmacists will take time and walk people through the process. If necessary, Ms. Esposito will open up a clinic for these people to accommodate them, and people can call the 211 line for help through the process.

Chesprocott has dedicated volunteers, and Mr. Oris talked about strategizing to work together to assist people with signup, or use the clinic to do this. The Council and Town staff support this effort. He thanked Mr. Kimball and Chief Casner and everyone who have made the pool a good place to run the clinic. The goal is to safely vaccinate as many people as fast as possible, and Council is ready to assist.

Ms. Nichols asked about the efficacy of the vaccine over time, the length of time it is protective, i.e. is next year another shot required.

In reply, Ms. Esposito said answers will come with time, and people will be followed by the CDC, asking questions, and the studies will continue for a few years. The long term effects are unknown yet.

Chairman Oris commented on hearing hospitals getting more vaccines than other places and doses going to waste...this is disturbing as every vaccine counts. He asked if something can be done to pressure the State for a system that will work to insure there is a call list of people if this happens.

The Council was informed by Ms. Esposito that with the first clinic there was wasted vaccine for no-shows. The second clinic had no vaccine wasted. The DPH has given guidance to volunteers, and there is vigilance on where the vials are going. There is better control of the vaccine; there are people on the call list for vaccine; and no vaccine will go to waste.

On behalf of the Council, Chairman Oris thanked Ms. Esposito for the informative update.

D. Ball & Socket Arts Project status update

Ilona Somogyi, President of Ball & Socket Arts Project, Dave Aria and Ron Bergamo participated in a short presentation on the project to the Council.

The group is a 503c-3 non-profit, founded in Fall 2011 to turn the Ball & Socket site into an arts center. A site plan was presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission in 2014, received approval, there was closing on the site with a redevelopment fund grant. The site is 3+ acres, 6 buildings with 1 demolished and 5 remaining , and has 63,000 S.F. usable space. The organization is a developer taking on a difficult construction project...historical conversion with environmental cleanup component. The plan is for retail shops, dining, and leases providing the income to cover the cost of operation. The commercial and cultural operations will complement one another. The site will have gallery spaces, 130 seating performance space, classrooms, library, dance and movement classes. West Main Street will be Cheshire's bustling commercial district, and when this project opens the neighborhood will blossom.

This is a difficult and expensive project; it was assisted by a \$750,000 grant program; Town Council recommendation was to use the funds on the exterior of the buildings, i.e. reside and paint the wooden buildings. There is interest from two future occupants with each taking one floor of the building. First floor occupant will be Sweet Claudes, a local business that wants to expand their operations. The site will have a new parking configuration, added parking in the courtyard space, and plan #1 is going through the PZC process for openings buildings 2 and 3. There are interested parties for art galleries, bike shop, and a partnership with a tap room and music venue. The organization is growing; has 834 donors; has raised \$457,000; the BOD is mostly Cheshire residents. Ms. Somogyi said the organization is requesting town leaders to become more involved in the project.

Chairman Oris said the Ball & Socket success is Cheshire's success, and their success will enhance the success of other West Main Street businesses. The town has supported Ball & Socket with pass-through for grants.

Mr. Talbot stated everyone associated with the project is to be commended, and he looks forward to the opening of the Arts Center.

This will be a show piece of the town and Mr. Walsh asked about tenants in building #1 or later in the year.

Mr. Bergamo explained the site is in the last phase of the PZC application and through the Building Department. Once these approvals are received, there are quotes for construction, action items to be accomplished, working on private funding resources, and get phase #1 completed.

Summer events were planned in 2020, but could not be held due to insurance coverage, as the site was considered abandoned property. There will be an Evening in White in summer 2021 at a surprise location.

Ms. Nichols has worked with the organization on Evening in White, and is pleased the majority of volunteers are Cheshire people interested in the importance of the project.

Having visited the facility recently, Mr. Oris said there are extraordinary pieces of the complex which will be used in the project. There is history in these buildings. He suggested Councilors reach out and visit the property. Mr. Oris noted the Council is limited in financial support for the project, but the project has been supported through grants for remedial work.

E. Summary of FY 20-21 second quarter October 2020-December 2020 Consent Calendar donations.

Chairman Oris expressed appreciation to the many donors for their generosity to the Cheshire community and those in need. Total donations were \$34,313.23. The summary of donations is attached to the minutes.

F. Public Comments

Ms. Talbot reported there were seven (7) emails requesting the Town Council condemn the violence in Washington D.C.

3. ITEMS FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Labor Negotiations

B. Litigation

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

MOVED that the Town Council enter Executive Session at 8:15 p.m. to include Town Manager Kimball, Asst. Town Manager Talbot, Town Attorney Smith, Personnel Director Zullo, Police Chief Dryfe, Deputy Chief Jortner to discuss labor negotiations and litigation.

The Council exited Executive Session at 8:48 p.m.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Regular Meeting December 8, 2020 and Special Meeting December 15, 2020

MOTION by Mr. Talbot; seconded by Ms. Pavano

MOVED to approve the minutes of December 8, 2020 and December 15, 2020 subject to corrections, additions, deletions.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION by Mr. Borowy; seconded by Mr. Slocum

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #011221-1

RESOLUTION #011221-1
CONSENT CALENDAR FOR JANUARY 12, 2021

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves the Consent Calendar for January 12, 2021 as follows:

3. Acceptance and appropriation of a donation of a police motorcycle to the Cheshire Police Department from the Hometown Foundation and Bozzuto's Inc.
4. Acceptance and appropriation of a \$150 donation from the Town Clerk's Office to the Human Services Account to be used for general purposes.
5. Acceptance and appropriation of a \$500 donation from White Bowman Plumbing & Heating Inc. to the Cheshire Fuel Bank.
6. Acceptance and appropriation of a \$1,760.00 donation from the Cheshire Senior Center Membership Association Inc. to the Human Services Gift Account to be used for the Senior Center.
7. Acceptance and appropriation of a \$943.85 donation from the Cheshire Fire Department Holiday Collection to the Human Services Gift Account to be used for general purposes.
8. Acceptance and appropriation of a \$100 donation from Richard and Kathleen Pfeiffer to the Cheshire Police Department Gift Account to be used for personal protective equipment.
9. Acceptance and appropriation of \$50 donation from Deborah Rutter to the Human Services Gift Account to be used for holiday programs.
10. Acceptance and appropriation of a \$100 donation from the First Congregational Church of Cheshire to the Cheshire Fuel Bank.
11. Acceptance and appropriation of a \$300 donation from Angie Bradley To the Human Services Gift Account for the Adopt-A-Family Program.
12. Acceptance and appropriation of a \$1,000 donation from Barbara Christoff To the Human Services Gift Account to help our residents in need.
13. Acceptance and appropriation of a \$50 donation from an anonymous donor To the Human Services Gift Account to help our residents in need.

14. Acceptance and appropriation of a \$4,940.29 donation from the Cheshire Senior Travel Club to the Human Services Gift Account to be used for the Senior Center.

Mr. Borowy commented on the great generosity of Cheshire residents, businesses and organization, and the \$25,000 gift of a motorcycle to the CPD from Hometown Foundation and Bozzuto's Inc.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

7. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT CALENDAR

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. Discussion and possible action re: Parks and Fields Use Fee Charges

MOTION by Mr. Talbot; seconded by Mr. Veleber.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #011221-2

RESOLUTION #011221-2

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves the revisions to the Recreation Field Use Fees as presented and attached, effective January 1, 2021.

Discussion

The fee changes have been in the works for several months and Mr. Talbot noted they received unanimous support of the Parks and Rec Commission.

Director Gawlak pointed out the change is to make a priority group #4 with fees raised for commercial businesses who want to use Cheshire fields. The fee was \$25 per hour and raised to \$75 per hour.

The Budget Committee reviewed the proposed fee changes and supports these changes. There was a brief discussion about maintenance charges, and staff will make recommendations during the budget process.

Mr. Gawlak explained that with the \$25 per hour fee the revenue was \$8,200, and if it was \$75 per hour the revenue would have been \$24,000. The change in this fee will have no impact on normal CYB and other local groups using the fields. The league organizations know this, and meetings were held with all the local users last year.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

B. Discussion and possible action re: BOE Administrators Labor Agreement

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MOTION by Ms. Nichols; seconded by Mr. Jaskot

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #011221-3

RESOLUTION #011221-3

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves the Cheshire Public Schools Administrative Personnel Collective Bargaining Agreement as revised and attached.

Discussion

Mr. Oris gave a brief summary of the revised Agreement.

Wage Increases – Year #1 – 1.75% all in; 1.3% general wage increase and .45% step; Year #2 – 2.5% all in; 2.2% general wage increase and .03% step; Year #3 – 2.65% all in; 2.65% all in; 2.58% general wage increase and .07% step.

Health Services Account Co-Share – increased to 12% and 13% and 15%; revised from previous offer of 11%, 12% and 14%

PPO and HMO Plans – are dropped in 2023; HSA deductions remain at \$2,000 and \$4,000.

Overall wage increase costs – year #1 \$44,671; year #2 \$65,221; year #3 \$71,068

The medical benefits cost savings as a result of the increased percentage shares is \$2,272 in the first 2 years, and \$5,402 in the 3rd year.

Annuity Increase each year - #1 - \$5,500; year #2 - \$5,750; year #3 - \$6,000.

Mr. Walsh stated due to the general wage increases and other benefits, he has an issue with the agreement. He commented on many people out of work due to the pandemic, and many people hurting financially. This is a generous contract to give to these employees based on what has been approved for other groups, it is too rich, and he will not support the contract.

Ms. Pavano will support the contract. It was first rejected, and administrators came back with lower numbers.

Mr. Borowy noted that he rejected the contract. It has come back following negotiations and some changes; it could have gone further; and in the spirit of compromise and adjustments made in favor of the Town he will support the contract.

Chairman Oris feels similar to Mr. Walsh, as it is a bit rich in these difficult times and other union requests being negotiated. He will vote in favor because given the size of the union there is no huge benefit to push the agreement into an arbitration situation. The group compromised and in the spirit of cooperation there will not be significant savings in addition to what is on the table.

VOTE The motion passed 8-0-1; Mr. Walsh opposed.

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Extension of COVID-19 local property tax deferral program.

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #011221-4

RESOLUTION #011221-4

BE IT RESOLVED, that, pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order No. 9R the Town Council confirms the extension of the local tax deferral program as adopted by the Council on April 14, 2020.

Discussion

Mr. Borowy stated the Town Council has already adopted this program, and the executive order says once adopted, it continues on. It should be noted this includes the property tax due in January (motor vehicles, 2nd half of real property, sewer use charges). It is actually a two (2) month deferral of the existing one (1) month grace period, and taxes can be paid by March 31st without penalties. The majority of taxes are in escrow accounts and paid on time, and many people paid up front without the grace period.

Chairman Oris explained that most towns have not approved this program for taxpayers. The Council recognizes what the taxpayers are dealing with in this difficult pandemic times.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present

B. Authorization to execute documents with the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security

MOTION by Ms. Pavano; seconded by Mr. Talbot

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #011221-5

RESOLUTION #011221-5

BE IT RESOLVED, that, the Town Council may enter into with and deliver to the State Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security any and all documents which it deems to be necessary or appropriate; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that Sean M. Kimball, as Town Manager of the Town of Cheshire, is authorized and directed to execute and deliver any and all documents on behalf of the Town of Cheshire and to do and perform all acts and things which he deems to be necessary or appropriate to carry out the terms of such documents, including, but not limited to executing and delivering all agreements and documents contemplated by such documents.

Discussion

Ms. Pavano stated this is a memo from the Emergency Management and Human Services, it is done annually, and allows the town to participate in many grant opportunities to secure funding.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

C. Approval of bidding requirements

MOTION by Mr. Slocum; seconded by Mr. Borowy

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #011221-6

RESOLUTION #011221-6

BE IT RESOLVED, that pursuant to Section 7-8 (C) (1) of the Town Charter, the Town Council maintains the requirements for sealed bids for February 1, 2021 through January 31, 2022 at \$15,000 bid limit for non-construction related services and a \$30,000 bid limit for construction related services, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, in accordance with Section 7-8 (C) (9) and Section 7-8 (C) (10) of the Town Charter, the Town Council authorizes the Town Manager, his designee and the Cheshire Public Schools to purchase goods or services for the Town without bids (1) through the State of Connecticut Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and (2) through or in conjunction with other municipalities qualified bids/RFPs, and regional and federal government purchasing entities, including but not limited to:

- U.S. Government General Services Administration
- Capital Regional Council of Governments and any successor organization
- Connecticut Library Consortium
- Library Connection Inc.
- National Joint Powers Alliance
- Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley and any successor organization
- Capital Region Education Council
- Western State Contracting Alliance (WSCA)-National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO) Cooperative Purchasing Organization
- Houston/Galveston Area Cooperative (HGAC)

Universal Service Administration Company (USAC)
Sourcewell
Omnia Partners

Discussion

Mr. Slocum stated this is done annually by Town Charter, and the limits remain the same as last year.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

D. Conflict of Interest Notification and Disclosures

A copy of the Conflict of Interest Ordinance is attached to the minutes.

Chairman Oris stated this is an annual notification requirement under Section 9-3 of the Town Charter.

This ordinance requires all Town appointed and elected officials to disclose, on an annual basis, any potential conflicts of interest. The ordinance also requires the Town Manager to distribute this ordinance section to every public officer and employee of the Town. Each Town employee and all elected and appointed officials on Boards, Commissions, Committees has, or will, receive the annual disclosure reminder.

E. Annual Adoption of Fair Housing Policy

MOTION by Mr. Walsh; seconded by Mr. Jinks.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #0111221-7

RESOLUTION #011221-7

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council adopts the Fair Housing Policy as follows:

WHEREAS, All American Citizens are afforded a right to full and equal housing opportunities in t he neighborhood of their choice; and

WHEREAS, State and Federal Fair Housing Laws require that all individuals, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, marital status, age, mental or physical disability, lawful source of income, sexual orientation, familial status, be given equal access to rental and homeownership opportunities, and be allowed to make free choices regarding housing location; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Cheshire is committed to upholding these laws, and realizes that these laws must be supplemented by an Affirmative Statement publicly endorsing the right of all people to full and equal housing opportunities in t he neighborhood of their choice.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Cheshire hereby endorses a Fair Housing Policy to ensure equal opportunity for all persons to rent, purchase and obtain financing for adequate housing of their choice on a non-discriminatory basis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Manager of the Town of Cheshire or his/her designated representative is responsible for responding to and assisting any person who alleges to be the victim of an illegal discriminatory housing practice in the Town of Cheshire.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

F. Discussion and possible approval of income levels for the 2020 Local Elderly Tax Credit Program.

MOTION by Mr. Borowy; seconded by Mr. Jinks

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #011221-8

RESOLUTION #011221-8

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council makes the following changes to the property tax relief qualifying incomes in the Ordinance Sections 17-6 (a) (2) and 17-6 (a) (3) for the 2020 Grand List: The changes are attached to the minutes.

Discussion

Mr. Borowy stated this is increasing the limits following State guidelines, about 1.5% or \$300 per income category, and the program helps over 400 people in Cheshire. The program is very successful.

At this time there are 431 people in the program, and the participation fluctuates year to year. In 2015 there were 499 people, and prior years the number was over 500 participants. The tax credit is based on State program guidelines. Each year the Council reviews and raises the levels to the State level.

The local program in Cheshire goes beyond what the State provides and covers more people than the State program. The Cheshire program goes to \$55,000 for single and \$59,000 for married. The State program limit is \$45,000.

Chairman Oris commented on the successful program, with 2019 grand list having 431 participants receiving tax relief of about \$425. There is also the local tax freeze program under Section 17-15 that provides another \$43,000 in tax relief. Mr. Oris stated the Town does everything it can to provide relief for seniors and those who want to stay in the Cheshire community.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

**G. Discussion and possible approval of extension of bid award for vendor
For equipment for summer concerts due to cancellation of 2020 events.**

MOTION by Mr. Veleber; seconded by Mr. Talbot

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #0111221-9

RESOLUTION #011221-9

WHEREAS, Power Station was awarded a bid for equipment for the summer concert series for Summer 2020, and

WHEREAS, the concert series was never held due to COVID-19, and

WHEREAS, Power Station has agreed to hold the price constant for the 2021 events,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves the extension of a bid award for equipment for the summer concert series to Power Station.

Discussion

The summer concert series was not held last year due to COVID-19, and it is hoped the series will be held in 2021. Mr. Veleber advised that Power Station is holding the 2020 costs for the 2021 concert series.

Mr. Gawlak expressed appreciation to the Council for its support and approval of the award for Power Station.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

**H. Discussion and possible action re: stipulated tax assessment appeal
agreement, possible executive session**

MOTION by Mr. Borowy; seconded by Mr. Slocum

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #011221-10

RESOLUTION #011221-10

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 James A. Fazzone Developers LLC, and

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

Discussion

Mr. Borowy said this is an adjustment to a commercial property value, and there is agreement with the property owner and the Assessor as to the current value. It is about an \$872 tax loss per year for a total loss over 4 years of just under \$3,500.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

I. Discussion and possible action re: Police Collective Bargaining Agreement possible executive session

MOTION by Ms. Nichols; seconded by Mr. Veleber

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #011221-11

RESOLUTION #011221-11

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby approves the Agreement between the Town of Cheshire and the Cheshire Police Union for the term July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2024, as presented.

Discussion

Ms. Nichols explained this is a four (4) year contract following negotiations with the Police Union. She cited specifics of the Agreement.

Year # 1- the contract is retroactive from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2024; the wage increase is 0% for most of the Police Department. There is a targeted increase for some senior officers above the ranks going up the steps, and this was done to improve retention of these senior officers.

Wage Increases - year 2 -1.8%; year 3 – 2.0%; year 4 – 2.0%.

The Agreement also offers educational benefits and military service; increase in co-payment of medical insurance to 13% to 20%; wellness incentive program; and net savings for wellness items is \$124,909. The estimated difference to the budget in wages and other one-time payments to senior police officers, educational benefits, military service will average out to \$80,000 a year.

Ms. Nichols supports this fair contract, as the CPD is superb, has done a wonderful job, and Cheshire wants to keep the police officers employed in Cheshire. There is great appreciation to the CPD for the job done during this pandemic year, as they rose to every task requested of them.

Ms. Pavano stated her support of the Police Union Contract, with appreciation to the police officers, and retention of these officers in Cheshire.

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Chief Dryfe thanked the Councilors for their support and time during this contract process. He reported the CPD union unanimously ratified this contract.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

J. Discussion re: Appointment of Clerk of the Town Council

MOTION by Ms. Nichols; seconded by Mr. Talbot

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #011221-12

RESOLUTION #011221-12

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council appoints Marilyn W. Milton as Clerk of the Town Council under the terms and conditions as follows for the term February 1, 2021 to January 30, 2022:

For attendance at meetings, preparation and submission of summary minutes for Town Council and Town Council standing committees, and study groups as assigned.

Attendance at meetings - \$45 per hour (one (1) hour minimum), billed in half hour increments.

Minutes - \$13 per page for summary minutes.

Clerical work for Council - \$25 per hour

No additional charge for meeting attendance past 11:00 p.m.

Discussion

Ms. Nichols supports the contract for the Clerk of the Council, and stated Ms. Milton goes above and beyond in her service, minutes are delivered quickly and accurately, and Council appreciates her attendance at the many meetings.

Mr. Walsh echoed these comments, especially with the zoom call challenges, for getting all the work done in a timely manner...and her work is appreciated.

Ms. Pavano expressed appreciation to Ms. Milton for the great job and quick submission of Council minutes. She will support the motion.

Chairman Oris thanked Ms. Milton for her dedication, her work on behalf of the community, taking her job seriously, and knows she cares about the Cheshire community.

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

COVID-19 Data and Vaccine Rollout – Case numbers continue to go up over the first 8 months of the pandemic (chart shows trend of cases). There is some stabilization the last few weeks, with an average of 100 cases per week. Town facilities are open for public access, except for the Senior Center and Youth Center. There is close monitoring of case rates, employee exposures, and reports of new cases. Residents and employees should rethink daily activities, continue to wear masks, wash hands, and keep social distance from non-family members.

Chesprocott - is hosting the vaccine clinics for Phase 1A at the Community Pool, is uploaded to the VAMS system for vaccine dose appointments. Phase #2 begins on Thursday, January 14th with eligibility for residents 75+ years of age.

Development of FY 2022 Operating Budget – Town Staff is in the process of preparing the FY 2022 Recommended Operating Budget; department requests are due to the Town Manager on January 15th; department head meetings will be held in the following weeks; transmittal of the budget to Town Council is Wednesday, March 10th.

The General Assembly convened on January 6th; will be closely monitoring information related to the state budget and potential impact on Cheshire; this is a long session with closing on June 9th. The deadline for Cheshire budget adoption is April 30th.

Human Services – Narcan training on January 26th from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; registration is required; Suicide Prevention training on January 29th, 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; registration is required. Both trainings are free of charge.

Quinnipiac Field New Restroom – the project is on schedule to be bid this winter with planned installation in early summer; the building will be a pre-cast structure similar to those on the Linear Trail; new restrooms will provide additional convenient and ADA accessible facilities on the other side of the park from the existing restrooms.

New Trinity Ambulance in Service – A new ambulance is in service for Cheshire; it was part of the contract negotiated with Trinity Health as part of the acquisition of Campion Ambulance.

Upcoming Meetings

Town Council Personnel Committee, January 13, 2021, 4:00 p.m.

Town Council Special Meeting, January 13, 2021, 6:00 p.m. (Executive Session only)

Town Council Special Meeting, January 14, 2021, 6:00 p.m. (Executive Session only)

Town Council Special Meeting (tentative), January 26, 2021, 6:00 p.m.

Town Council Regular Meeting, February 9, 2021, 7:00 p.m.

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School Modernization Communications Sub-Committee Meeting, January 13, 2021, 5:00 p.m.

School Modernization Committee Meeting, January 20, 2021, 7:00 p.m.

School Modernization Committee Meeting, February 1, 2021, 7:00 p.m.

11. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL.

A. Chairman's Report

Chairman Oris made the following referrals:

- i. Referral of amendments to Park and Recreation Ordinance to the Ordinance Review Committee.**

- ii. Referral of increase to qualifying income limits for the Veteran's Tax Exemption Section 17-13 to the Ordinance Review Committee.**

Personnel Committee – Ms. Nichols reported a meeting on January 13, 2021.

Planning Committee – Mr. Slocum advised the committee will meet with the full Town Council over the next two evenings to discuss the Town Attorney.

Ordinance Review Committee – Mr. Veleber will schedule a meeting to discuss short term rentals, anti-blight ordinance and mobile vendors ordinance.

Budget Committee – Mr. Borowy reported the budget meetings will be scheduled between March 10th and April 30th, and the schedule will be out within the next month.

B. Miscellaneous

12. MISCELLANEOUS AND APPOINTMENTS

A. Liaison Reports

Board of Education – Ms. Pavano reported the Superintendent's budget will be presented on January 14, 2021 (virtual meeting).

CPFA – Ms. Nichols reported Arts Place is thriving; there are notices on the website about classes and activities.

Cheshire Library – Ms. Nichols reported the Library is adjusting to the pandemic with programs and online virtual programs.

Public Safety – Mr. Jinks reported that Frank Loehmann is the new Chairman of the Commission.

Beautification Committee – Mr. Jinks approved the landscape plans for the new Starbucks project on South Main Street.

Economic Development Commission – Mr. Borowy reported EDC’s guest speaker and presenter was Peter Talbot, who spoke about internet activity, increased capacity to homes etc.

B. Appointments to Boards and Commissions

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

MOVED that the following **reappointments** be approved.

The Beautification Committee – Jessica Fischer (R). term of office 1/12/2021 to 1/31/2023.

Energy Commission – George Romania (R), term of office 1/12/2021 to 1/31/2025; David Gavin (R), term of office 1/12/2021 to 1/31/2025; Rich Ogurick (R), term of office 1/12/2021 to 1/31/2025.

Economic Development Commission – Donald Dobbs (R), term of office 1/12/2021 to 1/31/2025.

Historic District Commission – George Pawlush (R), term of office 1/12/2021 to 1/31/2024.

Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission – David Brzozowski (R), term of office 1/12/2021 to 1/23/2025.

Performing and Fine Arts Committee – Jill Viega (R), term of office 1/12/2021 to 1/31/2024; Donna Lodynysky (R), term of office 1/12/2021 to 1/31/2024; Joyce Karkel (R), term of office 1/12/2021 to 1/31/2024.

Prison Advisory Committee – Joel Holstein (R), term of office 1/12/2021 to 1/31/2023.

Public Building Commission – Diane Waldron (R), term of office 1/12/2021 to 1/31/2025; Rich Clavet (R), term of office 1/12/2021 to 1/31/2025.

Public Safety Commission – Frank Loehmann (R), term of office 1/12/2021 to 1/31/2025.

Retirement Board – Mike Evans (R), term of office 1/21/2021 to 1/31/2025.

Water Pollution Control Authority – Stephen Carroll (R), term of office 1/12/2021 to 1/31/2024.

Youth and Human Services Committee – Eric Gunther ®, term of office 1/12/21 to 1/31/2023.

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And further MOVED to approve the following **new appointments**:

Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission – Tim Graver (R) to replace Robert DeJohgh, term of office 1/12/2021 to 1/31/2024.

Public Safety Commission – Lauren Miele (R) to replace Steve Larson, term of office 1/12/2021 to 1/31/2025.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

MOTION by Mr. Talbot; seconded by Ms. Nichols

MOVED to approve the following **new appointment**:

Parks and Recreation Commission – Fiona Pearson (D) to fill the vacancy of Dan Nowak, term of office 1/12/2021 to 1/31/2025.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Following the approval of the reappointments and new appointments, Chairman Oris thanked these volunteers for their service to the community.

13. TOWN ATTORNEY REPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS – No report

14. COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

A. Letters to Council.

Chairman Oris reported the Council members received a number of letters representing citizen concerns about the incident in Washington D. C. The Council has addressed this incident earlier in the meeting.

B. Miscellaneous

15. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Walsh; seconded by Mr. Jinks

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:53 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk