

MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING  
AND SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, MARCH 20, 2012, 6:30 P.M. IN  
ROOM 207, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present

Budget Committee: David Schrumm, Chairman; Michael Ecke, Thomas Ruocco.

Council Members: Tim Slocum, Patti Flynn-Harris, Sylvia Nichols, James Sima, Peter Talbot. Absent: Andy Falvey

Staff: Michael A. Milone, Town Manager; James Jaskot, Finance Director; Gina DeFilio, Deputy Finance Director; Parks and Rec. Director Robert Ceccolini; PW Director Joseph Michaelangelo; Deputy PW Director George Noewatne.

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. FY 2012-2013 OPERATING BUDGET

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT; PARKS AND RECREATION  
COMMISSION; PUBLIC WORKS, PUBLIC PROPERTY.

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT – Robert Ceccolini; pages 187 (tab book)  
And 58 (smaller book)

Mr. Milone advised that this department budget has an overall increase of \$35,312, 2.2%; the 27<sup>th</sup> payroll was \$36,677. In five years the Park and Rec budget has increased by only \$23,000, 1.46%, and Mr. Milone commended Mr. Ceccolini for operating a good department, keeping parks in very good condition, and for being frugal with spending in the department. In 9 years the staffing has not changed in the department, and the Town has more land now, with the parks still manned by a five man crew.

Director Ceccolini informed the Council of the major change in the department budget, which is moving the concert program to Friday nights at Bartlem Park. This will result in better attendance; the concert will be held on the large stage; and there are very good acts coming to Cheshire for the concerts. Another change this summer is that there will be no summer theater program because the high school is unavailable. There will be a smaller program held for the youth.

Program materials are budgeted at \$4,000; Rentals are budgeted at \$4,000; the concerts will cost more in this budget; part time work crew account is up by \$5,000 for summer help and salaried instructors.

Revenue will be healthy this year; the numbers for May and June for summer camp registration should be over budget; average revenue is about \$390,000.

Adaptive Program – this was started a few years ago and is in this budget. It is a successful program; there will be a 4 week summer camp for the children; and it is a strong program.

Mr. Ceccolini reported to the Council on a big problem in the parks – that is the trash removal. People are using the dumpsters at the parks for private trash since there is no longer a transfer station in Town. He said we must find a way to get rid of bulky materials.

There is a minor increase in overtime for the department crew members.

Mr. Ceccolini commented on some of the projects ongoing and completed including Mixville Park pavilion, Bartlem Park shed to be installed soon which came in under budget; organic fertilizing program is still ongoing; compost program ongoing with the Town having its own compost program.

Sports clubs (baseball, soccer, softball) have been good about resting fields when possible, and with the new turf field at the high school fields can be rested. Youth football will be at Bartlem Park.

Pool Subsidy – will be the same as the last few years.

On-line registration – there will be more revenue coming from on-line registration with the Webtrak system. Everything is about ready to go; there will be an announcement about program sign ups.

The increase in the minimum wage in the State will be in place for the summer help who assist with park maintenance.

Program information is on the web site. The department now has a camera to film activities to be shown on the web site, and there are plans to do a virtual tour of all Cheshire parks and the pool.

Mr. Milone commented on department revenue down \$25,000 as program participation decreased. The program flyers are now a tri-fold; the program information will be in the Cheshire Herald as an insert; and there is major cost savings since the department no longer prints the brochures and mails them to households.

Mr. Ceccolini noted that other towns are going through the same issue with reduction in program participation. He also said that e-mail communication must be very controlled. The department is attempting to keep more in tune with facebook. With all the programs now going on, he informed the Council that the department still has the same number of staff in place.

The youth program cannot take place at the high school because there is an abatement going on during the summer. Smaller type production will be done with the youth. For

the concerts there will be food vendors at the park, and CYB may open put up their concession stand.

With regard to the use and maintenance of the parks, Mr. Ceccolini said that the sports groups have been of tremendous assistance in this area. The quality of the fields is good. Quinnipiac Park is almost entirely for soccer and there are never complaints about this field. There are field improvements made each year.

At Cheshire Park the fields are all skinned and easier to maintain. CYB has purchased a groomer to help with park maintenance, so there are 4 groomers between Parks and Rec and the sports groups. There are trails behind Cheshire Park and the cross country teams use them. A trail was cut out at Roaring Brook with assistance from an Eagle Scout.

The development of the 10 acre field by the prison never materialized due to the economy.

Mr. Slocum said the Linear Park is in good shape and there was clearing of overhanging trees and brush recently completed. There is \$190,000 in the existing budget to pave the entire trail.

It was stated by Mr. Milone that the \$190,000 is for paving the trail, and this project will be revisited with the Council as it could wait a year or two, and could be coordinated with the extension of the trail.

Compost – the purchase of compost is expensive, and the Town is working on having its own compost area for use by the Town and residents.

Scheduling of the Fields – Mr. Schrumm asked about use of the school fields and their maintenance.

In the beginning of May every field used by Parks and Rec programs will be groomed by department crews. Mr. Ceccolini said that at the start of the year there is professional landscaping for school fields.

At the Bartlem Park new parking area, Mr. Schrumm said he wants permanent granite curbing so the curbs will not deteriorate. This could be expensive but should be looked into.

PUBLIC PROPERTY – PW Director Michaelangelo and Deputy Director Noewatne  
Pages 66 (small book) and 41 (tab book)

On page 41, Mr. Milone noted an increase of \$3,000; the 27<sup>th</sup> payroll cost was \$7,889; this is a total budget increase of about \$11,000.

Pages 42 and 43 – there is movement of personnel with a Maintainer from Public Property going into the PW Department budget. The recommendation is to take the custodial position between Public Property and the Community Pool and make it a full time position in the Public Property budget. This would cut some of the custodial costs.

Account 5102 – the “Building Maintainer” position is zero; \$50,398 goes to the PW Department budget; the Custodian position is budgeted at \$40,144; this is a reduction of about \$29,000 in the budget. There are further reductions in the custodial director services line item; salary increase of \$44,000; \$26,000 for utilities. About \$200,000 is cut out of the maintenance line item in this budget. Most of the PW maintainers do the winter blitz of the Town buildings and do things which cannot be done during the rest of the year. CNR money will be replaced for public building maintenance. The energy audit initiative will also help with the maintenance budget for buildings.

Regarding gas, Mr. Milone said there would be a spreadsheet done across all departments looking at utilities. At the end of the budget process, all the information will be reviewed with one unique adjustment made in all the budgets with the latest and best information.

Handout, page 45. To reduce maintenance costs there will be a reduction in maintenance agreements, with in-house building maintenance taking place.

The maintenance requests from Town departments are for repairs. These requests go to Mr. Noewatne who reviews them and allocates funding based on the needs of the departments. \$100,000 is set aside for these repairs in this budget.

Mr. Noewatne reviewed the list with the Council, and pointed out those priority maintenance requests which could be funded in this budget. These included the Police Department HVAC and Shed, \$10,000; Library list of work, \$22,300; Fire Department, \$38,000 and \$30,000 CEP; PW Garage \$68,000; Town Hall exterior painting \$35,000 CEP; restriping Town Hall parking lot \$2,800; Youth Center carpet replacement and oil furnace replaced with gas furnace, \$41,000; Senior Center replace siding, \$25,000 CEP and replace tile in main room, \$7,000 CEP. The totals for all department maintenance requests was \$350,100; the total allocation in the budget is \$100,000 which is the Town Manager recommended funding.

Mr. Milone said he will be requesting an annual appropriation from CNR for ongoing building maintenance.

With regard to custodial services, Mr. Milone stated that there will be less cost than with outside contracted services. He will prepare an analysis for the Council.

Performance Contracting – Mr. Noewatne informed the Council there will be a meeting on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 11:30 a.m. with Ameresco for BOE, PW and Town officials to start the process and determine expectations and needs. This will be a 4 to 6 month project.

Some of the projects on the Public Property list could be done through performance contracting while others are immediate needs.

The generator at the Town Hall is not being replaced in this budget.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Ray Squier asked about a flat roof on the fire department annex building.

Mr. Noewatne said these roofs are all pitched with drains.

#### PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, PW Director Michaelangelo, Deputy Director Noewatne, Page 115 (tab book) and 68 (small book)

Mr. Milone stated that this budget increases by \$154,000, or 3%; the 27<sup>th</sup> payroll cost was \$60,211; the total salary increase is about \$214,000 or 4% and this is where the Public Property Maintainer (\$54,000) has been moved. Also, a Maintainer has been taken and made a Senior Crew Leader with reclassification, at an increase of \$3,700. There is \$57,000 in this budget for the transfer of the Maintainer and reclassification of the existing position.

A large part of the department increase is \$84,000 in contractual services, including the RWA charges for water mains and CL&P for streetlights.

Page 68 - Mr. Michaelangelo informed the Council that there was a \$1.5 million appropriation plus supplements for road work and backlog of old capital appropriations which were cleaned up. Marion Road, South Brooksvale Road, Schoolhouse Road, Sections of Peck Lane, were the most challenging roads to be worked on and they are now completed. Cheshire has 152 miles of road. This year PW Department has a pavement program; asphalt pricing is not set yet; the estimate is \$45 linear foot for road pavement. It costs \$235,000 to pave one mile of road.

In Fall 2008 the Town had a management study done for the roads and we are in the fourth year using this program, and it has helped. There is chip sealing used on some roads. To mill one mile of road is \$35,000. The list of the roads is spread out more now.

Sidewalks – There is operating money and capital money for sidewalks. Last year the department did Spring Street, Marion Road, Rumberg Road. The department wants to target roads which are used more by people and there is the most benefit. The parklet area is being done in cooperation with the gas company.

The mini-excavator was discussed with Mr. Michaelangelo noting it is ideal for sidewalk work.

There have been culvert projects designed and completed in the last year, along with the East Johnson Avenue Bridge design work.

Engineering Issues – the town engineers are involved with the PBC and school projects, including the new bubble, CHS turf project, CHS roof project, streetscape project, Linear Trail, Broad Brook Project, Reservoir Road traffic light and other projects. Water course issues which were handled by the department included Weeks Pond and Sindall Brook.

Operational – Building Maintainer Position – there was a retirement a few years ago in the Building Department, and crews are shared and deployed, as needed on the roads or in buildings. With this retirement the department hired more of a road guy rather than a maintainer type guy. On any given day, even with only 2 men in the building side, there is deployment of the other crew members as they are needed.

Senior Crew Leader – the top two men working out of the garage supervise the men, and they are the Highway Superintendent and the Fleet Manager. The Senior Crew Leader retired a few years ago, and the position was not filled, leaving the Highway Superintendent handling more responsibilities than should be placed on him. The Senior Crew Leader position is needed to address duties in the department.

Mr. Michaelangelo commented on the work issues and jobs from last year with the heavy winter snow storms, the Storm Irene in August, and Storm Alfred in October. The PW Department handled the removal of all the debris and brush from Storm Irene and snow from Storm Alfred. There was very good internal management and work performed by the department crew members.

Trees and Power Issues – CL&P is working with the towns to implement a program to change the ways things are done.

Fleet Manager and four mechanics service all of the Town of Cheshire and BOE vehicles, except for the Fire Department.

Composting – there will be in-town composting next year which will save money, and have compost material for the use of the Town and residents. A permit will be retained from the DEP, and the Town must meet all the DEP requirements. The composting sites will be the PW yard and Boulder Knoll site.

Winter Operations – Over the years the Town went to a street salt policy which has reduced the sweeping burden and use of rented sweeper. A contractor is used to supplement the work load. Sand is used for frozen areas on the roads. With the expansion at the prison (CCI) the Town received sand from the project.

Waste Disposal – the Transfer Station is closed, and the vendor is now on Barton Drive, offering an electrical collection in the Fall and Spring. The Town still participates in the hazard waste program through RWA in New Haven. The newest and largest proposal for waste disposal is single stream recycling and the toter program, which would change the operation and provide cost savings to the Town.

Page 119 – Engineering Technician. There was a brief discussion about this position. Mr. Michaelangelo informed the Council that this person designed the new culvert, drain pipe, pitches, elevations, etc. This position has been in the budget for years, and was replaced about two years ago, with the hours moved back to 35 per week.

Mr. Schrumm commented on the Town being at the end of replacement of the old Cheshire roads, and now we are fixing things. He questioned \$56,000 for the engineering technician + 30% benefits, and whether we should be calling in a local engineering company to do this work in a short time period.

In response, Mr. Michaelangelo said “no”. He stated that in the last year this person has done 25 designs which would have had a higher cost and more time with an outside firm. There are five major projects in the next year, and there is savings of \$20,000 for the Sindall Road and Inverness Court work. There is also savings on the Weeks Pond drainage which the in-house engineer did.

There are some complaints being received about the higher fees at the private transfer station facility.

RWA charges are very high for the Town paying fees to have infrastructure in the ground for firefighting purposes. This charge(for linear feet of pipe) has increased dramatically over the years and is a major increase in the PW Department budget.

CL&P’s increase was projected on the bills. The Town has locked in rates for a few years. Mr. Milone said he cut this line item in the budget last year, and more than he should have. PW Department will need money this year to recoup losses.

#### QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Mr. Slocum asked about overtime and hours allocated, i.e. a 35 hour person and if overtime is paid after 40 hours.

With a 35 hour person, Mr. Michaelangelo said the overtime begins after 35 hours. In the budget overtime is budgeted at \$3,500 for technical staff and \$2,000 for secretarial staff. Crew members start overtime at 41 hours. Discretionary overtime has been cut.

Mr. Sima asked about the \$520,000 water main expense and this exceeds the PILOT reimbursement up by \$100,000.

Mr. Milone said he would do some trends on this, noting there has been a gradual and progressive increase over the last 10 years. There has been an increase of 10% over 3 years.

Mr. Sima stated that RWA should provide detailed data if they are charging by the inch or foot on exactly where the water mains are, how long they are, where the hydrants are

and produce a GPS map. The bill should not be paid until this detailed report is received from RWA.

The Council was informed by Mr. Milone that Cheshire wants the RWA representative to attend a Council meeting and provide a report.

According to Mr. Sima the goal is to receive water meter numbers and receive information on consumption from WPCA.

Mr. Michaelangelo advised that the RWA December data was received in Excel form.

The mini-excavator machine was discussed by Mr. Sima, who asked if this is being offset with the reduction of a backhoe and other older equipment as a trade in to a vendor, and be able to afford the excavator.

This is possible and Mr. Michaelangelo said he would want to trade in the oldest equipment. In 10 years only one loader and one excavator was purchased and all the other equipment was here.

Mr. Sima commented on the request for the Maintainer and Senior Crew Leader positions.

Mr. Milone said the Maintainer is a person transferred from Public Property to PW Department. On page 116, the Maintainer position is eliminated and one Maintainer goes from Public Property to Public Works.

On page 121, Mr. Milone explained the list of positions. The Maintainer is budgeted at \$53,997 (new) from the Public Property budget. The Senior Crew Leader is budgeted at \$65,395, an upgrade of a Maintainer position with about a \$5,000 cost. The rest of the increase is normal salary increases.

The overtime of \$100,000 in snow and ice removal for this year was raised by Mr. Sima, with \$30,000 to date. He asked whether the money is counted for anywhere else in the budget...or if it would be rolled over year end.

Page 115 – Mr. Milone said the appropriation was \$5,168,000; and the estimated expense is \$5,176,000, which is a +\$8,000.

Page 125 – snow and ice, account 5409, \$767,000 appropriation, and all of the \$837,200 will be spent and maybe more. \$60,000 of any savings in snow and ice is being absorbed there.

Some of the overtime in the budget was the result of Storm Irene for the clean up; all the Storm Alfred costs were moved into the Civil Preparedness budget; the PW Department probably absorbed \$40,000 of the \$120,000 spent for Irene; and that was a transfer out. This is what is driving the estimated expenditures. There will be over

spending in the roads budget. FEMA payment for Storm Alfred will not be received until after the end of the fiscal year, and the snow removal was not allowed as an eligible expense, and only clean up was allowed.

Page 124 – Construction line item, 5402, is +\$50,000 and this is due to additional money to start the \$1.5 million for the road improvements last summer. This is about \$110,000 more than originally budgeted for this fiscal year.

The \$40,000 reimbursement from Storm Irene expenses is revenue taken in as additional State grant money, more than appropriated; and expenditures are not reduced. Mr. Jaskot reported that the Town has received \$102,000 from Storm Irene. All the expenses have been distributed anywhere from Parks and Rec to the BOE.

Mr. Sima said he was getting at the \$40,000 reimbursement to the Town. That is there and PW Department could trade in a piece of equipment for the excavator.

Mr. Milone said this would have to be appropriated. It is taken in as revenue. If we take it in as a reduction of an expenditure it completely distorts the expenditures. The Council can always appropriate the excess revenue.

Regarding the GPS system on all Town vehicles, Mr. Sima asked if this has happened.

This is in the discussion stage and Mr. Milone said he has talked to Mr. Michaelangelo about this issue, without a decision made. He questions whether it is worth the investment to put a GPS in the other vehicles.

Mr. Michaelangelo said that when the GPS devices were put in it was stated they would not be for discipline. They are for safety and efficiency of the crew members when they are out in snow storms working and their location is known. There have been instances of tracking speeds and plows out on the road, or guys taking longer breaks, etc.

Mr. Milone advised that this issue was discussed with Attorney Dugas during a recent meeting. The deployment of crews for snow storms has changed; crew leaders are not sent out only if needed. A grievance was filed and the Town prevailed. The GPS cost benefit is in question. The people without GPS systems have take home vehicles; they are on call 24 hours a day and weekends as the labor intensive operation of the PW Department. He is not sure it is cost effective to put a GPS on a car that gets 10% of the activity compared to the other pieces of rolling stock.

Mr. Schrumm stated that the PW Department maintains 163 Town vehicles.

Mr. Michaelangelo noted that this includes trailers, backhoes, police cars, senior vans, etc.

The Council was informed that the PW Department has instituted auctions rather than trade in for the Town vehicles. He will bring in an inventory of all Town vehicles.

Solid Waste and Single Stream Recycling – Mr. Milone said he would check with the hauler on the pilot recycling program pickup.

If the Town proceeds with the single stream recycling program, 10% of the waste will be taken out of the waste stream. This is 740 tons at \$68 per ton, a savings of about \$50,000. There will be additional savings with extension of the contract with the hauler. These savings could be front loaded or back loaded. The Solid Waste Committee wants consistent savings, \$30,000 to \$32,000 a year spread out over 6 years. The Council must revisit and consider this single stream recycling program, and find a revenue source for purchase of the toters of \$450,000. The committee is in support of the single stream recycling program.

Mr. Milone will have information to the Council on the proposed program. \$400,000 of the \$1 million contract is where the savings come from. The hauler must purchase a new single stream truck costing about \$250,000. This is a one person truck, with pickup every other week.

The Council was informed by Mr. Milone that there will be a Special Council Meeting on April 2, 2012, 7:30 p.m. and it will be an Executive Session meeting.

#### 4. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Sima; seconded by Mr. Talbot.

MOVED to adjourn at 9:05 p.m.

VOTE           The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

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Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk