

MINUTES OF THE JOINT TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING AND BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2013 AT 6:30 P.M. IN ROOM 207-209, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410.

Present

Tim Slocum, Chairman; David Schrumm, Vice Chairman; Patti Flynn-Harris, Sylvia Nichols, Thomas Ruocco, James Sima, Peter Talbot. Absent: Andrew Falvey
Staff: Michael A. Milone, Town Manager; James Jaskot, Finance Director; Gina DeFilio, Deputy Finance Director; Robert Ceccolini, Parks and Rec Director; Shelia Adams, Aquatic Director.

Guest: Attorney Matthew Hall

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. PROPOSED FY 2013-2014 OPERATING BUDGET

Parks & Recreation Department, Parks & Recreation Commission, Community Pool, Planning Department.

COMMUNITY POOL – SHEILA ADAMS, Aquatic Director - PAGES 118 AND 191

Mr. Milone stated that this budget is decreasing by \$10,865; the salary increase is \$3,262; there is a slight decrease in utilities; and Ms. Adams does a good job of holding costs constant. Over five years, since 2009, this budget has been reduced by \$51,000. It is a know fact that the public is not happy with the pool subsidy, but as a result of decreasing operational costs, the subsidy has been reduced by \$70,000 over the last five years. This year with insurance money and an additional contribution from the Parks and Rec budget the pool budget will end with a surplus. Everything was tracking positively until the storm and collapse of the bubble.

Ms. Adams commented on the community pool going really well until the bubble collapse, and reported that the night before the storm, the pool was filled to capacity with patrons. As a result of the collapse of the bubble, 555 letters were sent to households about a refund, and 85% have opted to keep their pool passes. Some passes had been extended as a result of the 2011 storm, and a big renewal was planned for May and June of this year. Many new programs were also underway including the pre-team prep and diving program and swim classes. For this year, all pass holders will get 3 ¼ months of extension of passes.

Mr. Ceccolini stated that the pool facility looked very good, was clean, bright, well lit, and the new bubble was keeping the facility operating well.

With regard to the full time maintainer requested last year, Ms. Adams advised that the decision for an outside contractor is working well. There will be no request for this position this year due to the bubble collapse.

Mr. Talbot asked a question about the contractor/vendor, the numbers, and hours worked.

In response, Ms. Adams stated that White Bowman is there every day, on site, at a cost of \$600 a month. Connecticut Aquatic is on site two times a week at a monthly cost of \$1040, and this vendor's service would have been reduced during the summer months. With a maintainer on staff this person would work inside the pool and on the grounds, and assist with Park and Rec projects and work.

Page 193 (tab book) – line item 5102 PFT is reduced to \$190,228 by the Town Manager. At this point, Mr. Milone said the budgeting is as if nothing happened, and all is status quo. Until the Council makes a decision to the contrary, this will remain the same.

The Council was told by Ms. Adams that in July 2012, there was a survey conducted about the pool, and 90% of the responses said the pool was a great place, leave things the way they are, the new bubble was great, and the feed back was positive.

Bubble – Ms. Adams advised that the quote for the new bubble was presented to the insurance company, but does not include other things to be repaired at the pool. The riggers are coming later this week to remove the cabling system. The adjuster and Ms. Adams will walk the pool site this week and put together a report on the pool damages as a result of the storm. It is believed there is less damage under the bubble than in the last storm.

Mr. Ceccolini stated that the railings, diving board, handicapped lift, and other equipment seems to be okay.

The way the pool budget numbers were trending, Mr. Milone said it was going to be the strongest year in the history of the pool. High renewals for passes was expected, and the pool would have been in solid financial standing. Mr. Milone and Mr. Jaskot each looked at the financial situation of the pool, used a model, and have numbers to be submitted and reviewed with the Council.

Page 120 (Non-tab book) - The numbers were run through February 2013, data from the 2011 storm was looked at, expected May and June pass renewals was reviewed, non-reimbursable expenses February to June were looked at, and Mr. Milone said both his and Mr. Jaskot's numbers were very close. Based on this they did projections on the expenditure side of the budget.

Page 191 (tab book) - \$734,646 is the 2013 estimated expenses.

Page 120 (non-tab book) Pool Fund Revenue Budget Report – the pool fee revenue to February was lower than budgeted due to the extension of pool passes. From January to June 2011 there was no pool revenue, but there was a spike in May and June, and Mr. Jaskot said this was used as the model for the 2014 budget.

\$337,635 is the FY 2013 estimated revenue; \$68,858 miscellaneous revenue (insurance for business interruption loss from company's last offer); General Fund subsidy \$423,000 which will increase by \$74,000; at the end of FY 2014 the pool budget will have a fund balance. Mr. Milone said he wanted to insure that at the end of this fiscal year there was not a deficiency in the fund balance, and insure there was enough in fund balance so the subsidy next year would not have to be increased. With more insurance company reimbursement the subsidy will decrease.

FY 2014 – increase in this budget by the 2012 multiples. In the revenue projections there was no assumption of the business interruption loss. 2010 was the last full year of the operation of the community pool, and was the best year of actual revenue.

Page 194 (tab book) – Line item 5404 was increased by \$20,000 by Mr. Milone to \$47,000.

Mr. Milone and Mr. Jaskot will compile a revenue/expense report on the last five years of the pool operation.

Agenda item #4 was moved to current status.

4. APPROVAL OF A RE-SUBDIVISION APPLICATION FOR ABANDONMENT OF A PORTION OF COMMERCE COURT.

Attorney Hall informed the Council that there is a 220 foot square strip of land on Commerce Court which his client, Housing Authority Insurance Corp. (HAI) is asking the Town to abandon. His client, HAI, plans to seek approval to build a 40,000 sq. ft. building on their property at the end of Commerce Court, and the Town owns a right-of-way on the circle. HAI has 130 employees, and will replicate their existing building, connect the two buildings, and is requesting the Town Manager be authorized to sign a resubdivision application on the Town's behalf. Mr. Hall said the urgency is to get this matter on the agenda of the Planning and Zoning Commission in April 2013 in order for HAI to break ground for the project. He informed the Council that a resubdivision application before PZC must have a public hearing. The abutting property owners have been notified of this application, and HAI will hold a meeting with them to discuss the application and provide maps and plans.

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #031913-1.

RESOLUTION #031913-1

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes the Town Manager to sign on behalf of the Town of Cheshire, as the owner of that certain right-of-way over Commerce Court, the resubdivision application to be submitted to the Cheshire Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) for the abandonment of a portion of Commerce Court in conjunction with the forthcoming special permit application of the Housing Authority Insurance Group to the PZC for the approval to build a second building on site.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

PARKS AND RECREATION, DIRECTOR CECCOLINI, pages 179 and 66.

Town Manager Milone noted that the Parks and Rec budget increases by \$37,437, and this number should be reduced by \$10,000 with deletion of funding for Camp Nerden.

Page 183 (tab book) – line item 5409 - \$10,000 to be eliminated for Camp Nerden expenditure.

Mr. Milone noted that this department's budget is about \$100 less than it was five years ago.

Page 188 – FY department request for the Pool subsidy is \$349,000; Town Manager's recommendation is \$423,000 for a sufficient start to end this fiscal year with a balanced budget. There is a little money in the fund balance to be used in next year's budget to maintain the subsidy at \$349,000. Mr. Milone commented on Director Ceccolini's budget being frugal, while programs have increased.

Director Ceccolini commented on the department budget being tight each year, the excellent Parks and Rec long time staff, successful programs, on-line registration for programs with credit card payments, and the brochure now being published in the Cheshire Citizen, the local paper that goes to every household.

The department is always trying new programs, including the "No School Day" program for children to come to the Youth Center for a day of fun and activity when school closes. The charge is \$35 per student for the day. Exercise classes are ongoing; the Adaptive Program is growing each year; summer camps are held each summer; theater program is coming back this year with "Suessical".

Mr. Ceccolini talked about the dedicated department long time staff, the return of the college kids again this summer to work, the cooperation between the Cheshire Youth Baseball (CYB) and the Parks and Rec Department, and Lacrosse and Soccer programs working with the department on the fields and their contributions of equipment and other items needed for the sports programs. Mr. Ceccolini will be meeting with the CYB and Department of Education staff regarding the start of the sports seasons and use of school fields. The summer concerts will be held at Bartlem Park again this year.

The Council was informed of the use of organic fertilizer in the department program for the fields. Mr. Ceccolini is working with PW Director Noewatne on an organic compost program, and this would also help with the soil used for the fields. He said the new building at Bartlem Park is used for storage of equipment and tractors, with crews using the Bobcat for snow plowing and other work as it is a safe vehicle. There is a GPS system in most of the Town trucks.

Field Use – Mr. Ceccolini reported that there is always pressure regarding use of the fields by all the sports teams, and there are overlapping spring sports using the fields, and travel teams needing fields for practices. The additional field and 90 ft. diamond at Bartlem Park have helped with overlap on the use of fields, and teams use the outfield at Dodd Middle School for Lacrosse.

Regarding the 10 acre site on Jarvis Street given to CYB, Mr. Ceccolini stated that the five year time limit is almost up. He thinks some other sports program might want to develop this field, and it could be youth football. The Parks and Rec Department uses the school fields at Dodd, Highland, Chapman and Norton schools, as well as Legion Field and the Junior Legion fields. Mr. Ceccolini noted that with the organic fertilizing of the fields they look lush and only one field has an issue that is being worked on by the department crews.

Mr. Milone commented on the use of the organic fertilizers and the fact that five years ago the CDC visited Cheshire and a Crusade Against Cancer was started in town. The use of the organic fertilizer was a result of this crusade program.

Mixville Park – Mr. Ceccolini reported that this park is probably the prettiest one in town; there have been improvements to the pavilions; projects by Eagle Scouts on the changing room, new windows, and new seating. The picnic area and bocce court get a lot of use each week. He stated that the bathroom facilities at all town parks must be looked at and worked on.

Geese problem – the prevention program is ongoing with the geese patrol person and dogs, looking for nests and eggs, and the program may have to be extended to Bartlem Park where there is an issue with geese.

Ms. Flynn-Harris asked about the use of solar garbage cans for the town parks, and noted they are being used in Hamden, CT parks.

Mr. Ceccolini will look into these cans for Cheshire parks.

Dog Park – the Council was told that the fund raising efforts are ongoing; the bowling party raised \$1800 towards the fencing; and the town is putting aside any of its fencing which could be used for the dog park fence along the wooded line. He said that anything across the capping must have a design with the “T” and be held down. The group needs another \$3,000+ and once they reach their goal the matter will come back to the Council.

Pool Recreational Swim Team – According to Mr. Ceccolini this was a program which Ms. Adams wanted to start and it would generate revenue. Other towns subsidize their municipal swim teams, and without a subsidy the teams lose ability to be formed at a reasonable cost. Ms. Adams and her assistants met with the Y swim coaches, and the Y has made a positive effort and changes to their teams, answering some of the concerns about swim teams in Cheshire.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT – Pages 70 and 38.

Mr. Milone reported that this department budget increases by \$8,384; salaries are the largest increase; other line items are status quo.

5. PERSONNEL MATTERS AND BINDING ARBITRATION, possible executive session.

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

MOVED that the Town Council enter Executive Session at 8:00 p.m. to discuss personnel matters and binding arbitration, to include the Town Manager.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Mr. Ecke left executive session at 8:05 p.m. and returned at 8:15 p.m.

MOTION by Ms. Flynn-Harris; seconded by Mr. Ruocco.

MOVED that the Town Council exit Executive Session at 8:20 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

6. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ms. Flynn-Harris; seconded by Mr. Talbot.

MOVED to adjourn the special meeting at 8:20 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk