

**MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28, 2013, AT 7:30 P.M. IN ROOM 210, TOWN
HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410**

Present

James Sima, Chairman; Patti Flynn-Harris and David Schrumm

Staff: Michael A. Milone, Town Manager; Vincent Masciana, Director of Management Services, Dept. of Education; Arnett Talbot, Exec. Asst. to Town Manager.

Guest: Michael O'Donnell, Parks and Rec Commission; Michael Solomine, I.T. Department, DOE

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. PEGPETIA GRANT PROJECT UPDATE

Ms. Talbot explained that the current audio and visual equipment in the Council Chambers is out of date, about a generation behind current technology, and there is a need to replace this equipment.

The PEGPETIA grant from the State of Connecticut is \$144,095.60, and this money will pay for replacement and upgrading of aging equipment for the recording and broadcasting of meetings of local government and education access television channels. There will be better production and quality, efficiency and timely management of broadcasts, remote access, link to the website and internet, and provision of additional information of interest to the community.

Apex Technology, Ms. Talbot, Henry Chase, Mr. Solomine and Mr. Giard (Cox Communications) worked with the vendor on the upgrade to the equipment. There is \$2,000 in the Council equipment budget if the grant does not cover all the costs for ancillary labor and training. Under the grant requirements all documents had to be submitted by June 17, 2013, with copies of all receipts for approved equipment and costs submitted by August 15, 2013. The list of equipment purchased was given to the committee members.

In the approved Town Council motion, it stated that the plan will not be implemented until the Planning Committee met and approved the plan. Mr. Sima questioned the submission of purchase orders by August 15th.

According to Ms. Talbot the equipment is on order, is in the warehouse, and some assembly is required. Minor change orders are acceptable, and any major alterations could jeopardize the grant funding. On September 5th there is a meeting with the vendor and staff to discuss when implementation will begin and major pieces of equipment (cameras) and changes to the room.

Mr. Solomine commented on the changes which will be made to the Council Chambers. They will include a dome on the ceiling, camera in the corner for direct angle to the podium/on the side walls, and behind the Council dais. The microphones will be newer, with 2 wireless microphones. The room will be more opened, and people can speak from any part of the room. Additional equipment can be purchased out of the operating budget,

It was noted by Mr. Sima that the Council motion said the purchase would go through the Planning Committee, and the plan has gone forward without Council input.

Mr. Milone said the motion was to refer the matter to the Planning Committee for final implementation. There was a deadline to be met or lose the grant and purchase of the equipment. If the purchase requisitions did not go in, the grant would be lost.

As part of the RFP Ms. Flynn-Harris said the vendor was chosen, and she spoke with Ms. Talbot and Apex about this.

There was a brief discussion on use of the wireless microphones, and having a camera and microphone (overhead) in the middle of the room on the ceiling. Microphones can be passed around; an overhead microphone could be turned down; and the vendor can be questioned on having a ceiling microphone. Final decision would, probably, be up to the experts and the installer. With an overhead microphone, people could make comments without realizing they are being heard. From a functional standpoint there will be cameras, better microphones (at the podium and wireless) and controls in the back room. With the four cameras, a screen with four segments, there is complexity involved. Each position on the dais can be programmed and there is ability to override a camera, 90% usage of pre-programming switches, and audio recording of meetings on cd's or memory cards. The upgrade to the equipment fulfills FOI requirement for record keeping, DVDs of the meetings would be available at the Library and can be burned for anyone requesting a copy (for a small charge). Mobile cameras and audio equipment can be used anywhere in the Town Hall building, and microphone and audio functions can be checked at anytime.

Mr. Solomine will check on the issue of feedback with multiple microphones turned on during a meeting. He noted that Cox and Apex support the new system.

Ms. Talbot stated that training on the new equipment will be provided, and there is compliance with ADA requirements with an assisted listening device. The group will meet on September 5th, and the time frame for implementation of the new functions will be decided. Under the State grant there is no requirement to open up the Council Chambers to outside groups.

The committee was told by Mr. Milone that, with this new equipment, many programs in Town departments can be video taped with immediate access to the public.

Mr. Sima asked about tight security and people hacking into the system.

The system is secure and Ms. Talbot advised that Apex is handling this issue. She also said that Mr. Chase and Mr. Solomine will be the primary people involved with implementation of the new system. With regard to the camera setup, Ms. Talbot said there will be information on this and other issues after the September 5th meeting.

3. DOG PARK STATUS

Cindy Forlanzo and Christine Milano were present for this part of the meeting along with Michael O'Donnell, Parks and Rec Commissioner.

The group received a \$10,000 grant from the John Martin Foundation, and their total fund raising has generated \$31,300. It is estimated that the total cost of the 4 foot high, fence around the 250 x 350 foot park will about \$21,000 inclusive. There are no plans for water at the dog park, and Arts Place has offered a tie-in for water into their site, if needed. The park will have a kiosk (with rules and regulations posted), signage which must meet all the zoning requirements including handicapped parking, and waste disposal containers (2 or 3) at a cost of \$400 each.

A "buy a brick" fundraiser is ongoing at this time at \$50 to \$60 per brick cost; 30 have been purchased to date; and the bricks will be set in around the kiosk. There are other fund raisers ongoing or in planning stages, i.e. wine tasting and annual canine carnival.

PW Director Noewatne has agreed to complete the parking area using millings for 18 spaces with 2 handicapped spaces. Parks and Rec will mow the area and handle garbage disposal, and a group of people will maintain ongoing cleanup of the site.

Aerial photos of the dog park were displayed. One of the gates will have a spring return for closure so dogs cannot run out of the park.

Regarding the revenue, Mr. Sima explained that the money must be accepted by the Town Council and appropriated to the Parks and Rec Department for work on the site such as the fence, cement blocks, rebar etc. The money will be turned over to the Town; Parks and Rec Department will get quotes on the fence etc., acquire the materials, and work with the group to construct the park.

There are no State regulations in place regarding dog parks. Mr. O'Donnell reported that PZC has approved the plans for the dog park, and DEEP signed off on the project. Parks and Rec crew will mow the site twice a month.

The rules and regulations state that dogs and owners use the park at their own risk...the Town has no liability.

The Town Attorney will review all the documents to insure correct language and protection of the Town.

Construction of the dog park will take about one week to complete, with a possible opening date of October 2013.

4. SMART BUS COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

Luther Miller, Dattco Bus Co. Manager and Dana Menke, Redflex Guardian Inc./dba Student Guardian, were present for discussion on this agenda item.

Mr. Sima stated that one school bus would have a camera installed to check violations on problem routes.

A SmartBus trial survey of violations was submitted to the committee. Mr. Miller noted that two bus routes, 24 and 21, were used for the survey as these two buses have central and neighborhood routes. On average the buses are passed by vehicles 1.6 times per day.

Mr. Masciana stated that the RedFlex model was .75 passes per bus per day, and 1.5 passes is the average number. If this is reflective of all the Cheshire school bus routes, then the Town has a safety issue, and should go forward with the recommendation to install cameras on the buses. The ultimate goal is for this to be a deterrent, decrease passes, and thus improve safety. Student Guardian assumes all the risk and can move cameras from the buses.

Ms. Menke informed the committee that the company has partnership with 25 cities, and Norwalk and Danbury recently signed onto the program. The Town of Southington is already on board with the program. There is a 60 day pilot program. Cameras are installed, routes are monitored, and violations are uploaded for the police department which issues the tickets. If there is a fluctuation in violations, the program is reviewed with the Town, and a comprehensive solution with the city, school district and police department is considered.

Going forward, Mr. Sima said there is notification to the police department of 10 violations, and only four are ticketed. He asked about this being a violation of the contract and forcing the issuance of tickets.

According to Ms. Menke the company works with the police department on why a violation is not ticketed, and issuance of tickets is at the discretion of the police department. For the Cheshire survey the videos were submitted for review to the police department and Town Council.

Ms. Flynn-Harris asked about the company working with the police department, sending the videos, and pre-screening.

Once the camera is on the bus, Ms. Menke said there is central location live monitoring of violations. All sightings are reviewed for violations, evidence compiled, and sent to the police department.

A question was raised by Mr. Milone about the bus driver triggering the violations.

In response, Ms. Menke said the bus driver's focus is on the students, and sometimes they do come into the terminal with notice of violations.

Regarding the central area of Town and student pickup on Route 10, Mr. Schrumm recommended that these students be picked up on Church Drive.

Mr. Miller agreed that this was a good suggestion and he will be checking into it.

The percentage of violations tracked was raised by Mr. Schrumm, and he also asked about the threshold for pulling out of the program.

Stating she did not have the percentage for police department violations, Ms. Menke did state that the end of the contract could be less than a ticker per day per school bus. The program is successful by writing tickets, and any issues would be discussed before ending a contract. There is a retention requirement for the company server to keep videos for 72 hours. The actual violations are retained until there is adjudication. The police department looks at the company server for the violations, and the department does not expect violations will be low in Cheshire due to its giant commuter traffic.

Ms. Flynn-Harris asked about printing of tickets, if Student Guardian prints them, mails them, or if the local police department does this.

Once the police department agrees there is a violation, Mr. Miller said this is when a ticket is printed.

The committee was told by Ms. Menke that Student Guardian is working on printing of tickets, and this is a capability the company will have. In the meantime, the police department prints the tickets. She explained that the violation includes a photograph of the vehicle and its license number. The police department then secures the name of the owner of the vehicle for issuance of the ticket. Ms. Menke stated that the cameras are uploaded when the bus returns to the depot, and information is sent to their main station in Phoenix AZ. Student Guardian provides the police department with 15 to 30 second clips of video from the cameras.

Mr. Masciana commented on the extra work required by the police department, and informed the committee that Chief Dryfe will have a civilian do some of the surveillance work. A police officer must be authorized to issue tickets. In the contract, which had legal review, there is a 90 day trial period from the date the camera is installed. It is a three year contract, with a termination policy, and the revenue information is stated in the contract. It takes one day to install a camera on a school bus.

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

MOVED that the Planning Committee forward the SmartBus Cooperative Agreement to the full Town Council for review and approval.

Discussion:

Ms. Flynn-Harris stated that page 10, paragraph #14, must be removed from the contract or altered.

Mr. Masciana will take care of this matter. The updated contract and memorandum to the Town Manager will be an agenda item for the September 10th Town Council meeting.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

5. ADJOURNMENT

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

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk