

**MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2013 AT 7:30 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS,
TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410**

Present

Town Council Members Patti Flynn-Harris, Liz Linehan, Sylvia Nichols, Rob Oris Jr., Thomas Ruocco, David Schrumm, James Sima, Tim Slocum, Peter Talbot.

Staff: Town Manager Michael A. Milone; Town Clerk Carolyn Soltis; Town Attorney Dwight Johnson; Town Attorney Al Smith; Finance Director James Jaskot; Personnel Director Louis Zullo; PW Director George Noewatne; Building Inspector Burt Schiarolli; Library Director Ramona Burke; Human Services Director Michelle Piccerillo; Economic Development Director Gerald Sitko; Fire Chief Jack Casner; Police Chief Neil Dryfe; Executive Assistant Arnett Talbot.

1. CONDUCTED BY THE TOWN CLERK

A. ROLL CALL

The clerk called the roll and a quorum was determined to be present.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

C. ELECTION OF COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

MOTION by Mr. Schrumm; seconded by Mr. Ruocco.

MOVED that the Town Council elect Tim Slocum as Chairperson.

Nominations were called for three times.

VOTE The motion to elect Tim Slocum as Chairperson of the Cheshire
Town Council passed 8-2; In Favor: Linehan, Slocum, Schrumm, Nichols,
Oris, Ruocco, Sima. Opposed – Flynn-Harris and Talbot.

2. CONDUCTED BY COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

A. Election of Vice Chairperson

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

MOVED that the Town Council elect David Schrumm as Vice Chairperson.

Nominations were called for three times.

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

MOVED to nominate Sylvia Nichols as Vice Chairperson of the Town Council.

VOTE The motion to elect David Schrumm as Vice Chairperson of the Cheshire Town Council passed 6-3; In favor – Slocum, Schrumm, Nichols, Ruocco, Sima, Oris. Opposed – Flynn-Harris, Linehan, Talbot.

B. Review of Town Council Rules of Procedure

Chairman Slocum stated that he made suggestions for changes to the Rules, which are red-lined on pages 3 and 4, Section VI-D; Section VII – B, E; Section VIII – deletion of current B, and replaced with new B.

With regard to VIII-B, Mr. Talbot noted that people cannot be forced to sign up prior to speaking, and he asked whether this is a legal change.

Attorney Johnson will research this question and report back to the Council members.

C. Announcement of Council committee and liaison assignments.

Chairman Slocum announced the Council committee and liaison assignments, which are attached to these minutes.

D. Schedule of regular meeting dates for calendar 2014.

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #120313-1

RESOLUTION #120313-1

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Town Council approves the following meeting dates for the 2014 Town Council Regular Meetings. All meetings are held in Council Chambers on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. unless otherwise indicated.

JANUARY 14, 2014
FEBRUARY 11, 2014
MARCH 11, 2014
APRIL 8, 2014
MAY 1, 2014
JUNE 10, 2014
JULY 8, 2014
AUGUST 12, 2014
SEPTEMBER 9, 2014
OCTOBER 14, 2014
NOVEMBER 12, 2014 (date changed due to Veterans' Day)
DECEMBER 9, 2014
JANUARY 13, 2015

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

E. FOIA and email boxes

Ms. Talbot advised that the Council contact information is in the packets.

Ms. Talbot stated that there has been discussion about e-mail box set up with a Town Hall address for Councilors. This is a good idea, solves problems with use of personal computers, has access only by the Councilor, and the Town server will retain all e-mail information. This provides easy access for FOI requirements, and I.T. people can access the Council e-mail, if required. Ms. Talbot said this is a convenience for Council members, and an offering under the new technology capabilities.

Chairman Slocum encouraged Council members to take advantage of the new e-mail capabilities.

Ms. Talbot will forward all the information to the Council members.

The retaining of e-mails for Town business was clarified by Attorney Johnson, who advised that these e-mails are public record and subject to FOIA regulations. If people receive e-mails on their personal computer, it must be disclosed. The advantage to the Town Hall e-mail address is that it is easier to deal with under FOIA review. If there was a dispute or litigation with a claim on matters surrounding Town business on a personal e-mail, it is conceivable the computer or hard drive would be turned over for court inspection.

F. Overview of Town projects and issues

Town Manager Milone introduced the Town Hall staff members present for the organizational meeting to the Town Council.

Mr. Milone informed the Council that the Town of Cheshire is embarking on many new initiatives, and the next two years present a myriad of opportunities, and he is excited about the potential which lies ahead. He commented on Town staff ready to be collegial, supportive, and committed, and looking forward to a strong start with the Town Council. Mr. Milone complimented Cheshire's Town staff as professionals in their fields, hard working, knowledgeable and experienced.

The Mission Statement of the Town of Cheshire was read into the record by Mr. Milone.

Mr. Milone said this statement is something which can be used as a guideline and blueprint for the next few years and beyond. He reviewed the "Key Elements" and "Applied Management Components".

Value Analysis – This year Town staff is committed to the process for improved initiative; a consultant was hired; staff participated in an 8 hour work session; and took the template to be adapted for various roles and to be incorporated into various organizations. For everything that is done, staff relies on each other, and there is inter-departmental support, with creation of an organization with cross over and continuing overlay activity.

Mr. Milone said that communication is the key element of what the Town Manager must achieve, and he must present a better way to communicate ideas and information on services, take advantage of technology initiatives, and communicate better to the public. Mr. Milone stated he wants the public to feel comfortable with staff and Council members, be informed of all that the Town is doing, and for Town government to be as transparent as it can be.

Technology Improvements – Ms. Talbot reviewed the technology upgrade project as one of the key goals. The Town now has the infrastructure and experience to support the technology project, and communication benefits will be numerous. There is more information to the public in a timely manner; improved quality and professionalism of communications; more flexibility with videos; more integration with the web site; streamlining of the process for production of meetings and scrolling information on Channel 13; creation of efficiencies in time, staff ability to have input, make changes. All of this was done at no cost to the taxpayers and was funded through a PEGPETIA grant of \$145,000.

A. Summary of Key Capital Construction Projects – Mr. Milone informed the Council that since 1975, the Town has spent \$272 million for infrastructure. Since 1994, there have been 79 projects to referendum, and 73 were approved by the voters. The Town has invested wisely in its infrastructure, with a high rate of taxpayer support for capital projects. Mr. Milone said the Council has done a good job of educating the public.

There are 10 key projects and \$42 million in appropriations. Mr. Milone presented brief highlights on some of these projects.

Community Pool \$3.2 million – with the permanent dome on the pool, Mr. Milone and Mr. Jaskot can do a trend analysis for the pool facility with creation of predictions and reliable trends, and costs will decrease. There is still \$285,000 in insurance proceeds to be used by the Council, as it sees fit, to further enhance the pool facility. The claim for the dehumidification issue is still pending.

Linear Trail \$3.4 million – It has taken 20 years to get to the point where the trail can be expanded in the near future.

Road Repaving \$1.75 million – this referendum item received the most voter support in the November election.

Cell tower construction – this is being constructed at the Cheshire Street Waste Water Treatment Plant.

B. Summary of Other Key Capital Projects – Mr. Milone reviewed and briefly highlighted some other key capital projects ongoing for the Town of Cheshire.

Property Revaluation (\$.550M) – this is ending in January, and Tax Assessor Panagrosso will review the project with the Council and provide an update at a future meeting.

GIS (\$.300M) – will be ready in January 2014, and will be an addition to the current resources for staff and residents; and a dual benefit as residents will have access to more information than before. This investment cuts across almost every Town department.

Information Technology Initiative Phase III (\$1.751M) – this is a five year plan, working with the Technology Study Group which has provided direction to Town staff. There were problems with the Police and Fire Departments and Board of Education technology, and now the infrastructure is solid and strong. The people who work for the Town will have more technology on their desks and be able to take advantage of the system.

Cable Access Technology Enhancement (\$1.44M) – this new technology provides more expansive view and warm atmosphere for production of meetings.

CAD System (\$.500M) – this is now completed; hardware is being installed in the fire trucks, and should be completed in 3 months; GIS system is important to the Police Department and Fire Department with street information and high level of information and data.

C. Summary of Key Issues and Operational Projects – Mr. Milone reviewed and highlighted some of the 18 items on the list for the Council.

Wellness Initiative – there is a good program in place, and Mr. Milone commented on the “Holiday Hold Em” program which encourages employees to lose weight or hold their weight over the holiday season.

State Dept. of Corrections – There are two issues with the State DOC. One is the Town wanting the State to pay for 20% of the WWTP upgrade (\$6.4 million), and the back billing of \$1.453 million due to under reporting of effluent to the plant.

Legislative Package – will be in the December 10th Council packets.

Budget Pre-Planning Session – is scheduled for December 17th. The Council will look at use of reserve funds (\$5.4 million), and decide on how best to use this money, and find money in other areas.

Operating Budget Amendment – The Town received \$180,000 more in State funding.

Economic Investment Policy – this program is very successful and is up for renewal in June 2014.

Council of Governments Realignment – OPM wants to reduce the number of Councils in Connecticut from 15 to 8. Mr. Sitko and Mr. Milone are meeting with the Director of the New Haven Council to get information on the realignment. Information will be needed for the Council to make a decision on where Cheshire would be best suited in terms of a region.

Boards/Commissions/Committees Outreach Program – there will be rejuvenation and/or revitalization of boards, commissions, committees. In February 2014 there is the turn over of appointments. An FOI session will be conducted for board, commission, committee members; a video will be made available for those who cannot attend this session; board, commission, committee meetings will be on video, and provide exposure, visibility, and heighten awareness of what is taking place in Town government.

Bulky Waste Collection – this is an important issue for Council members. Mr. Milone, Mr. Noewatne and Mr. Gancarz (PW Department staff) have been working on this issue. A meeting of the Solid Waste Committee is planned to review the issue and move forward quickly.

Police Department Reorganization – Chief Dryfe informed the Council about the ongoing reorganization of the department which will be implemented faster than expected. The Chief reported that the department is over staffed with management ranks, and during the collective bargaining, the reorganization was discussed, with 2 Lieutenant and 2 Captain positions eliminated, getting down to a command staff of 5 officers. There have been 5 retirements and 2 resignations since July 1st, so things are moving forward with significant reconfiguration of the department. Following an upcoming meeting with the union, Chief Dryfe will provide more information to the Town Manager and Town Council.

Mr. Milone noted that this reorganization will provide savings, and the Town will have a more efficient organization. The Council will see significant savings in the development of the FY 14-15 budget.

The Police Department will stay at 48 officers; is budgeted for 49 officers; and both the captain and lieutenant positions will be replaced by police officers, with great cost savings.

Fire Department Stipend/Revised Incentive Program; Ladder Truck – the department has a challenge in getting firefighters to respond to fires, and the goal is to strengthen the department, coming up with a stipend program or revised incentive plan for more volunteer fire response to a 3 a.m. call. The Town has sustained a volunteer fire department for a long time, at less cost to the Town for fire protection. The ladder truck is a priority issue for the fire department.

Library/CPFA Collaboration – The Fine Arts Program is now under the Library Director, and this will provide more cultural and enrichment opportunities.

Open Space/Land Acquisition Master Plan for Management and Maintenance – The Council was told by Mr. Milone that Town Planner Voelker is working on this plan with department heads. The Town has 1,530 acres of open space, and there must be a plan in place for maintenance, management, and roles each Town department will play in the ongoing maintenance of our properties.

Labor Negotiations (Dispatcher; Police) – the Dispatchers are having negotiations at this time; adjustments to the Police Department contract will go back to the Council for approval.

D. Summary of Key Potential Development Initiatives – Mr. Milone reviewed the 6 developments pending for the Town.

Housing Authority Insurance – The company has approved expansion plans, and will be seeking a tax incentive agreement from the Town at the December 10th Council meeting. The company will pay \$300,000+ in taxes.

W.S. Development – the company paid \$31,000 for a site plan permit, and it is expected permit fees for this development will be \$1 million; taxes paid to the Town will exceed \$2 million; Town service expenses will be about \$300,000; personal property taxes are unknown at this time. This development and taxes paid will provide the breathing room for tax relief without reduction in services.

Bozzuto's – the company has expansion plans that could generate an additional \$400,000 in real estate taxes; and property taxes will also be high.

Consolidated Industries – this company is trying to expand, and is awaiting resolution to some issues and concerns.

Ball & Socket Arts – this would be the creation of a village setting on West Main Street; the group is seeking funding.

Marbridge – the facility proposes a 28,000 sq. ft. expansion.

E. Other – Mr. Milone reviewed these two items with the Council.

Solarize Cheshire – this program is taking off; there is great interest and participation; and the Council authorized this program.

CCM Prescription Drug Program – the program is off the ground with implementation in a month without any cost to the Town.

Chairman Slocum thanked Town Manager Milone and the Town staff for their hard work and great service to the community. He commented on the upcoming year as a big one for the Town.

With regard to changes in the Rules of Procedure document, Mr. Schrumm requested Council members to forward any changes or suggestions to Chairman Slocum prior to the December 10th meeting.

Mr. Oris asked about the cell tower and generation of revenue.

The Council was informed by Mr. Milone that the cell tower will generate about \$25,000 annually, and this will increase as more co-locators are on the tower. The Police and Fire Departments have the first position on the tower, and this will greatly enhance public safety. There are 4 or 5 other co-locators on the tower, and the revenue increases with each new co-locator. Construction and installation of the tower is paid for by the tower company. The Town requested a Butler type building on site for store equipment, and the company is providing this building.

Mr. Sima asked that the calendar/schedule of all Town government meetings be posted on the web site.

In response, Ms. Talbot said she would look into this and work to get the meeting schedule on the web site.

G. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Schrumm; seconded by Mr. Sima.

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

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk