

MINUTES OF THE JOINT TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING AND BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2014, AT 6:30 P.M. IN ROOM 207-209, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present

Chairman Timothy Slocum; Vice Chairman David Schrumm; Patti Flynn-Harris, Liz Linehan, Sylvia Nichols, Robert Oris, Thomas Ruocco, James Sima, Peter Talbot.
Staff: Michael A. Milone, Town Manager; James Jaskot, Finance Director; Gina DeFilio, Deputy Finance Director; Police Chief Neil Dryfe; Fire Chief Jack Casner.
Guests: John Purtill, Kevin Wetmore, Art Crooker, PBC members

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. DISCUSSION RE: CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS FOR POOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECGT (POSSIBLE EXECUTVE SESSION)

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

MOVED that the Town Council enter executive session at 6:40 p.m. to include Town Manager Michael Milone and PBC Members Purtill, Wetmore and Crooker to discuss contract negotiations for pool construction.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

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

MOVED that the Town Council exit executive session at 7:55 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

4. PROPOSED FY 2014-2015 OPERATING BUDGET

PUBLIC SAFETY: Police Department, Animal Control, Prison Advisory Committee, Civil Preparedness, Public Safety Commission, Fire Department, Inspection Department.

POLICE DEPT. Pages 79 (tab book) and 74 (summary book). Chief Neil Dryfe
Page 79 – The department is going from 4 divisions to 3 divisions; Investigation and Traffic Safety divisions are being replaced by Support Services to be consistent with the Chief's reorganization.

Mr. Milone reported that the Police Department budget increases by \$65,024; \$24,500 is overtime; the department is down seven (7) positions so overtime has to increase; it is expected that with the new contract overtime will be reduced next year. There will be money saved with the 2nd and 3rd shift supervisors, and overtime paid to patrol officers is less costly than that paid to lieutenants.

Non-salary increases are \$43,000; about \$20,000 is for gasoline, and this is an allocation issue; equipment line is \$15,000 with \$10,000 for computers in cars and \$5,000 for replacement of lasers. Both of these expenditures will be supplemented by the Elim Park Gift Account. The budget has \$6,000 in data processing due to technology changes for maintenance agreements and service contracts, and \$4,000 for auto and equipment maintenance.

Chief Dryfe reviewed some elements of the reorganization of the Police Department. Dispatcher is moved to Administration; more patrol overtime is requested but the number is less because some of it goes to the Dispatchers in Administration; Support Services is a combination of the old Traffic Division and Investigation Division, with every line item of the two added together.

This budget has no major surprises. The tasers are \$1000 each; 40 were purchased together about 5 years ago with a 5 year warranty; the tasers are out of warranty now; they are a piece of technology; and Chief Dryfe wants to replace 10 tasers per year with \$5,000 from the general fund and \$5,000 from the gift account. Mobile computers were purchased in 2002; they are past their life expectancy; and the replacement computers will be replaced on a rotating schedule; Tough Books computers will cost \$5,000 each; they will be funded out of the general fund \$10,000 and gift account \$10,000.

Gasoline increases by \$20,000; police department now has fuel efficient vehicles.

Overtime has a \$24,000 increase (patrol). This year 6 retirements and 2 resignations took place since July 1st. One officer hired in early July and will be on his own this coming week; 3 officers entered the Police Academy in January, and will be on their own by October 1st; 3 patrol officers were sworn over the past few weeks, and they will be entering the Academy in April, and out on their own in January 2015. There is also a seat reserved at the Waterbury Academy for an officer in May for the next candidate, to be on the road February 2015. More retirements are not anticipated at this time, but there are some people who have reached their 25 years and could retire.

Page 81 – Administration increases by \$32,500; Patrol Division budget decreases.

Page 91 – Overtime, line item 5105, total is \$67,000; this includes \$28,000 which was originally in Traffic Division, and \$36,000 from Dispatch.

Page 92 – Quartermaster Charge, line item 5212, \$49,000 is the cost of uniforms and gear for police officers; the Town purchases uniforms and gives them to officers.

Vehicles – Chief Dryfe is looking to maintain the fleet; the five year plan (capital budget) is one unmarked car and two marked cars next fiscal year. The new smaller SUVs are working well and mileage is better; these cars have more room for two officers.

Elim Park Gifts – the facility has been very generous to the Police Department with a \$150,000 gift this year. The vehicles costs are augmented by this account with maintenance to change over the new equipment into the cars; more technology equipment will be needed for the detectives due to cell phone and surveillance issues.

RAD Program , \$55,000. This is a very successful program which the department offers to female residents. There is a plan to have a RAD program for CHS senior girls as they enter the world and college so they know how to protect themselves. The RAD program has received letters of appreciation and donations from former participants to continue support of the program, and an advanced program is planned.

Citizens Police Academy – starts tonight with participants in patrol cars with officers.

Policies and Procedures – Chief Dryfe stated that updating the Policies and Procedures was a priority goal for him, and he advised that the Elim Park gift account helped with updating the documents. The new blue binder was displayed and Councilors looked at the content (64 pages), 8 different policies. Every officer receives a copy, must read the document, and pass a test on its content. Chief Dryfe is working on a weapons section for the Policies and Procedures document. The long term goal is to get the entire Police Department accredited and the Policies and Procedures Manual is the #1 thing for this accreditation.

Chief Dryfe explained that the accreditation for the Police Department takes place every 3 years; the Policies and Procedures must be updated regularly; and the accreditation gives the department professional distinction and is a motivation, something to be achieved and never to be lost.

The Council asked Chief Dryfe to provide detailed information on the use of the Elim Park gift account. Chief Dryfe has an excel sheet calculated to the dollar and will provide this information to the Council.

Animal Control Department – Page 95; budget decrease of \$5,400 due to retirement of long term employee, and replacement by person at lower salary rate.

FIRE DEPARTMENT, Pages 60 (summary book) and 107 (tab book) Chief Casner
Page 107 – Mr. Milone reported that the Fire Department budget increases by \$66,000; salaries increase by \$48,2623; \$27,000 of this increase is for a one-half year Fire Inspector position starting January 1, 2015; and this is a result of the W.S. Development project which will require a full time Fire Marshal to oversee plans and construction. The Fire Inspector position will fulfill duties of the Fire Marshal assigned to the development project. If the project is delayed, filling the position will also be delayed.

Two Deputy Fire Marshal positions were reclassified in the bargaining unit, for a \$19,000 cost. Every other increase is within the 2.3% agreement.

Chief Casner informed the Council that the Fire Marshal will be on the W.S. Development project to completion. There is a long term effect from this development as indicated in the impact survey, especially post c/o issuance. The biggest demand is the follow-up inspections, particularly 3 months before and after a holiday seasons, and the position would be permanent; would be on site 75% of the time; every 3 years the stores are retrofitted with new fronts, fittings etc. and must be inspected.

Mr. Milone noted that 75% of the Deputy Fire Marshal salary will be associated with the W. S. Development project. He supports this position which will become a permanent one in the department.

The Council was informed by Chief Casner that full time employees in the department do not just do fire marshal duties all day. They spend time driving trucks, doing fire department work, do fire suppression work, this is in the job descriptions. Pumps are tested annually; every piece of hose is tested; the fire inspector position will be a \$54,000 full time position next year. The Chief said the goal of the department is to create a career ladder and keep employees in the department (page 109, line item 5102).

Mr. Milone advised that fringe benefits for the volunteer fire fighters are in the medical/workers compensation and pension section of the budget. Pensions increase \$17,000 which makes up the full increase on the non-salary side, and workers comp increases by \$4,800. Some other non-salary accounts were cut to meet these increases.

Elim Park Gift Account – money received is used for equipment and personnel accounts.

Volunteers receive \$5.50 per call response, and this is the first year of the full increase.

The W.S. Development project starts in spring 2015, with blueprints in January, and 4-6 months of permitting for State DOT and Cheshire local permitting. Work would begin in February or March 2015. The hire date for the fire inspector will be pushed off pending start of this project.

There was a discussion on the issue of staffing of fire houses to improve response time, and this is factored into the budget. Chief Casner said there is a cost of \$110,000 for overnight staffing; the numbers are a concern; and with the CAD system he is working on the data analysis before bringing it back to the Council.

According to Mr. Milone, this program is being modified, looking at having the driver and one other firefighter in the house overnight, with a stipend paid. Staff is also working on re-evaluating the incentive program (tax abatement, life insurance, pay per call etc).

This program was designed about 8 to 9 years ago and must be revisited to determine whether it should be modified and use as a tool to keep fire fighters involved and responding to calls.

Stating that the department is unpaid, does a great job, Mr. Oris said he is amazed at what they do and how they do it. The Fire Department is a bargain for the community, and we must be open minded about the costs for this department.

At this time, Mr. Milone and Chief Casner have concluded they do not have the evidence to come to the Council and make a case for the incentive programs.

Chief Casner explained that he has received the compensation and personnel analysis, knows the cost of everything that is done with delivery of services, the quality and how it is done. He reported that for every snow storm the fire houses are staffed by volunteers, and this is unpaid volunteer time from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Mr. Milone said the Town is looking at giving volunteer firefighters more points for this in-house volunteer staffing hours.

Volunteer membership has decreased in the department, and Chief Casner said their biggest asset is the 18 to 25 year old volunteers. During the day staff does emergency management work and training; an incident plan has been put together for emergency situations to run well. The department is equipment intensive; one tire costs \$600 for a truck or \$2,400 for one truck's four tires; and Elim Park money helps offset these costs.

Staff is working out the bugs with the software; most hurdles are now crossed; the process is streamlined; the Assessor's software data must still be linked to the department system and should be done next year.

Regarding information on the capital budget items/fire equipment, Chief Casner said he will provide this information to the Council. He reported on the gift account and need for equipment replacement. There is about \$40,000 balance in the gift account. The intent is to front load the next two or three years with equipment replacement and use the gift account.

The volunteer pension fund was raised by Mr. Sima who stated that last year a number of volunteers were not showing up for fire call but show up for training exercises. There was discussion about tracking all volunteers who do not show up for a call.

Chief Casner said this is always tracked because everything is based on the point system. A 25% quota must be maintained for calls, training and drills, and if not maintained and someone is down for three consecutive quarters, there is a vote of the membership. And, there are criteria in place which a fire fighter must adhere to.

Mr. Milone said this is one of the things to be looked at during re-evaluation of the benefit structure. There may be need for more incentives to get people to respond to a 3 a.m. fire call.

Quarterly reports come to Town Hall from Chief Casner. He stated that tracking of fire calls is done, and the Finance Department and actuary have all the records related to the department pension plan.

BUILDING DEPT. page 113 (tab)

This budget increases \$27,000, which is 2.3% increase per the contract. Page 116, line item 5409, is a \$20,000 increase and is the corresponding person for the Building Department to address the issues related to the W. S. Development project. This is a contractual position, part time, for 4 months.

Page 105 (summary book) – Revenue from the Building Department increases \$14,360 next year; W.S. Development revenue is not included in this budget.

The Council scheduled a meeting for Monday, March 31st to review debt, pension, medical benefits, Planning Department and Public Health sections of the budget.

There was a discussion regarding Town Council members meeting, individually, with BOE members and/or staff. Given that the BOE budget is the biggest piece of the overall Town budget, there is a need for better communication and open dialogue between the Council and BOE.

5. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Ruocco; seconded by Mr. Talbot.

MOVED to adjourn the special meeting at 9:30 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk