

MINUTES OF THE JOINT CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 2014, AT 7:00 P.M. IN ROOM 207, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410.

Present

David Schrumm, Vice-Chairman; Patti Flynn-Harris, Liz Linehan, Sylvia Nichols, Robert J. Oris, Thomas Ruocco-Personnel Committee Chairman, James Sima, Peter Talbot.

Absent: Timothy Slocum

Staff: Town Manager Michael A. Milone

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.

Personnel Committee Chairman Ruocco moved agenda item #4 to current status on the agenda.

4. TOWN MANAGER'S FY 14-15 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.

Town Manager Milone distributed copies of his introductory memo and Goals and Objectives document to the Council members, noting there were no changes to the document since May 6, 2014. Mr. Milone read excerpts from his introductory memo into the record of the meeting. He stated that in the development of his goals and objectives he looks at the priorities identified by the Council, service and program expectations in the operating and capital budgets, and advancement of best practices wherever possible. The improvements in technology were cited by Mr. Milone and he commented on the impact of technology advancements in service delivery, efficiency, communication, with more enhancements and efficiencies expected.

In the goals and objectives Mr. Milone reported there were no changes made. He noted that many things (particularly in the Financial area) are repeated year after year, are integral to financial sustainability, and require mentioning and should not be separated or overlooked when the new objectives are reviewed.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PACKET

Mr. Milone distributed a packet of information on "performance evaluation" which included documents that provide a resource for a constructive review process.

I. Municipal Government Challenges

Mr. Milone stated this is the list of municipal government challenges which form the umbrella of everything the Town Manager and Town Council have worked towards – factors affecting key decisions, and they drive the policy changes to be made, forming the basis for future decisions.

The “Challenges” were identified A through H, and in “D”, the Council recommended deletion of the words “sense of entitlement” and changing it to read “increased expectations”. Mr. Milone informed the Council he had deleted the wording, but the incorrect page was copied.

II. Organizational Sustainability/Management Principles

This information is a formalization of what the Town Manager and his staff have established with a mission statement and priorities. It is important as it flows through the objectives he has established, is a refinement to the goals he made, and is part of the measurement criteria used to determine if the Town Manager meets his goals, objectives and strategies put forth by the Council.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Mr. Milone reviewed the goals and objectives and highlighted some of them for the Council.

I. Preserve financial stability and sustainability of Town operations.

- Develop a prudent medical benefits trust fund policy – this will be worked on with the Budget Committee.
- Continue to aggressively pursue WPCD cost recovery strategies and Prison Contract negotiations with Dept. of Corrections. The Council was informed that Cheshire will receive 30% phosphorous grant and loan reimbursement (not 50% as anticipated) from the State. This information was confirmed by Rep. Fritz. The treatment plant renovation project must stay on course with construction. Supt. Dievert and Town Engineer Gancarz are doing a great job in overseeing this project.

Mr. Milone testified before the Claims Commission on the back billings from DOC to Cheshire. The current estimate of back billing is \$1.8 million, which is expected to increase to \$2 million with interest. Town Attorney Smith continues to work on the lawsuit against DOC to get Cheshire’s agreement amended.

- Oversight of the energy performance contracting project - \$10.2 million project will have continued oversight to insure milestones are met; there is a big push this summer for work at the schools and Town buildings work in September.
- Bond Sale with favorable interest and continued high credit ratings – the bond sale is scheduled for February 2015; it is expected Cheshire will retain its high credit rating.

II. Provide programs that support staff morale and enhance effectiveness to ensure the highest level of customer service.

Mr. Milone reported on the high staff morale, enrichment programs/workshops, and seminars/webinars for work skills and quality of life programs. The focus of offerings has changed; they are more broad in terms of life and work skills; and webinars provide

low cost training amongst employees and they are more informal and in a comfortable setting.

ICMA credentialed manager status is maintained by Mr. Milone. He brings back new and exciting programs (i.e. a new wellness program) from the ICMA conference to Cheshire which are well received by staff and are successful. Mr. Milone continues to learn through his ICMA membership, and he sets an example to his staff through continued learning, seeing how much more that can be done. He said it is exciting and fulfilling to bring new things to Cheshire and make them a reality. The Council was told by Mr. Milone that he has transformed the format of his transmittal letter, and now uses graphics, visual aids, and has gotten away from numbers and words.

III. Improve operational efficiency and effectiveness.

Reorganization of the Police Department should be completed in February 2015; the rules and regulations will be completed by December 2014; four new officers will be on the street along with a transition of 22% new staff over 12 to 14 months; Chief Dryfe has a great vision for the department; there are community policing programs as part of the effort to engage and interact with the community. The department has a successful RAD program; the RAD program will be offered to all female CHS graduates; the police academy will be re-established once or twice a year; and Chief Dryfe is out in the community speaking to civic organizations. Significant changes have been made in technology for the Police Department.

Fire Department – a personnel study is ongoing at the request of Chief Casner and includes the “bunk-in and stand by crew” program, to ensure consistent and appropriate staffing response to calls, particularly night calls. The department is working on development of a policy to address issues. With implementation of a new reporting system there will be a formalized mechanism to record those firefighters who respond to calls, when they arrive, leave, etc. Recommendations will also be made for a 2 or 3 tiered incentive system, and this is a high priority for the department.

Mr. Milone commented on the Town not wanting to migrate to a paid fire department, and the need to come up with a more realistic program to recognize the firefighter’s service to the community.

WPCD consumption based user fee is an issue being worked on by Town Engineer Gancarz. The RWA data has been received, and a model for a consumption based fee system is being undertaken. With the reorganization of the PW Dept. with division of public works and engineering duties, there is more efficiency, productivity, division of labor etc. The user fee study will come before the Council to be vetted.

Implementation of the succession plan – this is part of the sustainability initiative plan, and Mr. Milone noted that this is also a critical issue with ICMA. The goal is to ensure a system is in place; a plan will be put together to insure sustainability of the town government.

Public Works and Parks and Rec staff integration – this is an issue related to snow removal and infrastructure maintenance support. There is need for improvement to proceed in a unified and coherent way. In the winter months the crews move into the Town buildings and work on the project list. There could be more efficiency, better deployment of crew members, and one person supervising the operation.

Mr. Schrumm asked about use of e-commerce/credit cards. etc. for Town business.

Mr. Milone reported there is a plan in place to maximize use of e-commerce/credit cards for Town business in all departments. At this time tax payments cannot be done on-line due to a 3% fee charge. As software becomes available there will be implementation, in stages, within the Town's larger departments.

IV. Enhance communication with all stakeholders...

Meet or communicate periodically with each Council member – Mr. Milone stated that he has not been able to do this as much as he planned.

The cable channel government broadcast of boards, commissions, committees has been ongoing, and is successful. The broadcasts will continue and b/c/c are encouraged to continue with this programming.

The enhancements of audio/visual production in Council Chambers is completed except for a few minor adjustments.

V. Initiate, advance or complete key Town project.

PZC is working on the updating of the Plan of Conservation and Development (Plan), and it will be coming to the Council within a year.

The completion of the plan for management, maintenance and oversight of open space is being put together by staff. This plan will coordinate staff and insure appropriate maintenance on an annual basis and safety of the open space properties. The Council put money aside which will be used for this plan.

Regarding strategic parcels of land in Town, Mr. Oris asked about identification of these properties, and ranking of their priority.

The Council was told that people usually come to the Council or Town Manager with parcels of land for acquisition by the Town. Mr. Milone noted that an objective is to have contiguous properties, and the Town does not actively pursue properties.

Mr. Sima asked about a calendar of Council/board/commission/committee meetings on the web site.

Ms. Linehan has discussed this issue with Ms. Talbot (Town Manager's Office), and requested the most recent meetings be at the top of the listing with past meetings below.

It was stated by Mr. Talbot that a calendar on the web site is difficult to do, and Mr. Verrill (Apex) could be consulted about the software for a calendar.

According to Mr. Milone there is a filtering and operating process and staff will address the calendar meeting issue. He noted there is an events calendar for all Town related functions.

Mr. Ruocco raised the issue of establishing sunset parameters on capital projects, and requested Mr. Milone include this in his goals and objectives, under Item I, for the next year. He said there should be a report with the time line and dollar balance for each project.

Town Manager Milone will have this report to the Council for the capital budget process. Mr. Milone summarized the Council recommended changes to his Goals and Objectives document as follows:

- I - succession clause for projects
- III – maximum use of e-commerce
- IV – calendar of Town meetings
- V – strategic property listing for land acquisition

Under Item I – bullet #7, Mr. Schrumm asked that “with special emphasis on Town Center” be added to the end of this line.

3. TOWN MANAGER’S PERFORMANCE REVIEW (possible executive session)

In his memo to the Council (6/5/14) Mr. Milone cited the documents included in the packet of information on Performance Evaluation. There has not been a definitive process for evaluation of the Town Manager, and Mr. Milone submitted the documents to the Council as a tool for his performance evaluation. Mr. Milone supports establishment of goals and objectives for each subordinate, and evaluation of his success in achieving his goals and objectives.

The “Municipal Government Challenges” were identified A through H. In “D”, the Council recommended deletion of the words “sense of entitlement” and changed it to read “increased expectations”. Mr. Milone advised he had removed this word, and the incorrect page was copied for the Council meeting.

I - Municipal Government Challenges and II - Organizational Sustainability Management Principles.

Mr. Milone commented on the severe 2008 recession which was a great financial and structural upheaval, and has left public administration with a “new normal”. Things are now different and will stay different, and there is continued fear and paranoia about being one decision away from a crisis.

Municipal Government Challenges – Mr. Milone stated that D and E relate to the perception of government, which is usually negative. He wants Cheshire to be as

transparent as possible for public respect and the Town's credibility, and he believes this is being done. Mr. Milone said that people are angry and frustrated with government, and changing this image is not easy.

H – Succession Planning. It must be understood that change is the constant; it is hard to maintain the status quo because things are moving too quickly, and cannot fall behind.

Recap of Key Accomplishments

A - Financial Issues. Fiscal sustainability is most important for the Town. The surplus this year is about \$430,000; the year will end with a fund balance of \$8.8 million, 8.85% of the operating budget.

Debt Service Reserve Account will grow to \$5.750 million, and with refunding will be \$6 million.

Debt Mitigation Strategy has worked successfully and debt service is about 7.5% of the operating budget this year.

Debt Refunding was successful with savings of \$750,000, at 1.276% interest rate, and the Town is maintaining its good credit rating.

Medical Benefits Trust Fund has sustained a healthy balance of \$1.5 million on the Town side.

Pension Fund Initiatives – Mr. Milone and the Council have worked to minimize the impact of the contribution increase. With significant asset growth in the plan, it is hoped contributions to the plan will not be as significant as originally cited in the phase-in.

Tax Collections – it is expected the collection rate will be 99.6% this year. The tax lien sale proposal had 6 responses with the highest bid of 113.3%. The Council will vote on signing this agreement at the next meeting.

Audit Report – Cheshire received a clean audit, with no issues, and excellent work was done by Finance Director Jaskot and Deputy Director DeFilio and the department staff.

Pre-Budget Planning – Mr. Milone and department heads realize how the money is spent and how to save money.

Overtime Analysis Report - The overtime report pointed out where these costs were and there is now better coordination of overtime.

WPCD – Cost Recovery Strategies. It is hoped the recovery of back billing from DOC will come before the Claims Commission in the next few months.

Legislative Initiative – there were some PILOT increases; Facilities Plan is now a full year of flow rather than 6 months; the elimination of the motor vehicle tax was killed in the legislature; and the DOC billing issue will come before the Claims Commission.

Energy Performance Contract Projects – there is a challenge getting these projects off the ground, financing with Bank of America, but things are on track now and will move forward.

Grant Awards – Cheshire received another \$500,000 STEAP grant, and is awaiting the grant for West Main Street sidewalks.

Pool Insurance Claim Resolution – there has been success in capturing all that was expected when the pool collapsed, + \$45,000 in business interruption loss, and \$29,000 for the dehumidification unit. The FEMA payments are finalized. The pool has had a budget deficit carried forward. During the budget development the shortfall this year was dealt with, along with next year's shortfall, and the fund balance will have \$100,000 with a slight change. There will be a reduction in contributions to the pool from the Park and Rec General Fund.

Revaluation – property values dropped following the revaluation.

Economic Development Initiatives – some projects will help the Grand List. The EDC wants to continue with the economic development policy.

B. Professional Recognition – Mr. Milone cited the GFOA Budget and CAFR awards which the Town has received for 19 years on the audit and 12 years on the budget. CIRMA – over the last 5 years the Town has reduced compensation claims by 80%, and lost work days associated with workers compensation went from 336 to 0.

C. Communications – Cheshire received a PEGPETIA grant for audio/visual upgrades and installation of new equipment. The broadcasting of board/commission/committee meetings has been successful providing increased visibility of town government to the public.

Web site upgrade has seen many changes to the site; there is simple access to information; and the meeting calendar will be a priority. Cheshire's face book page has garnered interest.

High level of accessibility and responsiveness to the public – staff is responsive, reachable and the public gets answers quickly.

Budget Document Enhancements – the Town Manager's transmittal letter has changed with more graphics, charts, mill rate enhancements, etc.

Annual Report Revamped – Mr. Milone displayed a copy of the Annual Report which Ms. Talbot revamped with photos, stories, and facts. A copy must be given to the Town Council by January 31st of each year.

Chamber – Business After Hours Event was a success, and was well received and appreciated by Chamber of Commerce guests. It is expected this will be an annual event.

Press releases and outreach – Mr. Milone reported that much time is given to the media representatives by Town staff.

FOIA training Initiative – there will be an FOIA presentation filmed on key issues, questions and answers. All boards, commissions, committees will be required to view this 20 minute presentation as an agenda item.

D. Staff Morale and Productivity – Mr. Milone briefly reviewed the accomplishments in this category, and stated there has been and continues to be a good staff response to these initiatives.

E. Service Delivery Enhancements and Efficiencies – There are in-house sessions conducted for improving efficiency of services.

I.T. Outsourcing has been successful with Apex Technology's assistance with the I.T. operations. The Apex service is excellent, saves money, has improved employee level of satisfaction and understanding of technology.

Bulky Waste Collection – this program went very well with help and guidance from the Solid Waste Committee and PW Department staff overseeing the program. Staff helped design the way the program would be undertaken working with A.J. Waste. Mr. Gancarz checked truck weights, insured the scales were working, and tracked trucks on the GPS system. A.J. Waste did a good job, were very accommodating, particularly with the pickup at condo units.

F. Projects – The listed projects are those in process and Council receives updates on each of them.

G. In Progress – the expanded use of flex time in Town departments will be part of the next union negotiations.

With regard to FOIA issues, Mr. Schrumm requested that Town staff liaison to boards, commissions, committees, assist in keeping things on track with FOI requirements.

Personnel Committee Chairman Ruocco announced that the committee would meet on Thursday, June 19th, at 7:00 P.M.

5. ADJOURNMENT

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

MOVED to adjourn the special meeting at 9:25 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

ATTEST:

MARILYN W. MILTON, CLERK