

MINUTES OF THE JOINT CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 2014, AT 7:00 P.M. IN ROOM 207, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410.

Present

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

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.

Chairman Slocum moved agenda item #6 to current status.

6. Winslow Road Abatement – budget impact

Mr. Milone gave an update on budget impact for abatement and demolition of the house on Winslow Road. He informed the Council that the town attorney has reached out to the two closest relatives of Beverly Mitchell and has talked with them about the situation. If the Town decides to demolish the house there must be a court order, and in the interest of fairness, Attorney Markcowicz has reached out to the family and they have given their consent to go forward. The Town is expecting a signed document to this effect from the relatives before anything is done.

The Council was told by Mr. Milone that Health Director, Maura Esposito, reminded Town officials about the squalor and vermin etc. in the house, and the need to wait 14 days before an exterminator (cost of about \$500) can do the required work. Traps have been set in the house and they will be evaluated periodically.

Another issue to be dealt with is the tax liens on the property which have been sold since 2006 with the lien holder having paid about \$50,000 in 8 years. The lien holder wrote a strong letter to the Town and Town Attorney claiming the Town cannot go forward with any action if demolition is contemplated. Attorney Smith advised the lien holder he does not control the property. If he wants to foreclose he can control the property. To avoid future legal issues and challenges, the lien holder was offered the opportunity to view the property after signing an indemnification clause; this must be done within the next 7 days with immediate determination on whether the property can be renovated. If he feels the property is re-habitable, he forecloses, takes full responsibility and ownership of the premises. If the lien holder wants to rehab the house the Town would have to negotiate with the Town Council approval.

Mr. Milone stated the cost of demolition of the property at \$7,000 to \$10,000 range, with the Town awaiting another quote. This quote does not take in to account moving all of

the materials, getting a number of dumpsters, negotiations with A.J. Waste, and the cost will be another few thousand dollars. The initial concern was the cost exceeding \$24,000, and Mr. Milone does not have the authority to enter into an agreement over \$24,000 as this is the bidding limit for construction. There will, likely, be a budget transfer from the Building Department for these costs.

At this time the property is secured and under the watch of the Police Department. If the house is demolished, the land is worth something and the first lien holder would have to find a creative way to activate the property...build a house on it or sell the land. If the lien holder goes ahead and tries to rehab the house, the Town has a lien on the house for its expenses. Should the lien holder want to negotiate something with the Town, this could not be accepted without Council approval.

Mr. Milone commented on this being a classic case of a lien holder being a good thing, as taxes were paid, and other than demolition of the house the burden is on the lien holder. The lien is a mechanical lien. The total estimated cost of the work is \$7,000 to \$10,000 for demolition plus \$2,000 to \$3,000 for disposal of the material, and securing the property.

3. Non-Union Pay Plan.

The Council was informed by Mr. Milone that Burt Schiarolli, Building Official, will be retiring in 3 weeks after 27 years of service to the Town of Cheshire. He noted that his position was one of those reclassified at the last Council meeting. Mr. Milone reported that Warren Disbrow, Town Engineer, will also be retiring in a few weeks after many years of service to the Town.

The W.S. Development project is the largest ever undertaken in Cheshire and Mr. Milone stated that the new Building Official and a part time inspector would oversee this project.

The resolution #062514-1 before the Council reads as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves the FY 14-15 non-union Play Plan with a 4% increase in the minimum, mid and maximum for all ranges for the non-exempt job classifications and a 2.3% increase in the minimum, mid and maximum for all ranges for the exempt and Library job descriptions.

With regard to the Pay Plan, Mr. Slocum asked why the percentage increase for minimum, mid and maximum ranges is 4%.

Mr. Milone explained that the union pay plan has increased 11.67% in 5 years while the N4-N1 classifications have increased only by 7.28%. He wanted to close this gap and this is where the 4% came from and can be adjusted. Staying with the 2.3% would have some people maxed out very shortly. Mr. Milone noted that the Council had raised concerns of someone reaching their top level of their job and that should be it. He does not want to single out this group because they are not represented by a bargaining unit,

and establish a double standard. There could be 2 people at the top of the pay plan with one deserving of a raise and one not deserving. Without moving the max of the pay plan the person doing the better job cannot be rewarded. Everything is based on performance and Mr. Milone wants the ability to reward performance, and said this is important for him and his administration to motivate people and recognize their contributions.

With regard to employees deserving a high performance rating, Mr. Milone said there is clear indication of what constitutes an 8/9/10, and people can evaluate in different ways. Mr. Milone visited with a Quinnipiac College professor who designed a scoring model which can be used to equalize the fact there is subjectivity in performance evaluations. Now, the bias and subjectivity can be removed from the evaluation. Most employees fall into the 7/8/9 range, and for a 10 range, there must be a narrative to justify this score. On the performance evaluation form Section V the scoring criteria is outlined, and an employee submits their goals and objectives to their supervisor before the evaluation takes place.

Going forward, Ms. Flynn-Harris said the Town could get away from using the numeric system, and use a new model. She will send information on a new model to Mr. Milone.

Stating he does not like that system, Mr. Milone said it is subjective, and hard to translate a qualitative review into a score. He explained that employees submit a self assessment on how they meet their goals and objectives.

Ms. Nichols asked how all the information comes back to the employee and its impact.

In response, Mr. Milone stated the right amount of time must be given to the process and it must be fair. There is a comment page to be completed and people have a good understanding of their successes and areas needing improvement. And, an employee can challenge the evaluation.

Chairman Slocum recommended some changes to the resolution #062514-1 as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves the FY 14-15 non-union Play Plan with a 3% increase in the minimum, mid and maximum for all ranges for the non-exempt job classifications.

Mr. Talbot questioned there being a grid on the raise percentage based on ranking, i.e. someone minimum to mid, and someone mid to max.

The Council was told by Mr. Milone that what drives the percentage is the evaluation. He referred to the listing of job positions and those that have been eliminated.

Classification
E-4

Position Eliminated
Police Captain Investigation
Police Captain Patrol

Operations Manager (Deputy Director of Public Works)
Information Technology Network Administrator

N-1 WAN Assistant

Mr. Milone pointed out the positions without job grades:

Positions w/o Job Grades WAN Administrator
WAN Assistant
Director, Artsplace
Clerk/Typist, Artsplace
Asst. Head Lifeguard, Pool

Mr. Milone noted the Council approved re-classification for Deputy Police Chief to E-4, and Building Official to E-3.

Regarding 35 hour per week and 40 hour per week positions, Mr. Milone noted that there must be an hourly rate to calculate benefits, vacation time etc. He cited the weekly hours for the following positions.

E-2, Fire Marshal, 40 hours; Supt. WWTP, 40 hours; Highway Supt. 40 hours; Parks Foreman, 40 hours.

Personnel Committee Chairman Ruocco stated that the 4% is too big an increase in the ranges and does not see much of an equity. He also does not see a need to raise the minimum levels every year as they catch up over time. Mr. Ruocco believes the Council should take a closer look at how the pay plan is determined and is trying to keep up with the union pay plan.

Mr. Milone stated these non-union people get the same benefits etc. as the union people, and he wants to keep them on parity with the increases. This plan is consistent with the pay ranges of the bargaining unit. Regarding new hires, i.e. building official, Mr. Milone said they will not be hired at the minimum level; most candidates are coming in with experience; and it is not attractive to over minimum pay.

It was stated by Mr. Sima that we are talking about \$30 per hour plus benefits and retirement plan, and we are not hiring experienced people at the bottom. There is no reason to increase the minimum levels.

In looking at the BOE levels, Mr. Sima said they hire at the lower numbers. The Council decided on using 3% across the board for FY14-15 non-union pay plans.

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves the FY 14-15 non-union Pay Plan with a 3% increase in the minimum, mid and maximum for all ranges for the

non-exempt job classifications. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves FY 14-15 2.3% increase in the minimum, mid and maximum for all ranges for the exempt and Library job classifications.

VOTE The motion passed 6-2; Sima and Ruocco opposed.

4. Town Manager's Goals and Objectives.

The motion was cited for discussion purposes.

RESOLUTION #062514-2

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves the Town Manager's FY 14-15 Goals and Objectives as presented and attached.

Discussion

Mr. Milone advised that there are five (5) new items added to the goals and objectives, and they are identified in italics.

V. Develop a strategic policy for land acquisition

Mr. Slocum questioned the current policy on land acquisition.

It was explained by Mr. Milone that someone approaches the Town about potential property for sale, but the Town does not seek out parcels. There has been one exception, the DiDominicis property, and a current property being discussed with the Council. It was suggested by Mr. Oris that there be a more aggressive and active approach with land owners and identification of properties which fit the model.

Ms. Flynn-Harris clarified that Mr. Oris suggested the Town have an idea of a property, its location, whether on the market, and then approach the land owner.

According to Mr. Milone the suggestion was to have an active process, and to do this the Town must have a land acquisition strategy. The Town wants a green belt, contiguous properties, identification of a property, and decides whether to make an offer.

Mr. Schrumm believes identification of a property could result in the owner increasing the price. There could be a broad definition to add land to existing land to increase the green belt without specifics.

The Council discussed looking at a current Town map, a 1986 color coded map of conservation interest, and coming up with a land acquisition strategy.

Mr. Slocum asked about the following objective/strategy.

- I. *Develop an automatic five year review for closeout process for capital project Appropriations to evaluate the need for continuation.*

Mr. Milone stated the Planning Committee talked about five year review, a process to revisit and re-evaluate projects, with the Council evaluating a project, appropriation balance, and making a decision.

The Council discussed five years as a long time, and three (3) years was considered to be the appropriate time frame from the time a project is in the capital budget or approved at referendum. Mr. Milone said the clock would start from the cycle of the capital budget, and he would provide the Council with a status report. He will review this process with department heads.

- I. *Develop an automatic **three** year review for closeout process for capital projects appropriations to evaluate the need for continuation.*

Mr. Slocum asked about the following goal.

- I. *Encourage economic development...with special emphasis on Town Center*

Mr. Milone said this is issues of concern in this area of Town, he is okay with the inclusion of special emphasis on Town Center.

Ms. Linehan commented on not losing sight of the West Main Street area, which is in her district.

There was a brief discussion about the importance of the West Main Street area, not losing sight of the refurbishing of this street, and how the area represents incredible opportunities for wonderful things to happen. The Council noted many issues, limited space and accessibility in Town Center, and asked that Mr. Sitko consider this area a priority.

The goal was amended to read:

- I. *Encourage economic development...with special emphasis on Town Center and West Main Street Development.*

The following goal was discussed:

- III. *Complete Fire Department personnel study of "bunk in" and "stand by crew" program to ensure consistent and appropriate staffing response to all Department emergencies.*

Mr. Milone explained that this goal has been incorporated into the Fire Department plan for female and male bunks in the firehouse, particularly for emergency situations to have manpower on site. This cost will be incorporated into the department budget.

The goal stated in last year's document was read into the record by Mr. Talbot.

Conduct an evaluation of Fire Service delivery and response time and potential implementation of expanded volunteers' stipend program as well as modification to incentive structure.

Mr. Milone clarified that the department wants a means to fill voids for a quick response, such as a stipend for a truck driver at the firehouse, quicker responses to a call, or increase in pay per call.

After listening to last year's goal and objective, Mr. Schrumm said it is broader, and he noted that the overall incentive program includes many benefits for fire fighters.

The Council agreed to add FY 2013 goal to the FY 2014 document.

Mr. Milone informed the Council that Chief Casner is putting together a more detailed and updated report for the capital budget process. He also informed the Council that Chief Casner was elected President of the New England Fire Chief's Association.

V...Continue to pursue various energy conservation programs such as solar power...expanded acquisition of hybrid or all electric vehicles...

Mr. Milone said this goal is a group of things which the Energy Commission is promoting and they went to the Planning Committee.

Mr. Sima asked about this goal, and commented on hybrid vehicles not being as great as expected, and the Town getting vehicles with more miles per gallon which is better for the Town.

The Council briefly discussed "street light ownership" and Mr. Milone reported that Walter Gancarz is working on this, and CCM also has a program in place.

C-Pace is becoming popular around the State, and the Council must adopt this program by ordinance before it can be put out to the community.

III. *Continue to pursue development of information technology enhancements...*

Mr. Schrumm talked about taking credit card payments in Town offices, and expansion of this service for things such as fishing license and dog license.

Mr. Milone advised that this service is being looked into for further expansion in Town departments.

V. *Provide assistance to ensure the timely construction of the Community Pool Facility.*

With regard to the pool project, Mr. Schrumm stated that this project needs additional attention from Town staff.

The motion to approve the Town Manager's Goals and Objectives was placed on the floor.

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

RESOLUTION #062514-2

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves the Town Manager's FY 14-15 Goals and Objectives, **as amended**, and as presented and attached.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

5. Town Manager's Performance Review; possible executive session

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

MOVED that the Town Council enter executive session at 8:52 p.m. to include Town Manager Milone to discuss the Town Manager's Performance Review.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Town Manager Milone left executive session at 9:50 p.m.

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

MOVED that the Town Council exit Executive Session at 10:07 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

6. Winslow Road Abatement – budget impact

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 10:08 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk