

MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING AND BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, JULY 22, 2014, AT 7:00 P.M. AT FIRE DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS, MAPLE AVENUE, TOWN HALL, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present

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

Absent: Timothy Slocum and James Sima.

Staff: Michael A. Milone, Town Manager; James Jaskot, Finance Director; Gina DeFilio, Deputy Finance Director; Fire Chief Jack Casner; Police Chief Neil Dryfe; Deputy Fire Chief Donn Youngquist; Deputy Fire Chief Jay Hershman.

Guest: Anthony Verrill, Apex Technology

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. DISCUSSIONS RE: FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015 FIVE-YEAR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PLAN AND ANNUAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE BUDGET

Police Department, pages 30 and 31; Chief Neil Dryfe

Town Manager Milone explained that the acquisition of vehicles for the first four years of the CEP follow last year's plan. This year the department is requesting purchase of three (3) vehicles – Two Ford Interceptor Utility vehicles as marked patrol vehicles and one (1) Ford Interceptor sedan to be used as an unmarked vehicle. With this request the Town will be paying for two (2) marked cars this year, but no longer replacing 2 marked cars due to more police officers on the street. The cost of these vehicles is \$18,000 to \$20,000 more as equipment normally transferred from car to car will have to be purchased new for these vehicles.

Information on the complete costs for a new vehicle was submitted to the Council. Chief Dryfe informed the Council that the complete cost of a new and fully equipped vehicle is \$48,704. Total cost for purchase of 2 marked vehicles and 1 unmarked vehicle is \$121,908.

Chief Dryfe stated that the need for 2 new marked vehicles is an un-intended consequence of the Police Department reorganization – with more patrol officers on the street at one time. He said now there will be a minimum of 3 officers and one supervisor on duty at all times, and sometimes 4 patrol cars on the roads. At the end of the 2014 calendar year the Police Department will be back to 48 officers, with new officers out on patrol on their own. Sometimes there will be five patrol officers on the streets at the same time (officers and supervisor) in patrol cars, and this will result in

increased mileage and hours driven on the vehicles. The Council was told that the unmarked fleet is in good condition.

The Cheshire Police Department Fleet information was reviewed with the Council. Seven (7) of the 14 vehicles on the list are for patrol shifts – 5 officers per shift, 24/7; 2 traffic vehicles work 14 to 16 hours each day. By March 2015 the department will have 5 cars on patrol every day. Chief Dryfe reviewed the list of vehicles citing 10 as patrol cars; 1 SRO vehicle; Admin/Detectives cars for Chief, Deputy Chief, supervisors, spare car; and there are 3 utility vehicles. Five patrol cars will be on the road per shift; cars are changed amongst officers; cars have down time; and longevity of the vehicle is increased.

After this year, Chief Dryfe explained the department will return to the vehicle replacement cycle, i.e. sell/auction 3 cars, purchase 3 new cars.

Finance/Technology, page 22, Anthony Verrill, Apex Technology.

Mr. Milone reviewed the technology upgrade program stating that Apex Technology put together a five-year plan, implemented the plan with good success, and the Town made the decision to out source the I.T. operations at the start of FY 13-14. Apex provided resources and support which the Town never had before, with a savings of \$180,000. The technology upgrade will be completed in 4 years, rather than 5 years.

Mr. Verrill distributed a copy of Technology Initiatives, Progress & Budget Review, May 2014, which was presented to the Technology Committee.

Page 2 - The total allocation for the technology upgrade was \$1.4 million; \$826,000 has been expended; the balance is \$574,000, which will be spent by the end of the year. Infrastructure was replaced in all the schools and municipal buildings.

There are two major areas to be addressed – video surveillance system and door access system. Mr. Verrill pointed out that the Town Hall and Fire Department doors are old, and access to all buildings must be upgraded with a door access control system, which will help with emergency access for the Fire and Police Departments. The schools and Police Department have an analog system which is old. There would be one video surveillance system throughout all Town buildings, and this is one large infrastructure project.

Page 4 – This page outlines the overall requirement for major infrastructure projects to bring the network and technology to the required levels. In FY 14-15 the project spent \$295,000; there is a request for \$370,000 to complete the projects. Following completion of projects, Apex will start the maintenance mode.

Project Focus – the high school is a large piece of the infrastructure work, and Apex wants to complete the high school and Town buildings and put together a uniformed telephone system for the Town.

Mr. Milone commented on the five year plan technology plan cost of \$2,366,000, which was revised to four years at a cost of \$1,927,000.

Mr. Schrumm asked about putting money into the operating budget for future technology needs.

According to Mr. Verrill, every year there will be a capital request to replace aging equipment, using a cycle that is manageable. He noted that technology is advancing and getting less expensive, and he will purchase the best technology and get longevity of the equipment. Mr. Verrill will work closely with the schools, technology staff, have a uniform structure which makes it easier to move forward with technology and save money.

Fire Department, Page 47 – Chief Jack Casner; Deputy Chief Donn Youngquist and Deputy Chief Jay Hershman.

Chief Hershman and Chief Youngquist gave a presentation on the Fire Department, its history, organization, fire station locations, incident reporting, firefighter training, vehicles, strategic plan, mission statement, goals, code of values, achievements, benefits, and general information about the department.

The Fire Department was organized in February 1912, celebrated its 100th Anniversary in 2012, and people of varied professions make up the volunteer firefighters.

Three fire stations operate in Cheshire – Company #2, Byam Road, Headquarters, Maple Avenue, South End, South Main Street, and firefighters are assigned to a station based on their residence. A Captain is assigned to each station; a Lieutenant is assigned for each piece of apparatus; one Administrative Lieutenant assists the Chief. The department has 7 engines/pumpers in service; 1 aerial truck; and 2 heavy rescue vehicles. Fund raising comes through the operating budget and capital budget and donations from residents and businesses. The total cost to outfit one firefighter is \$9,690.

The Cheshire Volunteer Fire Department Inc. is a separate organization, and entered into an agreement with the Cheshire Municipal Fire Department. The Fire Marshal is now under the direction of the Fire Chief.

Chief Hershman reviewed the 911 sequence which comes through the Police Department dispatcher, is paged to firefighters for a response, with 8 radio cars responding to a call, and firefighters arriving at the scene in fire trucks or personal cars. Apparatus response is based on the nature of the fire call.

Chief Youngquist informed the Council on the types of calls, times of call, activity reports, active personnel and life members, and all members must be “compliant” and meet all the training requirements. In FY 13-14, about 15,207 personnel hours were recorded, and this number would be higher if every member recorded every hour of

their service. For benefits (pension, life insurance, tax abatement, pay per call) members must meet certain standards cited in the ordinance.

Training takes place once a week – changed from once a month. Firefighters must meet OSHA requirements, take courses, pass CFD agility test and pre-requisites for firefighter certification, and annual refresher training.

Chief Hershman informed the Council of the fact that when the fire department is called to a scene, they are in charge.

Public Education – The CFD members visit schools, conduct the SADD demonstration, hold an open house at headquarters for the public, provide in-service training, and are active in the community with fund raisers and human service work. The CFD is active in various organizations and national committees; Chief Casner was recently elected President of the New England Fire Chiefs Association; and this is a great honor for Cheshire. The CFD has a stellar reputation and takes pride in its accomplishments.

Fire Marshall – this office is responsible for inspection, daytime driver coverage, fire prevention education, investigation of fires, review of plans for new buildings.

Strategic Plan – the CFD went through the process of a strategic plan, reviewed department strengths and weaknesses, created a new mission statement, vision statement, and core values.

Chief Casner reviewed the CFD CEP requests, noting the first four years are similar to last year, \$3.165 million.

In FY 2014-15 two pieces of apparatus were requested, but Town Manager Milone did not approve this request. The replacement of the 1970 Truck #1 Snorkel Aerial Apparatus at \$1.2 million was approved by the Town Manager in FY 14-15. Some pieces of apparatus were moved out to years #3 and #4 of the CEP, and Chief Casner said this move does not impede public safety in the community.

Mr. Milone commented on the high cost installation of water mains, FY 15-16, \$220,000 and FY 17-18, \$420,000, and RWA continuing to increase this cost and maintenance of the mains. He advised he has invited David Borowy, Cheshire's representative to the RWA Board to an upcoming Council meeting to discuss the water main issues.

According to Chief Casner, this is the better approach to take, and the Town has plans for installation of mains in out years, and it is an expensive project.

Equipment – Chief Casner noted the CFD requested replacement of 3 pieces of equipment, and the apparatus was in the parking lot for Council inspection. He cited facts about the current 1998 ladder truck, and the use of Elim Park funds to equip this truck next year.

In that regard, Ms. Flynn-Harris said she would want to see the numbers, because using Elim Park funds for capital projects could affect the department operating budget.

It was noted by Mr. Milone that the Police and Fire Departments used some of the Elim Park money to supplement the CAD system costs.

Regarding the 1970 Snorkel, Mr. Ruocco asked if it is used for fire calls.

Stating "no", Chief Casner said it is not in use, is at the PW Garage, and this is why there is a request for a new ladder truck. If approved, the 16 year old truck goes to South Main fire station, and the new ladder truck will come to the headquarters station.

Chief Casner stated he would have a 3rd party consultant write the specs for the new fire truck, and if approved for purchase, this truck would not arrive in Town for 9 to 11 months after it is ordered.

In regard to the purchase of a new ladder truck, Mr. Oris stated the CFD would want to purchase a truck that would last a long time, so there are benefits to purchasing the right quality of vehicle.

Mr. Schrumm questioned the 8 radio cars responding to a call, training for members moving up the pecking order, and rolling procedures for call response.

In response to a call, the Chief explained that 4 cars are CFD cars, and 4 cars are personal member cars with radios.

Chief Hershman noted the pecking order with members starting with brush truck training, then rescue training, then engine training, with firefighters taking classes to learn how to drive apparatus. More than half of the CFD members are qualified all the way to aerial response.

For call response, the Chief advised that headquarters starts the equipment out to a call. There is mutual aid with surrounding towns, and Cheshire and Southington are working on a formal agreement policy.

Reporting System – Chief Casner advised the new system provides details of call responses; the Fire Marshal prepares this report for the State system reporting requirements.

It was noted by Mr. Schrumm that volunteer firefighting forces are down nation wide due to the extra training now required and regulations in effect. He also commented on the water mains on Waterbury Road with minimum protection of 40 houses, and spending \$220,000, when RWA continues to increase costs for the water mains.

Chief Casner said the trending line at CFD for membership is not as bad as the national trend. Without access to water at a fire call, he said there will be more significant damage than fires with water main access.

Chief Hershman reported that the junior firefighting program is the key to membership in CFD, and it is a very strong program. Members are totally trained by age 21 and become full CFD members.

Mr. Oris commented on the Council questioning the need for the new fire apparatus, when Council members have no expertise on this issue, and they should rely on their public safety experts.

The Council was informed by Chief Casner that there were two separate and independent surveys conducted for CFD. The conclusion stated for a town the size of Cheshire the fire department should have two aerial trucks.

Mr. Oris stated that the Council should find a way to get this apparatus for the Town and CFD, and implement it as quickly as possible in a fiscally responsible way. He commented on fire officials saying this is a public safety issue.

There are safety reports and Chief Casner will forward them to the Council members.

Mr. Milone will prepare a packet of information for the Council. He said the money to hire a consultant to write the specs for the new truck can come out of the Elim Park gift account.

Mr. Schrumm stated his opposition to a 2nd ladder truck, and noted there was purchase of a \$675,000 replacement truck for the Snorkel. He said the replacement truck requested in the subject CEP is not to replace the Snorkel, and is a request for a 2nd ladder truck. According to Mr. Schrumm with the current level of fire protection, and the Fire Marshal's office the risks are lower and the fire truck is not a necessary piece of equipment. He recommended a "Quint" truck which is a smaller ladder truck.

Ms. Linehan raised the issue and question of letting the CFD request for aerial apparatus go to referendum, and let the public decide whether to approve it or not.

If something is not a good idea to him, Mr. Schrumm does not believe it should go to referendum.

When it comes to public safety, Mr. Oris said the Council must rely on its experts. He cannot make this decision and will rely on the experts who do a wonderful job. Mr. Oris commented on the Town saving money with a volunteer fire department, and he looks at the issue of the need for a new fire truck different than replacement of a computer.

Community Pool Project – Mr. Milone informed the Council that the Arizona contract will not be final for Council vote on Tuesday, July 29th. He will e-mail the draft contract to

Council members on Wednesday, July 23rd for review. The Council has a public hearing on the CEP on July 29th, followed by a special meeting of the Council, and there is another special meeting scheduled for July 31st.

4. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Oris; seconded by Ms. Linehan

MOVED to adjourn the special meeting at 10:05 P.M.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk