

MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING AND BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, JULY 24, 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, Sylvia Nichols, Thomas Ruocco, Peter Talbot. Absent: Timothy Slocum, Liz Linehan, Robert Oris
Staff: Michael A. Milone, Town Manager; James Jaskot, Finance Director; Gina DeFilio, Deputy Finance Director.
Dept. of Education – Supt.of Schools, Dr.Greg Florio; Director of Management Services Vincent Masciana; BOE Members Brittingham, Dixon and Sobol.

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.

Mr. Milone cited some informational issues for the Council.

Demolition of the Winslow Road Property – this demolition will begin next week, and to do so the Town must gain access to a neighbor's property, with the Council approving a hold harmless agreement. The final date for utilization of this property is August 8th, so this agreement will be an agenda item for the special meeting of July 29th.

Mr. Milone informed the Council that the Town has two signed documents from the heirs to the property, including a hold harmless agreement. The Town is permitted to proceed with the demolition. Mr. Milone noted that the challenge has been with the lien holder who thought the property could be rehabilitated, and the lien holder was told the Town cannot wait any longer.

Community Pool Committee meeting – the committee meets on July 28th and it is expected to have the Arizon contract. Councilors have the draft contract, but must see the final contract before Tuesday, July 28th, and the earliest date action can be taken would be July 31st or August 5th.

Fire Truck Information – due to Chief Casner being on vacation this week, the Council will not have this information until July 29th.

Debt Analysis – the analysis will be completed for the July 29th Council meeting for review and discussion.

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

EDUCATION – DR. GREG FLORIO and VINCENT MASCIANA,

Town Manager Milone stated that the BOE budget is almost to the dollar in line with the five year plan. Mr. Milone moved the \$750,000 in year #1 to year #2, for a total of \$1.5 million for the high school cafeteria project, as the Town does not want to go to referendum on this project in each of the 2 years. The window replacement request is out of the CEP; this project will become part of the energy initiative; and the BOE has requested window replacement funding over 5 years.

Mr. Masciana reviewed the BOE summer work projects, and cited the following projects:

- Energy Performance Contract – LED lighting work completed at Norton School; CHS first floor completed with LED lighting; Doolittle school is scheduled next.
- Weatherization – week of 7/21/14 the electrical heating system is being removed from CHS and Highland school will be done in one year; this is a two year project.
- Roof – \$125,000 the CHS Band Room roof is being replaced, and work begins next week.
- Flooring – CHS Gym Floor has the old flooring removed; asbestos was found and abated; the concrete sub-floor looks good; the maple flooring is being shipped, and must wait 7 to 10 days before installation begins; all flooring work in the schools is being done over the summer and will be completed.
- Painting – there is lots of painting going on in the schools; the cleaning company is moving through the schools as rooms are freed up.
- Phone System – the replacement of the district wide telephone system is being done this summer following a walk-through of all buildings with Tele-Communications Company.
- Paving and Sidewalks - CHS and Darcey paving is completed; sidewalk work at Doolittle School is underway.
- Full Day Kindergarten – work is ongoing at Darcey School with a new kitchen, sump pump installation for sink system; old asbestos was found and abatement is ongoing; all Kindergarten materials are in the process of being delivered by W.B. Mason; work on the Kindergarten classrooms at Highland, Norton, Chapman is being done; and everything looks good for the start of the school year.

BOE FIVE YEAR PLAN – Mr. Masciana distributed CEP information and a proposal for a 10 year facility master plan for the school district. He reviewed the BOE Five Year Capital Plan which totals \$17.8 million, with a funding request for FY 2014-15 of \$2.3 million.

School Buildings – the district school buildings are aged; Highland School is 43 years old; Humiston School is 102 years old; and the average age of all the schools is 63.5 years. Upgrades since 2000 to the schools included the \$2 million addition to Dodd Middle School in 2002, and \$9.3 million addition to CHS in 2000. There has not been a full renovation to a Cheshire school since 1971.

Connecticut School Upgrades since 2000 – there have been 293 grant applications by school districts; +\$10 million or more has been spent for new schools or full renovations in surrounding districts (Southington, Meriden, Hamden, Wallingford, North Haven). Based on this information, and from a competitive point of view, Cheshire is falling behind with its schools.

CEP FY 14-15 to FY 18-19 BOE Request is \$17.8 million, with 96% of the request for physical plant maintenance and replacement needs; the first year, FY 13-15 totals \$2.28 million for school projects, including \$145,000 for a School Building Master Plan.

Projects in the CEP include the following:

- CHS Roof and re-seaming project -\$125,000.
- Code Compliance – 25% of the Five Year Plan - \$2 million in years 2 and 3 for CHS, plus code compliance costs \$2 million in FY 18-19 for Humiston School.
- Cafeteria Improvements - 16% of the five year CEP for cafeteria projects CHS, Highland, Norton, Chapman and Doolittle Schools. The budget request for the CHS cafeteria renovation is short at \$1.5 million, as Fletcher Thompson estimates the cost to be \$3.5 million. The request for the other elementary school projects is also under-stated.
- Window Replacement - \$1 million for CHS; windows must be done at Chapman and Darcey schools; total cost of window replacement is \$3 million, or 16% of the CEP.

Mr. Masciana pointed out that these are necessary requests to keep the school buildings functional and operationally sound.

In taking the five year CEP submitted, 8 years worth of data, Mr. Masciana pointed out that the Council approved 80% of the BOE requests during this time frame.

The FY 2014-15 request is \$2.28 million and includes the following projects:

- \$750,000 for the CHS cafeteria renovation is moved out to year #2 , \$1.5 million, but the Fletcher Thompson cost estimate is \$3 million.
- CHS storage solution cost is \$260,000 for a 4,000 sq. ft. prefab storage building to replace the old and rotted out 9 trailers.

- Lavatories – the request in FY 14-15 is \$125,000 in each of the five years for Norton and Doolittle Schools, with replacement of the original lavatory facilities (60 year old vintage facilities) with many issues.
- CHS Window Replacement over 4 years, \$250,000 each year; for State reimbursement there must be PCBs testing, and this may be present and expensive to abate.
- Flooring costs \$225,000, last request to replace old carpeting in school buildings with vinyl tile.
- Facilities Master Plan -\$145,000. This a proposal prepared by Milone and MacBroom. Mr. Masciana stated this is an investment in what should be done in the schools over the next 10 years. The master plan will focus on demographics, housing, enrollment patterns and projections, educational (programmatic review, trends state, region and national, classroom facilities (facility inventory, utilization, condition). This plan would provide a solid roadmap for development of a long term modernization plan for the public schools.
- Code and Facilities Improvements - \$125,000.

Mr. Masciana stated that the CEP request is a 100% no frills request and includes things necessary for the school system.

The actual CEP funding rate from the Council was stated. Mr. Masciana pointed out that over the last 7 years only 45% of funding was approved, and this is a disappointing number. The types of request submitted were for essential needs in the buildings, and it is time for approval at a higher rate before the school district gets further and further behind. If you take the capital funding rate of 45% plus operating funding not able to keep up with the needs of aging buildings, the Town continues to increase its facilities liabilities.

Modernization Plan – the BOE is requesting \$145,000 for a master plan to take a hard look and put together a long term facilities plan. Dr. Florio and Mr. Masciana met with Mr. Zuba of Milone and MacBroom and a proposal was put together, without any commitment to hire the firm for the project.

On page #2 of the proposal the plan approach is outlined, and includes what is happening in Cheshire from a housing point of view – new developments, taking an in depth look at the housing stock, housing turning over from empty nesters to families with children. Based on this information a detailed enrollment analysis will be undertaken, with analysis and projections over 10 years. Each school's capacity will be reviewed for determination of enough capacity/excess capacity, building by building, condition of each school facility, what needs to be done to bring it to where it should be in 10 years from an educational point of view. Classrooms, libraries, etc. will be looked at to make sure they are educationally sound. With everything taken into consideration the study will indicate what the Cheshire School System should do over the next 10 years based on housing and enrollment projections.

Mr. Masciana explained that the cost estimate for a master facility plan is between \$110,000 and \$145,000. It is also recommended that this plan be undertaken as a community committee project, with a seat and voice from everyone -- Town Council BOE, teacher, administrator, community members – to help move this project along.

Advantages to the master plan were defined by Mr. Masciana who noted school performance is excellent, but the Town has not invested to modernize its school buildings. Even with excellent school performance, if buildings are lacking compared to other towns there is unfair competition and this can hurt property values. Assuming the Town goes forward with this plan, and starts executing against the plan in 5 years, Cheshire's newest school building will be 48 years old.

Citing final points, Mr. Masciana commented on the fact that in the CEP there are a few projects that dropped off. These include energy projects for HVAC; utility tunnel project is completed; Smart Boards are now in every classroom and learning space; chimney repairs are done this summer; and flooring project is also completed this summer.

It was stated by Mr. Masciana that the practical reality is that project costs for older buildings will increase, and there are structural limitations in our buildings. The plan for CHS cannot be done as we would like because of these structural limitations. He noted abatement costs were expensive in the flooring project. Right now, construction inflation is rising faster than regular inflation, and the longer we wait the more projects will cost. Funds requested for windows, cafeteria, code compliance may cost more than what is built into the CEP.

Mr. Masciana pointed out that the CHS kitchen project is in the CEP for \$1.5 million, but could cost up to \$3.5 million. The CHS concession stand project is at \$350,000 but PBC estimates it will cost \$600,000; CHS locker room project is appropriated at \$550,000 but the estimated cost is up to \$750,000.

With regard to school buildings, Mr. Schrumm stated that they are old, but with maintenance and periodic updating, the age of the building is not important. He commented on three CHS additions, major renovations at Norton and Doolittle Schools, and two additions to Dodd Middle School

Mr. Ruocco questioned the concession stand which has no funding in the CEP, and if it would be funded as an amendment to the CEP. If the cost is over \$350,000 he said it must go to referendum.

CEP, EDUCATION, PAGE 96.

Code Compliance – no funds requested in FY 2014-15.

Civil Rights Compliance CHS - \$FY 15-16, \$1.404 million. Mr. Masciana reported that Cheshire is in the monitoring phase of the CHS deficiencies; a report was submitted to the State on June 30th; some large items need to be funded; FY 17-18 has

\$750,000 to complete remediation of the deficiencies; FY 15-16 has \$251,000 to remedy exterior deficiencies. The outline of code compliance deficiencies is noted on page 98.

Humiston School code compliance has \$2 million in FY 18-19. This building is not code compliant, and there is a question as to what should be done with it, as renovation will cost more than \$2 million with further upgrades. Some of the windows have been replaced in this historical building and the BOE must work with the Historic District Commission for some leeway on what can and cannot be done.

Dr. Florio informed the Council that, eventually, the State of Connecticut will demand Cheshire complete the work on cited deficiencies in the civil rights compliance.

Page 104 – Roof Replacement - \$125,000 in each year of the CEP; Doolittle School roof replacement is in FY 16-17, at \$1.5 million; Norton School replacement of two roof sections is at \$925,000 in FY 17-18.

Page 106 – District wide paving, \$125,000 in FY 15-16 and FY 16-17; \$250,000 in FY 17-18 and FY 18-19.

Flooring Replacement, \$225,000 in FY 14-15.

Regarding the flooring projects, Mr. Jaskot stated it was thought this project could be bonded, but the IRS says it cannot be bonded. This project will, probably, be moved into CNR.

Sidewalks and Masonry - \$150,000 in each year of the CEP.

CHS Cafeteria Renovation - \$1.5 million in FY 15-16; project could cost \$3.5 million.

Storage Solution - \$260,000 in FY 14-15 to replace old trailers which will be junked.

Science Labs CHs - \$200,000 in FY 16-17; \$300,000 has already been approved, and this project can be tied into the heat replacement work.

Master Plan - \$145,000, FY 14-15.

Lavatory Improvements -\$125,000 in each year of the CEP; total \$625,000; Norton and Doolittle Schools in year #1.

A question was posed by Mr. Ruocco regarding the funding for program review in the master plan proposal.

Mr. Masciana said this is to look at educational practices today and where they will be in the next decade. He said an educational consultant would be part of the roster for the plan.

Dr. Florio explained the programmatic review is tied to the facilities. He cited an example of there being no classroom space 20 years ago for autism, and now there are 6 to 8 classrooms for autism to educate children in the school district rather than send them out of district.

Dodd Middle School - \$125,000 FY 14-15 for improvements to athletic fields and repair drainage problems.

Page 107 – One to One Learning, \$125,000 FY 15-16. Dr. Florio stated the need to move to expand devices to students grade 5 to high school, and this should be part of the operating budget at some point in time. Each device, Chrome Book, costs \$300.

Underground Oil Tanks - \$125,000 FY 15-16 and FY 16-17; funding to pull tanks out of the ground.

Highland School Building Improvements - \$750,000 FY 18-19.

Window Replacement /Energy Improvements at Darcey, Highland, Chapman and CHS - \$250,000 in FY 14-15 and FY 15-16; \$650,000 in FY 17-19; and \$950,000 in FY 18-19. Total - \$2.1 million.

Boiler Replacement - \$275,000 FY 17-18, Doolittle School.

Bus Depot Expansion - \$110,000 FY 15-16. BOE replaced two mini-buses this year out of the operating budget; BOE owns 10 bus vehicles and 6 maintenance vehicles.

Regarding the CHS cafeteria/kitchen project, Mr. Milone reiterated that it is moved out to year #2 of the CEP at \$1.5 million. However, the estimate for this project from Fletcher Thompson is \$3.5 million, which includes expansion of the cafeteria dining area, gutting the kitchen/serving area, and new kitchen/serving area.

If the Council approves the master facilities plan, Mr. Masciana said it would be a 9 month project, starting in September 2014. At this time next year the Council would have the recommendations for the capital budget from a 10 year facilities plan.

Dr. Florio stated that the BOE needs a master plan. He noted that 20 years ago the removal of the electric heating system at the high school and Highland School were in the CEP. This is now being done as a project, and had it been done 20 years ago there would have been huge savings. Dr. Florio requested the Council approve the \$145,000 expenditure for the master plan.

Ms. Flynn-Harris commented on this master plan enabling the Town to look out to the future and know what must be done with the school facilities.

LAND ACQUISITION, Page 43

Planning – Land Acquisition, \$1 million in FY 2014-15, and FY 16-17 and FY 18-19. Mr. Milone stated there may be a need to include more funding for a certain parcel of property in which the Town is interested. At the present time there is \$550,000 in the Land Acquisition Account; the Town awaits \$250,000 from the State Open Space Grant for the Puchalski acquisition. With this reimbursement the account will have \$750,000.

Mr. Milone discussed revisiting having a policy on land acquisition by becoming more aggressive, going after properties idle for a long time, and changing the method of how the Town acquires properties. This is something to be considered and the Council can discuss it in executive session. If the Town were to pursue a property, there would have to be set criteria in place.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, Page 45

\$850,000, FY 2014-15. Mr. Milone reported on a \$500,000 STEAP grant appropriation, and said the Town has applied for a Main Street Grant. If this grant is not received the balance of \$350,000 for sidewalk design and construction would be paid through bonds. However, this would not have to go to referendum because they are development grants to support a project.

OPEN SPACE LAND MANAGEMENT, Page 36

\$50,000, FY 2014-15. Mr. Milone explained that a management plan takes all the Town owned properties and coordinates a plan, involving all Town Departments in the management of open space. The plan is 60% completed, will be completed in the Fall of 2014, and the Council will review the plan. The responsibility for management of the open space plan will be amongst various departments (Planning, Public Works, Police) to insure the management is carried through.

Mr. Milone advised that \$100,000 revaluation and \$50,000 open space management funding was frozen due to the increase in the snow/ice account. In the future, he said the land management plan will be part of the operating budget.

The issue of the borer infestation on Ash Trees was cited by Ms. Flynn-Harris, who noted this is an issue on Town owned property, and would come under a management plan.

Mr. Schrumm commented on well maintained forests (including logging) and having the right person to do work on Town property.

In the July 22nd handout to the Council, Mr. Milone pointed out that there is a listing of all Town owned acreage.

MEETINGS – TUESDAY, JULY 29TH, PUBLIC HEARING, 7:30 P.M. FOLLOWED BY SPECIAL MEETING.

THURSDAY, JULY 31ST, 7:00 P.M. SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING.

4. ADJOURNMENT

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

MOVED to adjourn the special meeting at 8:45 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:
