

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING AND BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2015, AT 7:00 P.M. IN ROOM 207, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410**

Present

David Schrumm, Budget Committee Chairman. Council Members: Patti Flynn-Harris, Liz Linehan, Sylvia Nichols, Robert Oris Jr., Thomas Ruocco, James Sima, Peter Talbot.

Staff: Michael A. Milone, Town Manager; James Jaskot, Finance Director; Gina DeFilio, Deputy Finance Director; Michelle Piccerillo, Human Services Director; Stephanie Farrell, Coordinator of Senior Services; Robert Ceccolini, Parks and Rec Director and Sheila Adams, Pool Coordinator.

**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. PROPOSED FY 2015-2016 OPERATING BUDGET**

Leisure: Parks & Recreation Department, Parks & Recreation Commission; Community Pool.

Planning: Planning Department, Planning and Zoning Commission; Zoning Board of Appeals, Economic Development, Beautification Committee, Public Building Commission, Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission, Environment Commission, Historic District Commission, Energy Commission

Social Services: Human Services Department, Youth Services Committee, Human Services Committee.

**SOCIAL SERVICES - Michelle Piccerillo, Director; Stephanie Farrell, Coordinator of Senior Services; Pages 64 and 135**

Town Manager Milone reviewed the department budget; \$41,000 budget increase; \$38,433 increase in the salary line item. There is a request to increase the Social Worker's hours from 20 to 25 per week, and Program Supervisor's hours from 19 to 25 hours per week, for a total of +11 hours per week, effective January 1, 2016 at a cost of \$7,779. Mr. Milone explained the reorganization of the department in 2012 with the merger of Youth Services and Senior Services into the Human Services Department. In 2012 the Social Worker position was reduced to 20 hours per week, and Program Supervisor was reduced to 19 hours per week.

Youth Services - \$9,746 increase. Due to an error made in the number of hours for the Program Assistant in last year's budget, \$9,746 is restoration of the funds from last year (page 136).

27th payroll is a \$5,800 increase; total budget is 2.7% increase.

Over the past 10 years the Cheshire census indicated an increase in +60 age group population from 4,311 (15.9%) to 6,404 (21.9%), and this trend is expected to continue. There is a significant increase and demand for senior services at the Senior Center, with youth services having a demand of a different type.

Director Piccerillo reported to the Council on the accomplishments of the department in 2014-15, and objectives for 2015-16.

Cheshire Human Services Department is getting notice across the State for its programs and services, and provides guidance to other communities on how to run programs and meet the needs of the community. The department has a professional and experienced staff; Cheshire is on the map; and is current with trends in the work done. The Crisis Management Team is on call 24/7 and staff has done a tremendous job managing many situations. The department has responded to many community crisis situations and deaths, has an awareness of the effect of social services, looked at its policies and procedures, review of handbooks to insure everything is in line and things are effectively managed.

Ms. Piccerillo cited the following highlights:

- The department is staff to the Human Services and Youth Services Committees, and supports youth and senior services in the community.
- BOE survey to youth to be conducted before end of the school year.
- Secured DOT mini-bus grant; purchased 2 new buses in 2015; 3 or 4 buses used each day to transport seniors; car is used to transport individuals not requiring a lift or wheelchair.
- Received \$10,000 donation from Lights of Hope.
- Continue to pursue grant funds; received annual substance abuse grant.

Internships - college students from area colleges/universities intern in the Human Services Department. Cheshire is a coveted intern site for students, with strong clinical supervision and creativity in the management of the needs of the community.

Juvenile Review Board - the JRB has been reestablished in Cheshire with a strong group of professional and qualified members.

The department established the work group which focuses on unsafe living conditions and hoarding in the community, along with development of an awareness program on these issues.

Ms. Piccerillo commented on future goals and objectives of the department. These include continue to achieve many of the accomplishments each year; increase in Senior Center membership and youth service programs; providing clinical services; working with the State Data Collection System; continue to conduct a successful internship program. The department has cooperative efforts with CPD, such as response to many crisis situations in town and the assessment sheet for domestic violence calls.

Senior Center - Stephanie Farrell, Coordinator of Senior Services, reported on the increase in people coming for senior services and membership in the Senior Center. She said interns are valuable assets; they are time consuming for the social worker; some interns must have 400 clinical hours. The telephone assurance program has been reinstated; it identifies people at risk; and the social worker provides services to these people.

Social Worker -Stephanie Thoreau is the department Social Worker; she has 20+ years of experience; holds an MSW, LCSW degree; she identifies people at risk who need services and follow through with the services. A monthly report is provided on all the issues related to senior clients. Ms. Thoreau is a mandated reporter; sees 164 clients a month; 38 per week; conducts a monthly care giver support meeting; conducts evening programs; and works 20 hours a week, plus putting in time over and above the 20 hours. The request is submitted for 5 more hours a week for the social worker position.

Program Supervisor - this position is 19 hours per week, with a request to increase to 25 hours per week. The person is responsible for class registrations, special events, instructors, programs, shopping, cooking, decorations for the center, book club, tag sale, holiday bazaar, health and wellness fairs. To accomplish the many tasks she works more than 19 hours a week.

Senior Center Membership - people 55+ can join the center; 25% of current members are from out of Cheshire. Many classes and programs have a waiting list (exercise, zumba classes) The basement renovation will enable more people to attend classes, and younger seniors want evening classes. Once the renovation is done, there will be less setting up and breaking down in the main room.

Transportation - the dispatcher position is a 24 hour job; there is free bus service on Friday through Dial A Ride (GWTD) for out of town appointments; there are 3 or 4 mini-buses on the road each day, along with a car for those seniors who do not need a lift or wheelchair.

Ms. Farrell stated that Senior Center staff does an excellent job, put in extra hours, have a willingness to provide services and programs. The center has developed a relationship with Quinnipiac University and Southern CT State University, and the student interns enjoy working at the center.

CCM Magazine featured an article on the Cheshire Senior Center, and Council members looked at the article.

Ms. Flynn-Harris commented on a letter from Deb Kelleher expressing support for the increase in hours for department staff. She requested an update on membership, particularly the increase in the numbers for in town and out of town members.

According to Ms. Farrell the Social Worker, Ms. Thoreau, sees only Cheshire residents for services. Any out of town person with an issue is referred to their local services. She noted that many commendations are received at the center on Ms. Thoreau.

It was pointed out by Ms. Piccerillo that the senior programs can save lives. She cited an example of someone stuck at home in the last snow storm, who called the center for help. The lady was plowed out, given food and other needed services. She explained that the younger seniors are volunteers at the center.

Mr. Schrumm commented on the younger aged seniors and exercise classes for seniors of all ages.

There are classes in every age group -- zumba, tai chi, arthritic, and regular exercise groups at the center. Ms. Farrell said that the needs of everyone are addressed, and some seniors go to the YMCA and other exercise programs in town.

Ms. Piccerillo reported that the department will be hiring a licensed marriage and family therapist, who is certified to do clinical supervision of the interns. The department will no longer be hiring outside for this service.

Budget - Mr. Milone stated that this department budget is +\$13,000 over budget. One issue is hiring a certified supervisor overseeing the interns. Until the person is hired the town will continue to hire for this outside service, which is about \$9,000 to date.

Ms. Linehan commented on the fact that caregivers benefit from the Senior Center programs and services, particularly community members with aging parents.

In response to a question from Mr. Talbot on "where the out of town members come from", Ms. Farrell cited Hamden, North Haven, Wallingford, Prospect, Derby, Rocky Hill, Southington. Out of town members pay \$10 membership per year; town residents pay \$5 per year; and someone must have membership to join in the travel club events.

Regarding functions which out of town people undertake, Mr. Oris asked if the town is losing money. He said things should not be provided to non-residents who are not taxpayers.

Mr. Milone stated that the cost of the programs are covered by registration and the fees charged.

Mr. Oris commented on additional services and too many non-residents costing the town more, looking at the totality and burden on the overall system. He said taxpayers should not fund anything for anyone who is not a Cheshire resident.

Volunteer Luncheon - Mr. Milone talked about the annual luncheon in appreciation to the 90 to 100 volunteers who work about 114,000 hours each year at the center. Without these people the center would need 2+ more paid staff.

If 20% of the membership is out of town people, Mr. Oris asked what is being done to the town's overhead, i.e. needing 2 more staff people to accommodate non-residents for services provided.

A cost analysis has not been done on this issue, and Ms. Piccerillo will compile data, figure out how many non-residents are in each of the classes and what they are paying. She believes the programs are revenue producing.

Mr. Ruocco raised the question on whether other towns are not offering the scope of services that are provided in Cheshire, so people come to our Senior Center.

Page 142 - line item 5104 TPT Program Assistants - Mr. Milone rolled back the hours of the Youth Activity Coordinator, budgeted at \$24,000 and rolled back to \$15,000; he never increased the dollars for the Program Assistants; \$50,775 is the number for 5104 at the start of the year.

5409 - Intern Supervisor is \$3,000 budgeted; estimate is \$12,000; \$9,000 cut last year for an in-house person which did not happen; outside services were contracted; this forces the budget over \$9,000.

5103 - two positions increase to 25 hours per week. No fringe benefits with these two positions at this time.

Mr. Sima suggested hiring another social worker - 2 people at 15 hours each per week.

In response, Ms. Piccerillo said that longevity of people in such a part time position does not last, and it makes no sense to do that. The program supervisor's background is therapeutic recreation.

For the certified person to supervise interns, Mr. Sima asked if this is a State requirement.

The Council was told by Ms. Piccerillo that the colleges and universities require certification by AMFT to supervise interns, and the department is also more comfortable with having a certified person.

With interns sent to Cheshire, Mr. Sima questioned the cost of the town for AMFT certification.

Ms. Piccerillo pointed out that services provided by these interns is a cost savings to the town.

Mr. Milone explained that the town is not charging for clinical services to residents.

In looking at the request for \$15,000 for increased hours for 2 positions, with an assumption for benefits, Mr. Oris said there must be a better way to do this without additional hours. He noted that 24 hours vs. 25 hours makes a difference regarding benefits. Mr. Oris commended Ms. Piccerillo, Ms. Farrell and their staff for doing a

good job, doing what is best for our senior citizen residents. He commented on the Council having tough decisions to make, and the Senior Center as an important commodity of the community.

Mr. Milone will provide a template on the costs of all town benefits. He noted that both positions with increase in hours request are non-union, and the town can make adjustments to the position.

**Parks and Recreation Department, Robert Ceccolini, Director; Sheila Adams, Pool Coordinator - Pages 68 and 163.**

Community Pool Budget, Page 122 - Mr. Milone stated that there has not been a complete year for the pool since 2009-10. When the pool closes there is no revenue except for revenue from swim classes. There are still expenses (salary, overhead and other expenses); total expenses are \$474,491; revenue of \$147,000; Elim Park pool use/swim lessons generates about \$20,000 of revenue; next session revenue will be about \$30,000; pool rental is \$3,500 to \$4,000. Revenue for the entire year for the pool budget will be about \$160,000. To balance the budget, \$100,000 was used from fund balance, with erosion of the entire insurance proceeds.

Handout March 16, 2015, page #1 - Insurance Reserve Fund Balance Analysis. Resources available 1+ years ago are dwindling; \$100,000 to balance the budget this year; \$71,999 to balance the budget next year. It is hoped that there will be 12 months of full operation for the pool.

Mr. Milone explained that the loss of business use insurance was compromised, with the insurance company paying more than he expected to realize.

In the first bubble collapse (2011) a claim was made with proceeds of \$192,435; \$285,000 was spent; leaving a negative \$93,003. The Council supplemented this with an appropriation of about \$127,000 for things not covered by the claim but which the Council wanted to be done. There is a balance in that appropriation of \$23,000. For the 2013 collapse the insurance reimbursed for everything and more; expenses were minimal because the pool never reopened. For the business loss, Mr. Milone said the company would not pay for more business interruption when the Town went out to bid. The delays were beyond what the insurance company considered normal. The policy did not cover issues with delays, contractors, referenda, etc. Some of the \$257,000 in the pool insurance revenue has been used for expenses and drawn to balance the budget. The pool subsidy continues at \$217,000 (page 122) from the Parks and Rec budget.

Handout, page 2 - Pool Fees, Current and Proposed 2015-2016. Ms. Adams said the number of participants has been modified; the assumptions are based on passed with the pool opening in September; passes usually run higher for the summer months; and this revenue would be recaptured May and June 2016. The average revenue (last 3 years) in July and August is \$92,000 a month. Total proposed revenue is \$600,240.

Pool Fees - according to Mr. Ceccolini it will be time to review the rates for an increase, and this should be discussed next year. He noted that the community pool is a still very reasonably priced facility.

Page 175 - the major change is in salaries; an 8 month operation was turned into a 10 month operation; total expenditures = \$806,056.

With regard to rates, Mr. Sima said CHS rental is at \$90 an hour and YMCA swim team rate is fairly low compared to everyone else. He proposed increasing the Y rates a little.

Ms. Adams said she would look into this next year, but does not want to do it this year because the Y budget is complete and set.

The Council was reminded by Mr. Milone that the Y generated a \$300,000 grant when the pool opened, and expected a "partnership" with more utilization of the pool for the Y programs. This was an assumption, not a commitment by the Town, and Y rates have been traditionally low. It may be time to revisit this issue next year.

Ms. Flynn-Harris explained that the Y is paying high fees at other pools, and once the Cheshire pool is reopened there should be renegotiation of the Y fees.

Salaries - Ms. Adams said salaries are for the Pool Coordinator and Lifeguards and Maintainer. The Maintainer position is important; the person must be on site when the project is ongoing; must learn what is taking place and about new equipment; and the position would start July 1, 2015. Ms. Adams charges \$85 to residents for 8 swim lessons; another pool facility would charge \$200+.

There is disruption expected to the pool grounds during construction and Mr. Ceccolini said the Maintainer could work outside and learn the mechanics of the pool. He expects someone within Parks and Rec union will move to this full time job, and the duties could fill a full work day. With the Maintainer on site, Ms. Adams was able to cut the cost of outside people doing work at the site. This fiscal year will be 10 months, and next fiscal year will be 12 months. The overtime was high due to Maintainer doing lots of snow removal.

Staff Training CPO - staff must know CPO and be certified, and by law there must be a CPO person on site at all times the pool is open.

Gas/Electric Costs - these costs are lower. Water costs will be paid outside the construction contract; \$12,000 budgeted to restore water to the pool; the pool will be drained and water will not come from the capital project expenses.

Consultant - \$5,000 out of the budget, but the person is not needed until the following September.

Interior Work - Locker room walls and lockers will be painted; floors, shower walls to be sand blasted and repainted; someone has been hired to do the work on the great wall with expectation of a good price; benches are all being refinished; front desk work being done; benches will be installed in the changing stalls in the locker room. Other work to be done involves awning, emergency doors, pool deck repair...all to be done by Parks and Rec crews.

Score Board - Ms. Adams informed the Council that the scoreboard needs to be replaced, with touch pads, and cost is about \$30,000. This cost could be undertaken by Speedo with name recognition on the score board. The Y has said it would assume half the cost of the scoreboard. Mr. Milone noted the Town has a policy about endorsing businesses at Town facilities.

Lessons - Ms. Adams cannot get enough pool time to accommodate the people who want swim lessons.

Construction should start on the pool on April 1st.

Parks and Recreation Department, pages 163 and 68

Mr. Milone reviewed the budget. Salaries - increase of \$38,000; non-salary increase is \$14,150; there was adjustment to the Lifeguard line item; the pool is not opening this summer, but camp programs will be moved to Mixville Park and lifeguards will be needed.

Mixville Park - Mr. Ceccolini explained that in the past there were two lifeguards at Mixville Pond on the weekends; gate checkers are on site to check passes Monday through Friday; and now lifeguards will be required to work the summer camps. The number of people using Mixville Park has increased with new playground, walkway over the dam, new sand at the beach area. The request is for 3 lifeguards Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and 1 lifeguard on the weekends. The pay rate is just above minimum wage.

Ms. Adams advised that there must be 3 lifeguards at Mixville for safety reasons...with 2 lifeguards working all the time. The estimated cost for the lifeguards is \$14,000.

The issue of tracking people coming to Mixville Park was raised by Mr. Sima, especially out of towners.

Season passes for Mixville Park are \$40 residents, and \$120 non-resident. Day passes are \$5 resident and \$10 non-resident. In the past the summer revenue has been about \$6,000.

With regard to the water quality of the pond, Mr. Ceccolini informed the Council that the pond is checked every Monday by Chesprocott, with the results forwarded to the Parks and Rec Department. With one inch of rain the pond is closed for a day; with 2 inches

of rain the pond is closed for two days. The clearing of geese from the pond is ongoing.

Non-Salary Expenditures - \$414,500 is budgeted; \$8800 for program services and materials. The Park and Rec and PW Departments collaborate for snow removal during storms, and Mr. Ceccolini reported it is going well. The snow routes were increased to 14 this year; they are completed 30 to 45 minutes quicker; clearing roads is a priority followed by parking lots and sidewalks; clearing of private sidewalks is billed to the homeowners through the PW department.

Fat Belly Solar Trash Can - this is a new concept in trash cans, and one will be installed at Bartlem Park during the summer.

Summer Concerts - 4 concerts will be held at Bartlem Park this summer on Friday nights.

Programs - all Park and Rec programs are very popular, and the Kids Therapeutic Program is one of the best in the area. There is on-line registration for department programs, with some overtime requested for the person handling this work.

Leagues - enrollment in baseball leagues has slightly declined; there is high enrollment for lacrosse and football; soccer enrollment is stable. There is a charge to outside groups using Town fields, with no charge to in Town sports programs.

10 Acre Parcel Jarvis Street and Route 10 - Mr. Ceccolini reported that CYB was interested in developing this parcel for ball fields, but it never happened. Now a lacrosse group and football league are interested in this parcel of land. The State gave the land to Cheshire to be used for "recreational purposes only.

Mr. Oris commented on interest in this 10 acres as an indoor and/or outdoor facility with potential of revenue for development. He asked about the building at Quinnipiac Field and if the men's' league has access to this building.

There are four soccer teams playing Sunday games at Quinnipiac Field, with access to this building, and Mr. Ceccolini reported that Parks and Rec has keys to the building. In addition, crews come and out of that building a few times a week, check on it, and there is no cooking allowed inside. It is still a snack shack.

Bathrooms - the bathroom facilities in all parks need to be addressed, and Mr. Ceccolini will be coming to the Council with this request.

Linear Trail - 3 miles of trail work is almost completed.

Playgrounds - 3 new playgrounds will be installed in the spring at the parks.

Sign Board - the new signboard will be installed in June; donations received from the gas company, Lions Club, and CHS PTO.

Organic Fertilizer Program - this successful program is ongoing; leaf mulch will be used for projected composting location in Town; proposed locations are old Casertano Farm or old Lassen Farm; the material will be used by the Town and offered at no cost to residents.

Budget Committee Chairman Schrumm thanked Ms. Adams and Mr. Ceccolini for their budget presentation.

Handout pages 3 and 4 - Mr. Milone reviewed the tax impact 2014 compared to proposed FY 2016 (page 3) and pointed out the change in some of the numbers, with 70% of accounts paying less taxes. Page 4 is the tax impact FY 2015 compared to proposed 2016; as the mill rate adjusted you can see stratified category change in the numbers.

REMINDER: Town Council Meeting, Monday, March 23, 2015, 7:00 p.m. in Room 207 to discuss medical/insurance benefits.

#### **4. ADJOURNMENT**

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

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

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Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk