

MINUTES OF THE JOINT CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING AND BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2015 AT 7:00 P.M. IN ROOM 207, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present

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

Staff: Michael A. Milone, Town Manager; James Jaskot, Finance Director; Gina DeFilio, Deputy Finance Director; Carolyn Soltis, Town Clerk; Arnett Talbot, Assistant to Town Manager; Maura Esposito, Director of Chesprocott Health District; Joann Pilarczyk, Director of Arts Place; Romana Burkey, Library Director; Deborah Rutter, Deputy Library Director;

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. REFERRAL OF TOWN MANAGER EXECUTIVE SECRETARY JOB DESCRIPTION TO PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Town Council Chairman Slocum referred the amendments to the Town Manager Executive Secretary Job Description to the Personnel Committee for review and recommendations.

Mr. Milone explained that the job description has not been updated in over 12 years, and following the update, the position will be posted.

4. APPOINTMENT OF CHESHIRE REPRESENTATIVE TO THE NAUGATUCK VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Mr. Milone explained that the COG has a new formalized regulation which requires an elected official of the town to represent the town. If the person is not an elected official, the Council can appoint Chairman Slocum, and he will then appoint Gerald Sitko as Cheshire's representative. With an appointment, Cheshire would have no voting rights at COG meetings.

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

BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Council approves Resolution #033015-1

RESOLUTION #033015-1

WHEREAS, The Town of Cheshire is a founding member of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments and the by-laws of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments require each member to be represented by a directly and separately

elected chief elected official, excepting those members statutorily lacking a directly and separately chief elected official, and

WHEREAS, the legislative body of the member statutorily lacking chief elected official must appoint an elected official to serve as the member's representative, and

WHEREAS, the Town of Cheshire does not possess a directly and separately elected chief elected official, possessing instead a Town Council Chairman, who is elected to the position by other members of the Town Council, therefore, Cheshire's Town Council must appoint Cheshire's representative to the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, and

WHEREAS, Tim Slocum is the Cheshire Town Council Chairman at the time of this resolution,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cheshire Town Council appoints Town Council Chairman Tim Slocum to serve as the Town of Cheshire's representative to the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments as defined and empowered by the by-laws of the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments.

VOTE The motion passed 7-2; Ruocco and Sima opposed.

Mr. Milone distributed the handout for March 30, 2015, which will be referred to at the upcoming meetings.

Pages 1/2/3 - Final Grand List. There was an assumption of a \$1 million reduction in the budget; it only reduced by \$561,808; \$138,092 was not calculated into the mill rate. Real Estate is reduced by \$5.5 million

Pages 4/5 - Proposed Budget FY 16: Salary Account-New Requests, Pro-Rated, and Salary Account Annual Cost. Page 4 shows newly requested positions pro-rated for one half a year, starting January 4, 2016; the exception is one dispatcher for 12 months and one dispatcher for 9 months. Medical and benefit costs are pro-rated for one half a year.

Page 5 shows the annual costs of the proposed positions. A position going from 19 to 25 hours per week pays 25 % of medical premiums, and the Town pays 75 % for total couple coverage. The 19 hour person is going from "0" benefits to 75% of benefits; 20 to 25 hour person pays 50% and Town pays 50% of coverage; 25 to 29 hour person pays 25% and Town pays 75%.

Pages 6 to 13 - requests for consideration of financial assistance in the FY 15-16 budget.

Pages 16 to 18 - information from Town Attorney Smith regarding the Senior Center, advising that no one can be denied access to Cheshire facilities, even if they live out of

town. There can be a different fee assessed than the resident fee, but it cannot be so high as to stop someone from using Town facilities.

Page 19 - CPD Chief Dryfe's memo to the Council regarding Public Safety Dispatchers.

5. PROPOSED FY 2015-2016 OPERATING BUDGET

Administration and Finance: *Town Council, Town Manager, Town Attorney, Town Clerk, Elections, Probate Court, Finance Department, Board of Assessment Appeals, General Services.*

TOWN COUNCIL, PAGES 1 AND 86; ARNETT TALBOT.

Ms. Talbot reviewed the Town Council budget, stating it decreases by \$6,000; there was an increase in the costs of the explanatory text printing with USPS requirement of heavier paper.

TOWN MANAGER'S BUDGET, PAGES 3 AND 82

Ms. Talbot reported that this is a labor intensive budget with 96% of the budget being salary. The salary for the Town Manager looks skewed because the increase is not included in this line item. \$3,127 for 27th payroll.

The Council was informed by Ms. Talbot that the Town Manager's office continues to expand its scope of work, handles financial management, electronic communications, personnel/employee benefits, general services, and is involved in all major initiatives such as Dept. of Corrections claim, GIS System, Linear Trail, Community Pool, provides support and information to the Town Council, the public and State agencies. The goal is to enhance more two way communication, reduce overtime with use of flex time and comp hours. Ten years ago, overtime was double what it is now. Another item in this budget is the Town Manager's attendance at the ICMA conference later in 2015.

Ms. Talbot reported that Pat Sepp, Executive Secretary, is leaving March 31st, so there will be some adjustments in the secretarial services costs with a payout to Ms. Sepp. She advised that Kathy Kirby would fill in, part time, for the executive secretary job.

Executive Secretary Position - the Council Personnel Committee will review and update the job description; change title to Administrative Assistant to more appropriately reflect what is happening in the technology area and changing of demands on the office. Regarding salary, there will be a change, probably lower than the current rate. The committee will meet before the April 14th Council meeting on this issue.

TOWN ATTORNEY- PAGES 7 AND 90

The Town Attorney fee increases to \$20,000 per month effective 1/1/15; hourly rate increases to \$250 per hour effective 1/1/15; some major events have cost significant dollars, i.e. cell tower, PBC issues with the pool, Barite Mines, DOC legal claim, zoning enforcement lawsuits. \$50,000 is budgeted for Bercham, Moses, Devlin for personnel/labor issues in the FY 15-16 budget. The Town Attorney costs fluctuate depending on the cases and legal activity to a low of \$186,000 and high of \$482,000 in

recent years. The retainer includes the first 25 hours of projects and general matters. Cell tower costs were about \$8,000; PBC/Arizon costs were \$23,000.

Mr. Milone explained the Town contract with Murtha Cullina does not include personnel matters, and the Town contracts with Bercham, Moses, Devlin/Labor Relations Department for personnel and labor issues.

Retainer - \$20,000 monthly is paid by Town Council Resolution, and coordinates with the Town Council term of office.

With upcoming contract negotiations, Lou Zullo, Personnel Director, will take the lead, and it will be a year before there is arbitration, and brining in the labor attorney.

The contract for Town Attorney will have an RFP out in the Fall of 2015. Mr. Milone informed the Council members that there are many law firms out there, but there are very few law firms with good municipal law experience. Most firms discount hourly rates, and the Town pays less than the customary fee on the street for legal services. Mr. Milone and the Town Attorney meet once a month with department heads and staff to review and discuss all matters and concerns.

Public Health: *Chesprocott, Champion Ambulance*
PUBLIC HEALTH, MAURA ESPOSITO, PAGE 188

Mr. Milone stated that most of the budget costs are contractual, i.e. Champion Ambulance contract is in its final year with the Town at a cost of \$212,940. An RFP can be done for the next ambulance contract at the end of this fiscal year. Northwest Connecticut Public Safety Center cost is \$5,700 annually to access emergency services state wide. Cheshire's cost for Chesprocott is \$228,828, + \$10,000 for restoration of nursing services. Mr. Milone noted that participation and support from Chesprocott increased in the last year, and nursing services benefits residents and employees.

Dues - \$7.85 per capita; 29,150 residents (including prison population).
Chesprocott has 6 staff members.

Ms. Esposito advised the per capita is the same since 2012. She reviewed "nursing services" which include blood pressure screening, health education to the school system, staff training on blood borne pathogens, CPR training, and basic first aid. At the Senior Center the nurse visits with the seniors, takes blood pressure readings, provides some health education. When there was a nurse on staff in the past there were flu shots given to residents at a small fee or what insurance covered; the nurse evaluated the true needs in the community and associated costs; she went into the schools to provide health education. The restoration of the nursing services program costs \$16,000 a year; Cheshire's portion is \$10,000 a year; Wolcott and Prospect pay the \$6,000.

Lead Testing of Children - Ms. Esposito reported on the necessity and importance of lead testing for children 1 and 2 years old. Letters and posters have gone out to

doctors about lead testing, and she said Cheshire pediatrician testing is very low. Doctors must be educated on the importance of this testing for young children.

Mr. Oris commented on the importance of the Town taking advantage of all that Chesprocott has to offer the community.

TOWN CLERK, CAROLYN SOLTIS, PAGES 9 AND 80

This budget increases by \$4,900, and Mr. Milone advised there is a request for increased hours for the Assistant Town Clerk from 20 to 25 hours, effective 1/4/16. Other increases are standard for the bargaining units. On page 12 the land records documentation cost is decreasing; rental #5405 is \$17,000 per the contract.

Town Clerk Soltis reported that in 2009 there was 10 hours cut from her staff, and due to new State reports, changes to forms, increase in meeting minutes with attachments, notary public services, increase in land records/warranty deeds, State birth certifications serving many towns, etc. there is more staff work.

The issue of shifting staff hours was raised by Ms. Flynn-Harris who asked if this has been looked at since last year.

It has not been looked at and Ms. Soltis said it would have to be part of the union contract.

Last year the Town Clerk generated revenue of \$526,000; and \$612,000 is budgeted for FY 2015-16.

Ms. Soltis explained the electronic recording system, how it works, payment to the Town Clerk's office overnight, and provision of easier access of records to attorneys and others who must look at them. The process is easier and staff work load is not affected. Land records are on-line with the company. The staff is back indexing documents, using grant funds, which were only \$4,000 this year.

ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT, PAGES 13 AND 64

Status quo budget with funding for a Summer 2016 primary, regular November 2015 election, and no referendum or special elections planned.

PROBATE COURT - PAGES 17 AND 90

\$7,794 budget; Mr. Jaskot will meet with staff regarding the department finances and operations.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT, JAMES JASKOT and GINA DEFILIO, PAGES 19 AND 58

The Finance Department includes six divisions: Accounting & Treasury, Collector of Revenue, Tax Assessor, Audit, General Insurance and Information Technology. There are 17 full and part time employees.

Page 58 - Mr. Jaskot reviewed some of the accomplishments including \$15 million bond sale, AAA rating from Fitch and Standard & Poors; refunding sale March 2015 of \$4.9 million, \$210,775 savings to be used in the budget process, and total savings of \$253,000. Mr. Jaskot and Ms. DeFilio are working to streamline department operations; payroll is entered on site in each Town department; and reviewed by Finance Department staff members. Tax collection rate of 99.78%; bulk lien sale generated 13%+ above principal amount, and another sale is set for next month.

Tax payments can be made by credit card, electronic checks, on line payment; this decreases the tax office overtime; but Finance Department was cut 20 staff hours and overtime has increased. \$28,000 in overtime costs at straight time rate to keep up with the volume of work. For payroll many changes started with the calendar year for salary, benefits, pensions, etc. and this work requires overtime.

Assessors Office - minimum increase of 2.86% in the budget.

Tax Office - 1.99% increase.

Audit - 10 personal property audits are declared each year, and done by a hired accountant. McGladrey is in its 8th year as the Town Auditor, and in the last year of a five year contract. Audit fees are expected to increase. Pension Plans are now more complicated and more auditing is involved.

MUNIS system - Police Department getting new scheduling software to be linked into the Munis system.

GASB - more changes forthcoming over the next few years. Data is more confusing, takes more time for the Finance Department to generate information, but the Town adheres to the GASB standards. The State wants uniform charge of accounts annually.

Pages 28 and 29 General Insurance - this includes Workers Comp and General Insurance. The Town is in a 3 year lock in with CIRMA, paying a 7% increase next year, in the 3rd year of the cap in 2016. Increase of 7.5% this year; RFP will be out for consultant for medical benefits and general insurance; with a consultant the Town is not locked in, pays a consulting fee without commission for placements.

Safety Committee - there is a department head level and employee level committee which works hard on safety in the work place, resulting in better experience in workers comp claims and property and casualty insurance.

Information Technology, page 29 - \$13.57% increase or \$54,000; the Town hired a consulting firm for I.T.; fees are stable with cost split with BOE at 56% and Town 44%.

Pages 30-31 listing of A/E Maintenance; there is higher payment for security of data lines; \$20,000 is requested for the web site design and upgrade; the current design is 5+ years old; and technology is changing all the time. Ms. Talbot said the Town is at the

point where the web site must be enhanced; e-commerce must be used; private information to residents through the web site; and someone is needed to design the site. She has met with Apex Technology staff on the issues; the Social Media Committee is doing research and work on the web site; and organization and links must be set up. With \$20,000 the Town can do what is necessary and have the site meet its goals. The Technology Study Group has been very supportive of the technology initiatives and upgrades, providing guidance and assistance, and whatever is decided must go back to this committee. The Town awaits RFP responses for the new phone system, and an RFP will be done for the web site consultant.

General Services Page 35 - there is a Electronic Media Coordinator position at \$22,750 in this budget. Mr. Milone pointed out that there should be an immediate and accurate response to the public; information must be properly managed; and the Town needs someone professionally trained for this position.

Copiers - an RFP was out for new equipment; postage and printing costs have decreased; copiers are very comprehensive machines with many features, and are more efficient. With virtualized desk tops, the desk printers will go.

\$10,000 for GIS maintenance; \$1200 for large map printing; more engineering and project work is being done in-house, and more could be done with funding.

Cultural Services: Library, Library Board, Performing and Fine Arts Committee.

FINE ARTS - JOANN PILCARZYK, PAGES 159 AND 70

Ms. Pilarczyk reviewed the budget, stating that one position has an increase in hours from 25 to 29 with no change in medical benefits coverage. There is a slight increase requested for teacher salaries. She displayed copies of pencil colored drawings to the Council for their awareness of the artistic talents and high caliber of student and teachers at Arts Place. Mr. Pilarczyk reported no interference with Arts Place from the Dog Park, and noted many dog owners have become new clients of the arts program.

LIBRARY - RAMONA BURKEY, DEBORAH RUTTER, PAGES 66 AND 151.

Ms. Burkey distributed copies of the new Library brochure and information on membership in Friends of the Library.

Town Manager Milone reviewed the budget, stating the salary account goes up \$45,000; \$11,000 for 27th payroll accrual; \$7,100 more is requested for Sunday Library hours for 20 Sundays...up from 13 this year. Non-Salary side budget for program materials is \$19,260.

The Library was cited as a vibrant, successful, efficient facility by Mr. Milone, and he said money spent at the Library goes a long way.

Ms. Burkey commented on the big increase in program materials to accommodate the demands and on-line materials. The program, Hoopla, has been used extensively

since November for magazine subscription services; Zinio lists magazine titles; Overdrive is for E-Books (through the consortium). Even though digitalized materials are available to patrons, many people still want the hard cover book in regular and large print, and the physical magazine to read. The Library provides data base research, language data base, newspaper data base. Some new materials have a 3 month waiting period.

Sunday Library hours were very successful; 150 people attended the Irish Music Fest last Sunday; on average 635 items are checked out on a Sunday. Ms. Burkey had 13 Sundays schedule for Library opening this year, and is requesting 20 Sundays next year, November to March. 2% of checkouts are electronic; physical books budget is \$110,000; electronic materials budget is \$45,000.

Library Facility - Ms. Burkey spoke about ideas for the building and future of the Library which will be discussed with the Council at a future date.

Newsletter - the recent information in the newsletter states the shifting in hours, with a one hour earlier opening and one hour later closing. This provides one extra hour of service to patrons at no cost.

Technology - Ms. Burkey reported that the Technology Coordinator is excellent and does a great job at the Library. RFID has assisted with speeding up checkouts; technology is more efficient without adding staff; a new fax and business center are getting good use at the Library.

With the \$45,000 for e materials, Mr. Oris asked how much use they get versus the money spent.

The Council was told by Mr. Burkey that Overdrive added magazine subscriptions to their service. She will be looking at the service, evaluate it, and compare it to Zinio at a lower cost. She noted that Cheshire has the highest collection turn over in the State. For electronic material checkout the person must be a Cheshire resident. With regard to demographics, Ms. Burkey said there is a broad spectrum of people in the community using the Library services. All programs are funded through Friends of the Library.

Other Miscellaneous Budget Items.

There was a brief discussion between the Council and Mr. Milone about medical benefits. BOE budget has a 7% increase in rates, but these rates are going down. Mr. Milone explained that the rates are not broken down by age, and negotiated agreements do not allow charging premiums by age. The Town went to point of service coverage for all unions. There are years when actual claims are less, and this surplus is not shared with employees. The Council will be discussing medical benefits and pensions at its next meeting.

6. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk