

MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2015, AT 7:30 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, TOWN HALL,  
84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present

Tim Slocum, Chairman; David Schrumm, Vice Chairman; Patti Flynn-Harris, Liz Linehan, Sylvia Nichols, Robert J. Oris, Thomas Ruocco, James Sima, Peter Talbot.  
Staff: Town Manager Michael A. Milone; Finance Director James Jaskot  
Dept. of Education - Supt. Dr. Greg Florio; Vincent Masciana, Director of Management Services; BOE Chairman Gerry Brittingham  
WPCA - Tim Pelton, Chairman and Tom Scannell

PUBLIC HEARING SUBJECT MATTER

FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016 FIVE YEAR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE  
PLAN AND ANNUAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE BUDGET

1. ROLL CALL

The clerk called the roll and a quorum was determined to be present.

2. EXPLANATION OF HEARING PROCEDURE AND AGENDA

Chairman Slocum explained the procedures for a public hearing of the Town Council.

3. READING OF LEGAL NOTICE

The clerk read the legal notice into the record.

4. PRESENTATION ON HEARING SUBJECT

Town Manager Milone presented the Town Government side of the FY 2015-2016 capital budget. He explained there are two budget processes in Cheshire -- the operating budget in the spring, and capital budget in the summer.

Capital Budget - items in this budget must be more than \$110,000 with a life expectancy of at least five years, i.e. non-recurring expenses, heavy equipment, vehicles, street excavation, construction. Some projects are less than \$110,000 as they supplement another project or it is an additional appropriation to a project.

Debt Service Policy - Nine years ago the Council put a debt service policy in place which lays out guidelines to be used in terms of debt obligations, keeping the debt obligation percentage as part of the operating budget at 10% or less.

The population growth in Cheshire since 1970 is 10,200 people, with current Town population of 29,225, and this represents a 54% growth in population. From the 1980's to 2000, there was a large growth in population of 7,000 residents or 31%. This growth put an immense amount of pressure on the Town's capital needs...roads, sidewalks, sewer lines, improvements to schools and buildings. Ten years ago there was a significant debt burden due to the building boom which supports why money was spent.

Handout - Page A1 - Mr. Milone reviewed the major capital expenditures 1985 to 2015; \$294 million spent over 30 years; and some of this debt is still being paid.

Mr. Milone cited some of the major projects -- Town Hall renovation and doubled in size \$4 million; Cheshire Police Dept. Headquarters Expansion \$3 million; Senior Center renovation and expansion \$2.8 million; Library \$3.5 million; total of about \$14 million spent on Town owned buildings.

Public Works - \$150 million. Water Pollution Control Facility, \$55 million spent over 30 years.

Mr. Milone said the right decisions have been made and money invested in the Town's infrastructure, with support from the public of the Town needs, keeping maintenance at minimum costs going forward.

Land Acquisition - \$19 million of open space and land acquisition; Town owns 1,500 acres of open space and the program is a model for other Connecticut communities.

Page A2 - is a listing of Cheshire facilities and Infrastructure as of June 30, 2014. 152 miles of streets; 106 miles of sidewalks; 120 miles of sanitary sewers; 325 acres of parks and recreation areas; 1,507 miles of open space/land acquisition.

BOE Facilities - 4 elementary schools, 1 middle school, 1 high school; total enrollment 4,597 students.

These assets are protected by the money spent in the capital expenditure plan.

The upgrade of the WWTP, cost of \$32 million, will be completed by October; the Linear Trail project is moving forward for November completion, \$3.4 million; State portion of the trail starts in September; community pool construction project \$3.2 million has started.

Bridges - Blacks Road Bridge completed; Creamery Road Bridge project ongoing; East Johnson Avenue Bridge project is in the planning stages. \$4.2 million for bridge projects.

Road Repaving Project - \$1.750 million; \$10.2 million energy efficiency upgrade; Mixville Pond Dredging and Dam improvement projects are completed; walkway over dam at Mixville being constructed; sidewalk project completed in Town Center; school improvements \$3 million; Park improvement projects w/new playground equipment completed; Senior Center basement renovation project, \$300,000, will start soon. There is an \$850,000 sidewalk extension project to begin in September; connection of sidewalks from the street scape project, West Main Street to Maple Avenue.

"Money Magazine" recently designated Cheshire CT as the 45th best place to live in the United States. Mr. Milone expressed pride in this designation for the community, which

provides great services and has a strong infrastructure which affects the quality of life and costs.

Page A4 - Most of the CEP funding comes from borrowing and bond funds. The chart on this page shows the 10 year history 2005 to 2014 of debt service as a percentage of actual budgetary expenditures. 2001 - 13.6%; 2016 - 6.5%.

Page A5 - FY 2015-2024 projected debt service as percentage of actual budgetary expenditures; 2018 is the highest at 9.6%; this is when the Town starts repayment of the upgrade to the treatment plant; and the challenge is how to mitigate the debt spike. The Council can increase the debt service reserve account or use the \$860,000 from the energy initiative project rebate.

Mr. Milone commented on continuing the fight with the State of Connecticut and the claim for \$7.2 million for State money to pay for the plant upgrade (DOC use of the facility), and retroactive billing for the prison which was not billed for many years.

Page B6 - \$9.9 million was cut by the Town Manager from the CEP requests. The five year plan is a commitment of millions of dollars for projects out into the future, and years 2016-17 to 2019-20 could have changes. For the FY 2015-16 CEP, the budget gets Council approval and the projects move forward. Public Works is 58% of the appropriation; East Johnson Bridge \$2.76 project with possible 80% CWF reimbursement.

Tim Pelton, WPCA Chairman, addressed the Council on the rehabilitation of the West Johnson Avenue pump station, which is 30 years old. There is difficulty getting parts and controls etc. to operate the pump station, and the project is part of the strategic plan to upgrade the pump stations. Seven (7) stations are done; West Johnson is the next station to be done, and there may be CWF money to pay for this project. It was noted by Mr. Pelton that payments are slow coming from the State and some federal funds may be available. Cook Hill Pump Station services Elim Park, and a donation from the facility helped to upgrade pumps and controls to get more useful life out of this pump station. It was clarified by Mr. Pelton that CWF reimbursement is unknown at this time, but there is a good probability the money will be available.

Mr. Milone clarified that the numbers cited are gross costs of projects. There are a few funding sources -- borrowing money needed for a portion of the projects being constructed; going into the bond market every two years for bond proceeds; appropriation of cash from C.N.R.; and the bridge project(s) could have grant funding of 80%. With the Town of Cheshire having an AAA credit rating there is borrowing at a competitive rate.

Page B6 is a summary of all Town Departments and BOE projects. This budget has not been modified yet by the Town Council, and work on this will take place over the next week with CEP budget adoption on August 25th.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, Pages 18-22.

Dr. Florio referred to page A1 of the handout. He cited the BOE spending \$38 million over 30 years, with most of the money for expansion, additions at 2 elementary schools, addition at Dodd Middle School and major CHS addition. About \$600,000 was spent annually for school facilities; some of the money was for computer upgrades, oil tank replacement.

The BOE is focusing on a comprehensive plan to improve the schools; moving forward with the capital plan including addressing deficiencies from the CRO review. Window Replacement for one wall at CHS is \$250,000; Lavatory upgrades is in the CEP at \$200,000 in each year; things in the CEP are already part of the comprehensive review; and some of the money will not be spent until next year. Some items are part of a long term plan; the comprehensive study will be completed in the fall; and enrollment will be slightly down this year. Dr. Florio stated the facilities plan will be a great tool for the community in looking at the schools going forward.

Mr. Milone commented on the CWF funding, advising Cheshire received an 80% grant for the last three projects. For the WWTP upgrade CWF funding provided a 2% loan.

The Council was informed by Mr. Pelton that the legislators asked for more grant money for phosphorous, from 20% to 50%. The legislators had a different measurement system than the one Cheshire used, and the increase did not happen.

5. QUESTIONS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR.

Jack McGowan, Nob Hill Road, informed the Council he has a two acre pond fed by three storm drains, which was dredged in 1990 and 2005, a 15 year cycle. The pond has about another 2000 yards of sand and he wants to have it pulled out of the pond.

Town Manager Milone stated that pond dredging is out of the CEP, and the Council will be developing a pond dredging policy. Many requests are received to dredge ponds and the Town wants to make sure there is a well thought out policy rather than on an ad hoc basis.

Mr. McGowan believes this is the last time the pond must be dredged; he wants the sand out of the pond because it effects ecology; and the pond is going through a self cleaning process. There would not be a need for future dredging.

6. PROPONENTS AND OPPONENTS STATEMENTS ALTERNATELY EXPRESSED.

A letter was in the Council packets from Cindy Kleist, and it was made part of the record.

7. REBUTTAL AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Slocum adjourned the public hearing at 8:20 p.m.

Attest:

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Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk