

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL AND WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2016, AT 7:00 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present

Council Members: Chairman Robert J. Oris Jr., Vice Chairman Paul A. Bowman, Patti Flynn-Harris, Sylvia Nichols, Thomas Ruocco and Timothy Slocum

Absent: Michael Ecke, Liz Linehan and Peter Talbot

WPCA: John Perrotti, Chairman

Staff: Michael A. Milone, Town Manager; James Jaskot, Finance Director; Gina DeFilio Deputy Finance Director; Town Attorney Alfred Smith; Town Engineer Walter Gancarz. Department of Education - Vincent Masciana, Chief Operating Officer

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.

2. EXPLANATION OF HEARING PROCEDURE AND AGENDA

Chairman Oris explained the procedure 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 informed those present that there are 26 projects for FY 2017-2018. The proposed appropriation is \$15,810,000, and the amount to be bonded is \$12,560,000. The Town of Cheshire has a five year Capital Expenditure Plan (CEP), and this public hearing is only for year #1 of the CEP. The CEP is the capital budget for items with a five year life expectancy and costs of at least \$110,000 (sidewalks, roads, buildings, vehicles, heavy equipment etc.) The operating budget is a 12-month budget dealing with recurring expenses. The capital budget is in August and the operating budget is in April. Decisions of the Town Council will affect the operating budget for FY 2017-2018. Any capital project approved in the past has been funded already through cash or bonding. The Town has a large fund balance; projects can get started to be paid in February following the 2017 bond sale.

Mr. Milone explained that not everything in the CEP is budgeted. There are grant reimbursements...\$1.1 million annually for smaller capital projects, without bonding, and other sources of funding from reserve accounts.

This public hearing is a review of the Town Manager's recommendations for the annual capital expenditure budget and five year CEP. The Council will review these recommendations and can make changes to the proposed capital budget.

PROJECTS

- 1. Revaluation** - Proposed appropriation \$315,000; 0 amount bonded
This is required by State Statute; the last revaluation was October 2013; the Town must prepare for the next revaluation in October 2018.
- 2. Vehicle/Equipment Replacement Fund Total** - proposed appropriation \$281,000; 0 amount bonded.
The vehicles and equipment are for Police, Fire, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Building Departments; pickup trucks for Public Works and Parks and Recreation; this is where cash from C.N.R. is used.
Using cash has saved over \$7 million in interest since 1992.
- 3. Generator Replacements, Firehouse #2 and Animal Control** - proposed Appropriation \$120,000; bonded amount \$120,000.
This is funding for operating generators at public facilities, replacement of generators or new generators for buildings that do not have them...Byam Road Firehouse and Animal Control facility.
- 4. Town Hall Window Replacement** - proposed appropriation \$175,000; bonded amount \$175,000.
Town Hall has a new energy efficient system; 20+ year old windows cause loss of air, cannot be opened, and must be replaced.
- 5. Upgrade & Expansion of Public Safety Radio System** - proposed Appropriation \$3,144,000; bonded amount \$3,144,000.
This budget item is for the communication network between Police, Fire, Public Works, School System, and town departments. School System security is a most important priority, and this project is one the Police Chief considers important to move forward. It includes a completely new dispatch console as the existing console is outdated, and includes radio replacements. This is a referendum item.
- 6. Cruiser Camera Replacement & Body Worn Cameras** - proposed appropriation \$204,000; 0 bonded amount.
This appropriation will be funded out of C.N.R.; 13 cruiser cameras to be replaced; and purchase of body cameras for police officers.
- 7. Replace 1990 Pumping Engine #3** - proposed appropriation \$635,000; bonded amount \$635,000.
This engine is the oldest in the fleet. With Council approval it will be two years before the vehicle is replaced; it will be a November referendum item.
- 8. Culvert Replacement, Mt. Sanford and South Brooksvale Roads** - proposed appropriation \$875,000; bonded amount \$75,000; \$800,000 reimbursement through LoCIP road grant.

This project will realign the road, install a new culvert at a dangerous intersection, and funding is in place for this project.

9. Light Pole Maintenance - proposed appropriation \$100,000; bonded amount 0; The Town purchased streetlights last year, and funding must be in place for replacement and maintenance of the streetlights; last year energy savings of \$15,000 per month was realized.

10. Public Works Dump Trucks and Plows - proposed appropriation \$351,000; bonded amount \$351,000.

Two dump trucks and plows will be purchased; the fleet has 15 trucks with one kept as a spare; salt erodes the under-carriage of the trucks; the plan has replacement of two trucks each year; and one truck will be smaller to service certain areas of Town.

11. Public Works Vehicles (non-dump trucks) and Equipment - proposed Appropriation \$380,000; bonded amount \$380,000.

This is for purchase of a vacuum truck for clean-up of storm sewers; current truck is 11 years old; DEEP has significant regulations in place for cleaning and maintenance.

12. Road Repavement Program - proposed appropriation \$1,750,000; bonded Amount 1,750,000.

This project is funded each year; \$9.7 million approved in the last 8 years; Cheshire has 152 miles of roads; 7-10 miles are done each year; and work cannot fall back as it will damage the efforts for the road program. This is a referendum item.

13. Sidewalk Program - proposed appropriation \$300,000; bonded amount \$300,000.

This is a referendum item if bond counsel aggregates it with prior \$200,000 sidewalk program. The work is for pockets of repairs or sidewalk extension.

14. South Brooksvale Road Repavement Rehabilitation - proposed appropriation \$1,200,000; bonded amount - 0.

State funds will pay for the road repavement for the project, and it ties in with the culvert project.

15. West Johnson Avenue Pump Station - proposed appropriation \$3,500,000; Bonded amount \$3,500,000.

Cheshire has 9 pump stations; 7 have been upgraded; this station serves the industrial area, is 30 years old, and the project cannot be pushed out further.

16. Phase 2 Library Reconfiguration and RFID conversion - proposed Appropriation \$500,000; \$250,000 bonded amount.

The project is for the lower and upper floors rehabilitation, reconfiguration of the Library, painting, carpeting, additional study areas.

17. Renovations at Tennis and Outdoor Basketball Courts - proposed appropriation \$280,000; bonded amount \$280,000.
The project is for the courts at Cheshire Park, MacNamara Park, Rolling Acres. The courts are no longer safe for playing, and there are concerns about public safety and Town's liability.

Mr. Masciana reviewed and explained the Dept. of Education projects, and stated the BOE request is \$1.7 million for capital improvements for 8 school buildings.

18. Districtwide Roof Repairs and Replacements - proposed appropriation \$125,000; bonded amount \$125,000.

These roofs are out of warranty, and the funding is roof work and maintenance.

19. Replacement of Underground Oil Storage Tanks - Chapman, Dodd, Doolittle, Darcey, Humiston and Highland Schools. Proposed appropriation \$125,000; bonded amount \$125,000.

The funding is for replacement of one of the tanks, and the others to be replaced in three years.

20. Sidewalk and Masonry Repairs - Chapman, Darcey and Cheshire High School. Proposed appropriation \$125,000; bonded amount \$125,000.

21. Cafeteria Renovations - Doolittle, Highland, Norton, Chapman & Cheshire High School; proposed appropriation \$275,000; bonded amount \$275,000.

This project is to "redo" original Doolittle School cafeteria.

22. Lavatory Improvements - Norton, Chapman and Darcey. Proposed appropriation \$375,000; bonded amount \$375,000.

In the last two years \$250,000 has been appropriated for lavatory improvements. Two men's and two ladies lavatories were completed at Norton School. This is a referendum item. There is an alternate to do an additional two bathrooms for \$150,000, but this cannot be done with the allocation.

23. Districtwide Technology - One to One Learning Initiative - proposed allocation \$100,000; bonded amount 0.

The allocation is for purchase of Chrome Books, continuation of the one to one program, and C.N.R. funds will be used.

24. Window Replacements Cheshire High School - proposed allocation \$275,000; bonded amount \$275,000.

The window replacement is for the north, east and west side windows in the courtyard; last year the south side was completed. This is a referendum item because the total appropriation is \$500,000.

25. Emergency Generator & Electrical Improvements Cheshire High School - proposed appropriation \$125,000; bonded amount \$125,000.

There was a prior appropriation of \$160,000 for a permanent emergency generator at CHS (for electrical engineer) to support the school with loss of power. The high school is a town wide emergency shelter. There is need for an additional \$100,000 plus contingency to complete the generator installation, transfer switches, and rewiring to power the building.

26. Emergency Generator Connections, 5 Elementary Schools and Dodd.

Proposed appropriation \$175,000; bonded amount \$175,000.

Total Board of Education request is \$1.7 million.

Mr. Milone cited the total for 26 projects at \$15,810,000, less \$3.25 million in grants and revenue sources, for an amount of \$12,560,000 to be bonded.

Page 2 - CEP historical summary, 1985 to 2016; total projects \$245,601,381. Program Totals by Department - Administration and Finance, \$17,096,325; Land Acquisition \$22,248,123; Public Safety \$15,267,067; Public Works \$156,721,268; Social Services \$3,016,051; Cultural Services (Library) \$3,630,000; Leisure Services \$18,664,703; Education \$68,793,424.

From 1980 to 2000, there was a 33% growth in population in Cheshire. Mr. Milone commented on the 20 years of borrowing to support this growth, with a large capital budget and debt service. Over the past few years the debt service has been reduced. Cheshire has a AAA credit rating, and current interest rates are lower than when debt was absorbed in the 1980's and 1990's.

Page 3 - Town Infrastructure and Property - 152 miles of streets; 107 miles of sidewalks; 120 miles of sanitary sewers; 325 acres of parks and recreation areas; 1,507 acres of open space; total student enrollment in schools is 4,475.

Town Assets - the total value is \$307.2 million.

Page 4 - Five Year CEP, FY 2017 to 2021. Analysis shows where the debt service expenses will be in the next 10 years. Mr. Milone reviewed the data, noting column 2 is the unissued debt for existing CEP; column 4 is the WWTP upgrade debt; column 5 is the General Fund debt total (2017 = \$6,727,183). There is a spike in 2018 due to the interest to be paid on the CWF loan (for WWTP upgrade); there are resources set aside to pay this debt; and the Council makes the decisions on how funds are used.

Pages 5 and 6 - shows the debt as a percentage of the operating budget; the commitment is to keep the debt below 10%; 2016 debt service is 6.8% of the operating budget.

Page 7 - Program Element Summary FY 2015-2016 to FY 2019-2020.

Mr. Milone stated the Council has not made any decisions on the Town Manager's recommendations for allocation of funds to various departments over the next five years.

5. QUESTIONS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR.

Derf Kleist, 251 Lancaster Way, commented on the Police Dept. request for body cameras, when cameras do not show the actual incident, i.e. shooting. He suggested getting grants from the State to fund the body cameras, or lease them as well as police cars. Training is required for the body cameras, and he asked how long they last. Mr. Kleist noted people want bulky waste pickup but it is not a capital item. For the Board of Education, they should look at metal and plastic roofs which last 50 years. Regarding the generator for the high school when it is used for a shelter, he said the time his mother was there it was very cold for people to stay there, but nurses and staff were very helpful to his mother.

Margaret McKee, 522 South Brooksvale Road, stated her house and property is filled with history and it has gone through the family. She commented on the stream that goes through her front lawn; it is a vital part of the area; and wants the Town to save this stream as its loss is unacceptable to her family. She read an excerpt from a prior court case in 1876 into the record...the case was related to saving the stream. Ms. McKee said her ancestors asked the Town to move the road outside the stream for a straighter road...the stream is on her property and Mt. Sanford Road. She counted cars in the area going south down So. Brooksvale to Mt. Sanford (348 cars); heading east (240 cars); and the other way to the sharp turn (96 cars); 10 cars made the turn, 2 garden trucks, 2 delivery trucks. This totals 826 cars out of Mt. Sanford Road, stopping, waiting for clearance, and then going out. Ms. McKee reviewed the accident reports for the area, and January 2015 showed a medical emergency and a tree fell on a car. She believes the proposed plan for the area is an expensive way to solve a problem, and is uncertain everything needs to be done, and money should be conserved. The problem is no one cleans out the culverts on a regular basis, and with a huge storm they get blocked. The large stone wall is still there due to cars crashing into the stream. Ms. McKee talked about the small dam in the area. She expressed hope that the design redirecting traffic on Mt. Sanford Road will not result in lights aimed at her house.

John McGowan, Nob Hill Road, stated there is no record or information about a pond on his property in Town records. The pond was constructed in the 1960's, probably through an informal agreement. Over 40+ years of sanding roads, there is a build up of sand in the pond. There were 6,000 cubic yards of material removed from the pond in 2005; the sandbar was 5 feet high out of the water; and there is still sand in the pond. Since 2010 he has been asking the Town to look at the pond, and officials came out three times to the site, but no one has gone into the stream or walked the water course. In 2013 Mr. Noewatne and workers visited the pond site. There is now about 2,000 cubic yards of material to be taken out of the pond. With the material out, there are three 3 foot storm drains, and turbulence with the pond self-cleaning. This is a stream fed pond.

Mr. Slocum said there must be some down wash, and the stream brings in other materials into the pond. He asked if this is a problem, or everything comes from the town roads.

Mr. McGowan said you can walk on the stream; it gets winter sand; and it can handle normal silt; there is 45 years of sand in the pond.

A request was made by Mr. Ruocco to Town Manager Milone for a cost estimate to dredge 2,000 cubic yards of material from the pond.

According to Mr. McGowan this all started with former Town Engineer Michaelangelo, and restarted with Mr. Noewatne in 2012.

A question was raised by Mr. Slocum who said his understanding is the Town does not lay out drains into culverts, and if there was a plan for the development in this area of Town.

Mr. Gancarz said it would be part of the site plan.

It was restated by Mr. McGowan that this area was wetlands, with 15 to 20 springs, and there is no formality in place. There is no mention of the pond on a deed or map, no easement, and he would be more comfortable with something in writing so this does not happen again.

Chairman Oris stated the pond dredging issue is something the Council is aware of, and it will be addressed. He expressed appreciation for Mr. McGowan's comments.

6. PROPONENTS AND OPPONENTS STATEMENTS ALTERNATELY EXPRESSED.
7. REBUTTAL AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR.
8. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Oris adjourned the public hearing at 8:25 p.m.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk