

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2016 AT 7:00 P.M. IN ROOM 207, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410**

Present

Personnel Committee Chairman Thomas Ruocco; Committee Members Sylvia Nichols and Peter Talbot. Council Members: Timothy Slocum.

Absent: Robert J. Oris Jr., Paul A. Bowman, Michael Ecke, Patti Flynn-Harris, Liz Linehan

Staff: Town Manager Michael A. Milone.

**1. ROLL CALL**

The clerk called the roll. A quorum of the Personnel Committee and Town Council was determined to be present.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

**3. TOWN MANAGER FY 16-17 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Town Manager Milone distributed information (memo May 3, 2016 to Town Council and Goals and Objectives). Mr. Milone read memo paragraphs 4 and 5 into the record, and said his goals and objectives are based on the service, program and performance expectations established in the Operating and Capital Budgets. He noted there are challenges in the coming years that will impact government operation.

The five Goals and Objectives are the same as in past years, and are the framework of the work that is done. The "Objectives" are first, followed by "Continuing Initiatives" and then "Measurement Criteria"...which establishes benchmarks to determine whether or not the Town Manager is meeting the goals and objectives.

Town Manager Milone highlighted information in the Goals and Objectives.

**I. Preserve Financial Stability and Sustainability of Town Operations.**

Budget Revenue Shortfall - Mr. Milone cited the \$423,000 shortfall as a result of changes in the State budget. This matter requires a Council meeting to address the shortfall, and Mr. Milone is confident the proposed plan will work. Last year there was a \$1,050,000 surplus, even after losing the \$420,000 expected revenue from W.S. Development permit fees. This year there is savings from the new stop/loss insurance changes.

February 2017 Debt Sale - Staff continues to work towards making sure all of the information is assembled for the sale.

Surplus - the surplus is larger than expected; fund balance is \$9.7 million. WPCD budget surplus is closer to \$800,000 from additional revenue. The Town is in good financial shape.

Medical Benefits Stop/Loss Insurance Program - The program implementation has been done; it is successful; and will have savings.

Development of Strategic Plan - The plan should be developed; an alternative could be extending the multi-year budget model out to 3 to 5 years. This requires working closely with department heads and getting department heads and staff involved in determining what will happen with their operation over the next 3 to 5 years...look at trends, and make projections from there. Some modeling will be done for Council review of scenarios over the next 3 to 5 years. The biennial budget can be looked at for 3 year trends, 5 year trends...and expenses such as personnel, supplies, contractual expenses. Three to five year averages are looked at, along with departments, their savings. Growth assessments may be too liberal and can be scaled back. This is all a start, rather than spending \$100,000 for a consultant. Finance Director Jaskot and his staff can provide a good look at things and identify vulnerability.

Information and data on population growth can be taken from the school facilities plan which has this analysis and numbers. Regarding economic growth, the Economic Development Commission (EDC) has hired a consulting firm to review economic growth in the town.

Land Acquisition - The Council should adopt a land acquisition policy, with a model to show how the Town will actively pursue land acquisition as a development strategy. An education strategy can be pursued which would broaden the land acquisition policy. If a piece of property is on the market and considered a good economic value for the town, it can be purchased or leased. The suggestion is to open the policy, make it more broad, and have Council review strategy at least once a year so we are active rather than proactive. (CEP Book, page 18).

WPCD two tier user fee - This fee was discussed by the Council. The idea was to get fees from organizations with this fee. But, there cannot be a higher user fee to organizations. Town Attorney Smith has informed the Town Manager and Council that this two tier fee cannot be implemented and it will be removed from the Goals and Objectives.

Mr. Milone discussed adoption of a sponsorship program to offset operating costs, and advised it is in the final stages of development and submission to the Council. The plan is to potentially take the pressure off some of the departments, i.e. the score board at the pool could be sponsored with a company name. There are other opportunities in the recreation area.

Continued initiatives - \$7.2 million DOC lawsuit; January 2017 is the scheduled court date, and Implementation of Succession Plan.

**II. Provide programs that support staff morale and enhance effectiveness  
To ensure the highest level of customer service.**

Mr. Milone explained that the Town is using a new performance evaluation process, and the numbered system is no longer used. A staff committee was formed, and worked with a Quinnipiac College Professor on the new evaluation process. Under the new evaluation a person considers their own assessment to meet goals, and it is more meaningful. The new form requires lots of work on the part of the employee, and is a good management tool which speaks to specifics. In the union environment people are getting feedback, and longevity payments are based on years of service and outcome of the evaluation. The payments have varied ranges from the union contracts, and Mr. Milone will get this payment information for the Council.

Incorporate Elements of Succession Planning - the succession guide has been completed with much time spent with department heads. In the planning, there was profiling of people who have reached the rule of 80...they are eligible for retirement at any time...and people who are approaching the rule of 80.

Mr. Milone said he is looking for people to put together a "playbook" of their job responsibilities...what they do, when they do it, how it is done. Staff is trying to solidify the policies, guidelines and best practices in place so everything is in writing. The technological advances have helped in this regard with more records electronically filed. There are a number of people in critical positions at or close to retirement age.

Mr. Talbot asked if people are being identified as having the skill set to fill into other positions. The tie in to this could be some of the performance goals with taking additional courses, training, etc. to better prepare them for a jump.

This is a key part of succession planning and Mr. Milone said in a large organization that works universally and some of it is external. On the town side we have to look at positions, if there are people who could be successors...but in some of the senior executive level positions the best option is going outside. This has been identified as part of the succession plan. He will extract from some of the people at rule 80 what their plans are, as time is needed to find replacements, when these people retire.

It was noted by Mr. Talbot that a person who could fill a position might be in another department. This requires coordination of department heads with recognition of someone who could move to another department position. With this process people can be cross trained, and their career goals can be determined.

As people quantify what they do, Mr. Slocum asked if this comes up with a better job description, identification of what people do and identify a succession person.

Mr. Milone said that could be done. He commented on a person defining the job, but not the job description, and sometimes there is no longer a match of the person and the job. This is an important observation...look at the job description before it is filled...and insure it adequately identifies what is wanted and the person succeeding someone.

Public Works and Cheshire Police Department Accreditation - both departments want to pursue accreditation, which could take 2 to 5 years. This will force implementation of best practices and utilization of state of the art in terms of management techniques. Once their rules and regulations are adopted, CPD is ready to go to national organizations for accreditation.

**III. Improve Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness** - A major objective is to continue to have strength in collaboration and professionalism; all departments work together and assist each other; effectiveness is based on ability to interact and inter-relate. There is much overlap in what is done in town government. Mr. Milone said he is trying to get away from the culture of separate departments...as all departments must rely on each other...i.e. Public Works and Planning & Zoning.

Mr. Milone commented on the great collegiality between Fire Marshall, Building Department and Chesprocott...working together on many issues and problems.

Core and Non-Core Services - as the budget gets tighter, Mr. Milone stated the need to do a better job of designating and distinguishing between what has to be done and what is nice to do. Figure out what is important to do, what is not important to do, the related costs, and possibly shedding some things and save some money.

I.T. Enhancement - Mr. Milone reported that three companies are being interviewed for upgrading of the web site. The firm will be hired in September; it will take a few months for the changes; and the Council will receive feedback.

Mr. Milone commented on the need for improvement in Town Council turn-around referrals. There are many other items that could go before Council committees. Mr. Milone cited open policy recommendations for Open Space Management, Land Acquisition...and said pond dredging, water main installation and energy rebate are done.

Fire Service Staff Evaluation - This is an important issue which the Council must take up and discuss. Mr. Milone continues to have concerns about the viability of the CFD, and having enough people to respond to a call. It would be a Personnel Committee item.

Continued Initiatives - these include expansion of E-Commerce; new software for the Building Department; people could get permits from home.

**IV. Enhance Communication With All Stakeholders to Foster Citizen Awareness Of and Involvement in Town Government...To Maintain High Level of Engagement and Transparency.**

Implement website upgrade; produce department profiles for viewing on CATV to include captions and pictures. Mr. Milone advised that Michael Salamini will work with department heads and staff and undertake this project.

**V. Initiate, Advance or Complete Key Town Projects** - these are familiar projects to the Council; some are in progress and moving along; West Main Street Sidewalk Project underway and to be completed.

Succession Plan - Mr. Milone is comfortable with what is now in place, but has concerns about continuity and stability of the transition of the Town Manager's position when he retires. He has identified needs to be addressed.

Mr. Milone commented on the situation in place when John Salamone was hired as Town Manager. There were silos, departments, but no leadership to help him transition into the job. A critical element to be considered to make the upcoming transition successful is to have a link, anchor, stabilizing force to be there and provide the institutional knowledge and assistance to the new Town Manager. This is a need that must be in place. Mr. Milone is looking at making personnel changes to create this approach in order for someone to be successful and effective.

Mr. Ruocco commented on new people bringing in new approaches, ideas, and does not want to lock them into a system where they must do the same thing for the next 5 to 10 years.

Before someone can come in they must know how the Town operates, and Mr. Milone said someone is needed to help the new person through this process.

The new town manager needs to know how the Town operates, formal and informal relationships with people who know how to get things done. With his proposed personnel changes, Mr. Milone said this person would assist the new town manager with continuity and bridging into the new position. Some personnel adjustments must be made, which will be discussed with the Council.

Mr. Milone wants to revisit the non-union personnel pay plan which can affect maintaining these employees, while union staff gets pay increases each year.

Mr. Talbot recommended putting together a town manager search committee in March 2017. A plan was proposed by Mr. Talbot regarding the transition process for the new town manager. He suggested getting someone in place for December 2017 to work for 6 months with Mr. Milone. The new town manager can learn from Mr. Milone about how things are done, still formalize their own ideas, etc. It will be an expense, but Mr. Talbot considers it critical enough to be discussed.

In December 2017 there will be a new Town Council starting. Mr. Talbot cited the fact that the new town manager can work with the new Council for 6 months; and Mr. Milone will be in place to assist with the transition process.

It was noted by Mr. Slocum that Town Manager Milone brought an extensive financial background to his position. This will be a challenge to be met with the pool of people for the job.

There re 39 town managers in the State and Mr. Milone said only 3 have a financial background.

When a business changes hands, Ms. Nichols said it is important to have a transition period. She agrees the new person should have the ability to change and grow, but it cannot be done without a basic understanding of the organization. There is definitely a need to have this transition.

Regarding the accreditation for Public Works and Police Departments, Mr. Ruocco asked about the costs involved.

It is not expected there will be costs, initially, and Mr. Milone said there is some training involved for the departments. He will share information as it is available with the Council. CPD is almost at the point of accreditation. Chief Dryfe hired an attorney to assist with writing the rules for CPD.

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

MOVED that the Personnel Committee accepts and approves the Goals and Objectives of the Town Manager (as amended with removal of reference to WPCD), and moves them to the full Town Council for approval.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

**4. TOWN MANAGER PERFORMANCE REVIEW**  
**Tabled.**

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

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

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

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Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk