

MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL AND BUDGET COMMITTEE JOINT MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 2016, AT 6:30 P.M. IN ROOM 207-209, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present

Town Council Chairman Robert J. Oris Jr.; Paul A. Bowman, Vice Chairman.
Budget Committee Chairman Tim Slocum and committee members Michael Ecke and Sylvia Nichols. Council Members Patti Flynn-Harris, Liz Linehan and Peter Talbot.

Absent: Thomas Ruocco

Staff: Michael A. Milone, Town Manager; James Jaskot, Finance Director; Gina DeFilio, Deputy Finance Director. Laura Brennan, Town Clerk; Patti Dickinson, Deputy Town Clerk; Police Chief Neil Dryfe; Deputy Chief Brian Pichnarck; LT. Michael Strollo; Fire Chief Jack Casner; Fire Marshal John Andrews; Town Historian Jeanne Chesanow.

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. FY 2016-17 GENERAL FUND OPERATING BUDGET.

PUBLIC SAFETY - Town Clerk, Police Department, Animal Control, Prison Advisory, Civil Preparedness, Public Safety Commission, Fire Department, Inspection Department.

TOWN CLERK- Pages 9-12 and 82. Mr. Milone informed the Council that this is a status quo budget that is actually going down; there was a salary increase due to the retirement of Carolyn Soltis and payment of her vacation and sick leave; and in the non-salary account there are few changes. The budget shows a slight increase in contractual services/land records; the real estate conveyance tax and other activity is picking up; and the overtime account has a slight increase.

Town Clerk Brennan said she continues to carry on the excellent record keeping of the department with the 2016 grant spent and application for the 2017 \$5,000 grant, and filing of minutes of the Council, boards and commissions. Vital statistics continue to be updated along with electronic recordings from CSC and Simple File. The vault has new shelving; land records are on line with U.S. Land Records.com; and there is a \$1.00 per page fee for copies.

Objectives for 2017 include the grant application, working with Registrars of Voters for the primary and general elections; digesting of the maps and trade names; bringing the vault to code with guidance of State Library with removal of carpeting and computer stations.

Deputy Clerk Dickinson informed the Council that the old vault has been cleared out, archival boxes have been ordered, the vault is very orderly and labeled, the area is totally cleaned. An archival consultant assists with decisions on what should be kept or passed onto the Historical Society. There will be storage of some documents at the Society building. Ms. Dickinson commented on Cheshire having 40 permanent absentee voters.

Ms. Brennan has requested two items in the budget...new furniture for her office, as the current furniture is +27 years old and falling apart at a cost of \$4,750, and 5 more hours for the 20 hour clerk position to 25 hours per week. In 2009, the office lost 10 hours to this position and has lost 2 people due to cuts in work hours with transfer to another town department.

Town Manager Milone cited his agreement with the Town Clerk's requests. The +5 hours would start in January 2017 with a budget impact of \$2,394 for half a year. He put extra funding into the overtime account as a buffer for the office, and overtime is paid after 35 hours of work.

New Hire in Town Clerk's Office - the position(s) require Town Clerk certification at a cost of \$1100. Ms. Brennan explained that two people have been trained, hours were cut, and they transferred to another position in town.

Mr. Slocum thanked Ms. Brennan and Ms. Dickinson for their presentation.

POLICE DEPARTMENT, Pages 81-102 and 76.

Chief Neil Dryfe, Deputy Chief Brian Pichnarck, and Lt. Michael Strollo were present for the budget presentation.

Town Manager Milone reviewed the budget, stating the CPD budget has increased by \$505,000 OR 10.4% since 2012, about 2% a year. He pointed out the efficiency of the department with the reorganization, savings, more officers on the street, increase in professionalism, with department staff doing a good and efficient job.

The proposed CPD budget has a salary increase of \$166,000. CPD is at full staff of 48 officers, with one retirement pending the end of March. Last year the overtime was higher due to vacancies in staff. Overtime line item is increased by \$30,000 for 2017. The department was also mandated with the E91 Dispatch training last year which required enormous training, overtime hours. CPD received many grants to fortify its programs, i.e. DUI, Distracted Driving. Non-salary account remains constant. The Elim Park gift account supplements many of the accounts in the department's operating budget and maximizes its use. The CPD budget will be over-budget for FY 2016 due to more overtime costs and \$40,000 for the consultant hired to do the radio study.

Chief Dryfe introduced Deputy Chief Pichnarck and Lt. Strollo and said CPD has a command staff in place for a few years out and is working on a succession plan. He commented on the CPD reorganization, elimination of two management positions, 4

command positions became police officers on the street...and the department is where it wants to be. CPD hired two retired/experienced/certified officers who are already on the road, and 2 new recruits graduate from the academy and will be on the street 10 weeks after field training.

911 System - the State is moving to Next Generation 911; CPD is scheduled for 4/19/16; and the new system requires an ID entry and the operator must be a certified telecommunicator. Twelve (12) officers have been through the certification training; officers must also go through medical emergency dispatcher training, 3 days of basic public safety dispatcher training; total training is 56 hours.

There is a State move to regionalize 911 calls, and Chief Dryfe has discussed this with Wallingford, North Haven and Branford for a regionalized dispatch center. A study is being undertaken on the matter, and in 2018 the State will be informed on town partnerships and date of implementation.

Chief Dryfe talked about the drug problem in Cheshire which is hard to quantify. He is in constant contact with Director of Human Services, Ms. Piccerillo, and he believes there is heroin use in town but has not seen a large spike. Human Services is looking into the issue and an educational program is being planned.

Overtime - this year CPD was four officers short and will be three people short to the end of the fiscal year; the department continues to pursue grant funds with 25% of overtime paid through State grants.

Elim Park Gift Account - Chief Dryfe stated the gift account supports community programs such as RAD, Citizens Academy, assists with purchase of vehicles, supplies, equipment. The department wants to purchase a special vehicle for accident/crime scenes, \$60,000 cost, using \$10,000 of the gift account.

Open Space Management Plan - CPD receives complaints about cars and various vehicles on open space land. The department needs a new ATV, \$15,000 cost, which can be offered and used by other departments. Chief Dryfe is working with the Planning and Environmental departments on many issues related to open space.

Mr. Milone cited the need to make open space safer for the public use. With the new Linear Trail, residents that have the trail in their back yards have expressed concerns about loss of privacy and safety issues. A public information session will be held with these residents along the trail, and the town is prepared to have a presence in the area to offer them some comfort. This is another reason for the CPD overtime increase. Both CPD and Parks and Recreation Department have requests for new ATVs.

Other gift account fund use - new Lasers for all police officers; \$1,000 each; 16 per year for the next 3 years; CAD/RMS system enhancement; \$12,000 software split between CPD and CFD; \$25,000 to supplement capital budget for vehicle purchases; \$20,000 training; \$6,000 for quartermaster budget. Chief Dryfe said there will be a RAD

program for senior citizens this year; CPD is continuing work on the policies and procedures manual.

Officer Patrols - there are a variety of plans for patrols and it depends on the number of patrol officers on duty; normal patrol is three (3) officers, and with more officers the town is divided further; officers drive every street in their beat one time each night. Most accidents occur on Route 10; complaints are received from residents about speeding, and request a patrol of their street; patrols are modified; officers are shifted to a particular area for stronger visibility; midnight shift cars patrol the back roads.

Cruiser cameras - there is a need to replace these cameras after 8 years of use; it will be a capital expense for these cameras and 35 body cameras; every patrol officer and traffic officer will have the cameras; \$120,000 estimated cost. Chief Dryfe is looking for a cruiser camera and body camera from the same vendor so they are compatible. There are grant funds, state and federal, for purchase of the cameras.

Radio System - portable radios are starting to fail; Motorola has provided the last patch to the radios and can no longer offer support; and CPD wants to have integrated communication with the school system and town departments. The life span of the upgraded radio system is well over 10 years.

This is not just a Police Department issue, and Mr. Milone said it is Public Works, Planning, WWTP, Education, Fire Department, and the entire town will benefit from a change and upgrade in the radio system. . The cost is \$4 million for a townwide radio system, with the last upgrade taking place 10+ years ago, and this system never functioned as expected.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Derf Kleist, 251 Lancaster Way, asked about incidents per officer, other equipment costs, and vehicle replacement program \$115.

Chief Dryfe stated incidents means officer activity such as traffic stops etc. The equipment request included \$16,000 for new tasers; it was decreased by Mr. Milone to \$21,000 and Tasers will be purchased from the gift account. Vehicle inspection charges are for inspection after a crime or accident, and CPD now uses two garage mechanics for this service. Vehicle Replacement is \$115,000. Regarding the gift account fund, Chief Dryfe stated it is not \$1million as cited by Ms. Kleist.

Extra Duty Cars - Chief Dryfe would like to look at a program for extra duty officers to have a police car hired on site by the vendor. This is being explored for next year, and could generate revenue. The program would require Council approval, and determination on whether an ordinance is required.

Cindy Kleist asked about a DARE officer at \$75,000 and if the officer does this work all the time.

Chief Dryfe explained the DARE officer position has been eliminated. There is a School Resource Officer who is on site at the high school each day school is in session. When school is not in session this officer works patrol.

Town Historian - Jeanne Chesanow, Town Historian, reviewed her budget of \$387 and categories of expense. Ms. Chesanow explained she uses linen stationary and acid free paper for written communications, and has membership in professional groups, attends yearly conferences, and subscribes to publications for her work. She said it is helpful for the Historian to have some funds.

FIRE DEPARTMENT - Pages 103-108 and 62

Chief Jack Casner and Fire Marshal John Andrews.

Mr. Milone reviewed the CFD budget, stating the budget absorbs the fire pension contribution, which has increased by 25% over 5 years, or \$116,000. The actual five year average is just under 15%. CFD budget is constant on the non-salary side; expenses are kept down with utilization of Elim Park money in a significant way. Fire Inspection position was in the budget for the W. S. Development project which did not materialize; the position has been eliminated; \$33,242 reduction for the Fire Inspection position.

Non-salary account increase is \$38,000 to include a new program to pay a stipend to volunteers to man the fire houses during the daytime hours. \$50,000 requested for this expense. Mr. Milone wants to hold off on this program to January 1, 2017 to further review the program and reduce the expense. The program is part of a bigger plan and integrated with this plan. An \$8,000 increase is budgeted for pay for call, and \$25,000 for the one-half year stipend for volunteer firefighters. Everything else in the budget is status quo. There are significant changes in the Fire Department. The Fire Marshal Department will be a more visible, engaging, department, bringing it to a higher level.

This has been a challenging year for CFD and Chief Casner said the loss of Fire Marshal Boland resulted in a 25% reduction in the work force. He commended his staff for stepping up and doing a good job during a difficult time.

Recruitment - a staffing study was given to the Town Council. 2008 to the present there is a reduction in volunteer firefighters with only 60 members now (including junior members), and four (4) paid staff. The peak hours for fire response are 6:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. when most calls are received. Six to seven firefighters go to a scene and normal standard is 16 firefighters. Chief Casner is proposing hiring daytime firefighters to man the fire houses at a flat rate of pay, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. This proposal will be further researched and a plan developed.

CFD partners with the University of New Haven Fire Science Program, with interns working in the fire department building. There is consideration to have some live-in students at the fire houses and expansion of this program. CFD collaborates with other town departments, and participates monthly with the BOE school lock-down drills for all schools.

Elim Park Gift Account - Chief Casner reported there is no longer a carry over of account funds; it is really operating budget money. He reviewed the categories of use for the funds in this account. Other Equipment, \$95,000 including new truck equipment, \$55,000 to \$60,000; Airpacks, \$6,000 for 6 airpacks; \$12,000 for Training; \$19,000 Personnel Expenses; \$5,000 Contractual Services; \$25,500 for Automotive Equipment and Supplies.

It was noted by Mr. Milone that these line items stay constant due to the gift account funding.

Chief Casner stated he was satisfied with the Town Manager's reductions in the CFD budget. Part-time funding was reduced and reinstatement of some of this funding is requested through the stipend program and increase in pay per call to \$8.00 for firefighters effective January 1, 2017.

Ladder Truck - the purchase order has been cut; the truck cost was \$950,000 and reduced to \$914,000; \$100,000 will come from the gift account and this check has been cut and sent to the vendor. It will cost \$60,000 to \$70,000 to equip this truck. Cost of the truck to taxpayers is \$814,000, and it is the right truck at a lower cost.

Regarding the volunteer firefighters, Chief Casner noted that the population in town is getting older. The trend for volunteer firefighters is going away. With regard to marketing the CFD, Chief Casner said many efforts have been exhausted...a billboard at the Notch, flyers, mailings, inserts in the local newspaper.

There must be a well thought out integrated project, and Mr. Milone explained the incentive program is not working as designed. It is paying people, some are lifetime members, who are not contributing to fighting fires. The incentive must be revised; there must be a combination of many things for a plan to grow over time; and a plan to reward people who do respond and fight fires.

With regard to CFD being reimbursed for fire calls after an accident situation, Chief Casner said there is such a plan in some towns and he has discussed it with Mr. Milone. The feedback from people is that they pay taxes, so why charge extra for a CFD response. He will be looking into this situation again.

Civil Preparedness/Disaster Plan - Cheshire CFD and the school system staff did a drill in the Fall at Chapman School that involved the State Emergency Operation Center. It went very well, and Chief Casner and a BOE representative have been invited to the State conference in May to speak about the excellent integration plan in Cheshire.

Mr. Bowman said he and Chief Casner have discussed the areas of refuge in Cheshire...the high school and Youth Center...and the Cheshire Community Food Pantry being integrated into this plan, bringing food to these sites for those housed there during an emergency.

In response, Chief Casner stated he has not heard from the coordinator, but has sent him an e-mail stating CCFP will be the provider of food for the town shelters.

With CCFP as part of the town's plan, Mr. Bowman said the pantry could apply for grants to benefit the community program.

FIRE MARSHAL JOHN EDWARDS

Marshall Edwards is new to the position in Cheshire. There are four (4) people in the firehouse to respond to calls. He has concerns about building inspections and meeting the statutory requirements, and said lack of inspections is a recipe for disaster with serious liability to the Town.

Marshall Edwards talked about a 7 hour part-time Fire Inspector request at a cost of \$10,000 in the budget, it not being enough, and double that is needed. He is looking for a 16 hour per week Inspector to be out on the streets. Current part time staff is well trained, does a good job, and the money is needed to keep them going, and conduct inspections. Every year the statutory requirement is inspection of every residential property in Cheshire, and 39 building inspections were done last year...not individual living units which is part of the requirements. Having inspectors out in town for 12, 14, 16 hours a week along with the Fire Marshall and Deputy working, the department could meet 50% to 60% of yearly inspections. The goal is to work towards 90% to 100% of inspections which would require full time staff.

Currently, there are three (3) people being paid single salary and giving the Town six (6) staff people. Marshall Edwards is the Fire Marshall and paid firefighter for Cheshire, and the extra \$10,000 to have an inspector on the streets will increase the inspection program. He cited not only individual residents, but complexes such as Elim Park units to be inspected. If there are violations found, they must be take care of, and a re-inspection is then required. Violations could be smoke detector batteries not working, and they can be replaced; there are serious violations such as electrical hazards, blocked egress, windows and doors screwed shut, fire resistant walls needing to be repaired.

The Fire Marshall performs many duties necessary to make the operation work, and the stipend person can relieve the Marshall from some of these duties. The inspection process is a four (4) year cycle which makes things better for the future. It includes schools, nursing homes, group homes...which must be inspected every year. There is no inspection of state and federal buildings.

Budget Committee Chairman Slocum thanked Chief Casner and Marshall Andrews for their presentation.

PLANNING: Planning Department, Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Economic Development, Beautification Committee, Environment Commission,

Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission, Historic District Commission, Energy Commission. Moved to another meeting.

4. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Talbot; seconded by Ms. Flynn-Harris.

MOVED to adjourn the joint special meeting at 9:10 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk