

**MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2018, AT 7:00 P.M. IN ROOM 207, TOWN
HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410**

Present

Chairman Timothy Slocum and members Jeffrey Falk and Sylvia Nichols.
Staff: Michael A. Milone, Town Manager; Louis Zullo, Human Resources Director;
Parks and Recreation Department - Dr. Joshua Medeiros, Director and Elizabeth Mane,
Program Supervisor.
Cheshire Public Library – Ramona Burkey, Director
Cheshire Town Clerk Laura Brennan
Cheshire Police Department - Chief Neil Dryfe and Deputy Chief Brian Pichnarcik.

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. DISCUSSION RE: VACANT RECREATION, TOWN CLERK and
LIBRARY POSITIONS**

Parks and Recreation Department – Program Coordinator Position.

Dr. Medeiros gave a short presentation on this position vacancy in the department. It is a 19 hour per week position with no benefits; it was created as part of the July 2017 department reorganization; total expense for the position is about \$20,000 annually. The Program Coordination is an important position. The person is responsible for summer camps, sports, weekend programs, quality of existing programs, training volunteers and employees, taking a role in marketing the department activities, along with many other duties. Without this position being filled, the duties fall on Dr. Medeiros and Ms. Mane. The benefit of hiring the coordinator would be revenue generated and the position paying for itself through department activities.

In his three months as Director, Dr. Medeiros advised there have been many successes within the department. He is working closely with Ms. Adams, is building a strong partnership with her and pool staff, assisting with installation of new bleachers and starting blocks, and creation of new special events for the pool facility. Staff has undertaken a complete review and overhaul of department forms to be more user friendly and on-line use and scheduling of fields.

The department has undertaken a community needs assessment survey, and the Program Coordinator will be the person to help move forward with new initiatives. Dr. Medeiros is working on sponsorships, and has secured a \$3,000 business sponsorship for one of the summer concerts. With more time available to him, he said he would be out into the business community, and secure more sponsorships for the department.

During the April vacation break there are plans for a Family Fun Day, and open house for the Parks and Rec Department along with other activities in the planning process. Many things are happening in the department. The position of Program Coordinator needs to be filled to allow time to recruit and train the new employee for upcoming summer activities. Dr. Medeiros requested the Council approve hiring the Program Coordinator.

Mr. Slocum asked about the current staff at the Parks and Rec Department, and changes from the past.

In response, Dr. Medeiros said there are four full time employees (FTEs) – Director, Program Supervisor, Secretary, and Executive Assistant.

Mr. Milone explained that five people were changed to four or four and half staff. During the reorganization last year, he said Mr. Ceccolini cautioned about melding three supervisors into two, and the large amount of work at the Program Coordinator level for 7 to 8 months of the year. He strongly recommended filling the 19 hour per week position. Mr. Milone pointed out that Director Medeiros is doing a good job in his new position, and he and Ms. Mane are moving things along. However, it is now apparent that their skills are suffering because of the clerical duties they have had to undertake. He noted Dr. Medeiros is working on sponsorships, new fee schedules and some things which do not enhance revenue or services. With the reorganization the Town saved about \$200,000 and Mr. Milone said the case was made that this was part and parcel of making the whole thing work. Ms. Adams has operated on her own at the pool, and with Dr. Medeiros' aquatic background and experience, they have developed a strong working relationship.

For the Program Coordinator position, Mr. Milone cited the expense involved at \$4,850 for four months this fiscal year; three months expense is \$3,800; and the operating budget included this position. This is a part time, non-benefit position. Mr. Milone supports hiring the Program Coordinator.

It was restated by Dr. Medeiros that the department needs this support staff and this need has not been overstated to the Council. The person would prepare program flyers, program evaluation, and assist the department to reach its goals. He noted that the department is still 100% in charge of the use of parks and fields; there is much activity; a process is implemented for the scheduling; the department is creating a business culture, using a business approach to everything it does; and the part-time position could self fund itself.

Regarding the interface with the BOE, Mr. Slocum asked how this is taking place, and if there are concerns about BOE expectations about school fields etc.

It has been good so far, and Dr. Medeiros has interface and communication with Athletic Director Trifone (who is on the Parks and Rec Commission). He and Ms. Mane

have met with BOE officials; there is positive interaction with BOE; and so far, there have been no requests forthcoming.

It was explained by Mr. Milone that a big change is in formalizing things between PW Director Noewatne, Director Medeiros and the BOE. It was made clear that Park crews will be available when they are available. The BOE cannot call at 5:30 p.m. and want a field lined at 6 p.m. The problem was the drain on the Park Division crew to do work on the school fields. Now, there must be a formal request with schedules and plans.

Dr. Medeiros also stated he is looking at all the expenses in the budget, including non-Cheshire based groups using Town facilities at no cost.

Town Clerk's Office, 30 hour per week, Part-time position, Assistant Town Clerk

Town Clerk Brennan requested the 30-hour per week position be posted and filled. It is currently being filled, on a temporary basis, by the 20-hour per week staff member. If this person gets the 30 hour per week position, then a 20 hour per week position will be opened up. At the present time the office is down 20 hours of work per week. Ms. Brennan noted things are currently slow in the office, but will pick up considerably in March.

Mr. Milone explained that the 20 hour per week employee is working 10+ hours each week to temporarily fill the 30 hour position. If this staff member is appointed to the 30 hour per week position...then, the 20 hour per week position is open, and is the one to be filled.

Cheshire Public Library (CPL)– 15 hours per week Library Clerk position

Ramona Burkey, Library Director, requested the Council authorize hiring for the vacant Library Clerk position. This is a \$12,090 annual salary position (\$15.50 per hour); it is a non-benefit position; and hiring as of March 1, 2018 would be \$4,185 for the current fiscal year.

Ms. Burkey advised there were no Summer Saturday hours for the Library in 2017 due to position vacancies. She reviewed the staffing issues. Under current staffing, CPL is at 22.8 FTEs; this is 3.8% fewer than FY 2005; and is 12.8% fewer than in 2015. In comparison, CPL is open 17% more hours per year; Library usage is up 67%; program attendance is up 276%; and CPL under spent \$45,000 for the end of the fiscal year.

According to Ms. Burkey, the administrative staff is doing more clerical jobs, and it is not looking good for Saturday Summer hours in 2018. She reported that CPL has 65% self checkout; there are currently five vacancies (3 page positions, 25 hour Senior Library Assistant, 15 hour Clerk position), and an upcoming full-time position due to resignation.

The Library will be undergoing a seven-month construction project, and Ms. Burkey said this will require more of her time and attention. And, a full complement of staff is needed to handle CPL services to the clients.

Mr. Milone informed the committee that the Saturday work hours are included in the union contract, with union staff required to work one Saturday during July or August.

4. DISCUSSION RE: ANTICIPATED VACANT POSITIONS DUE TO RECENT RETIREMENT NOTIFICATIONS IN POLICE AND WATER POLLUTION CONTROL DEPARTMENTS.

Town Manager Milone informed the committee that WWTP Supt. Dennis Dievert will retire as of March 2, 2018, and CPD Lt. Mike Strollo will retire as of March 30, 2018.

Chief Dryfe and Deputy Chief Pichnarcik presented information on the CPD staffing issues. In November 2017, Chief Dryfe discussed with the Council the three open positions in CPD...2 were officer positions frozen since 2016, and 2 officers resigned in July 2017. The Council authorized hiring one police officer right away. There was anticipation of a fourth vacancy due to an officer out on a long term injury, and seeking disability retirement, which was recently approved.

Chief Dryfe received a retirement notification from Lt. Strollo with a March 30th date. This results in five police officer vacancies in the department. Chief Dryfe will have to make a promotion to Lieutenant in the near future, and must go through the entire testing process which can take up to three months.

Town Manager Milone commented on filling the Lieutenant position and savings of about \$22,000,

There is an internal promotional process. Chief Dryfe explained he would promote a Sergeant of +2 years to the Lieutenant position, and would then fill the Sergeant position from an internal list. For the 45th and 46th officer positions, Chief Dryfe is in the process of making offers to two candidates. One is a certified police officer in another town, could start in March, and be on the road. The second hire is a new officer, who must begin the Police Academy in April for 22 weeks, be trained and on the road by December 1st.

Due to the unanticipated retirement, Chief Dryfe is requesting approval to hire another police officer for the CPD. There is only permission to hire two officers, and there is a third candidate to begin the background process, and enter the Academy in April. The CPD must commit to the Academy for this second seat in April.

Mr. Milone stated he and Chief Dryfe want to move on the three remaining vacant positions (#47, #48, #49) given what has happened the last three weeks. He has requested the Chief put these positions into next year's budget for funding, including the

49th frozen position. Mr. Milone stated his support for full funding of three additional CPD police officer positions in the next fiscal year.

With regard to the school security issues at Cheshire High School, Chief Dryfe reported that CPD took action, and the student is in police custody.

WATER POLLUTION CONTROL DEPARTMENT – PLANT SUPERINTENDENT POSITION

Mr. Milone reported on receiving a retirement notification from Plant Supt. Dennis Dievert effective March 2, 2018. As Superintendent, Mr. Dievert has responsibility for and operates nine (9) pump stations, 120 miles of sewers, the treatment plant and he runs an excellent facility. He has only two supervisors, department head and deputy. The Superintendent position is not one the Town can go without. The plant is a facility that cannot be neglected, and no one has run it better than Mr. Dievert.

The committee was told by Mr. Milone that Town Engineer Walter Gancarz will also be retiring, and he and Supt. Dievert worked together and oversaw the upgrade of the treatment plant in the last four years. Mr. Gancarz will stay on a little longer, and will cut back to 20 hours a month, spending more time at the treatment plant. The Town needs a Plant Superintendent...someone very qualified. Mr. Milone reported that there are people out there who want to work at the Cheshire plant; it is one of the best run plants in the State; there are no major capital project challenges to deal with; and the plant has an excellent reputation. He said there is a critical urgency to fill the Superintendent position, and finding someone of Mr. Dievert's caliber.

Mr. Milone reported the salary for the position is set at \$108,000 (from \$118,000).

Given the current dynamics of the budget, Mr. Milone explained that he spoke with Town Clerk Brennan and recommended filling the 30 hour per week position, and revisiting the 20 hour per week position at the start of the new fiscal year.

This is a reasonable consideration and Mr. Slocum concurred with further review during the budget process.

Committee Chairman Slocum reviewed the expectations for the Budget Committee following all the information presented for consideration. The Committee approved the following and will forward its recommendations to the full Town Council.

Cheshire Public Library – 15 hour per week Library Clerk position approved to be filled.

Town Clerk's Office – 30 hour per week Assistant Town Clerk position approved to be filled.

Parks and Recreation Department – 19 hour per week Program Coordinator position approved to be filled.

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

MOVED that the Budget Committee approves the following positions to be filled, and forwards this recommendation to the full Town Council for approval:

Cheshire Public Library – 15 hour per week Library Clerk position

Town Clerk's Office – 30 hour per week Assistant Town Clerk position

Parks and Recreation Department – 19 hour per week Program Coordinator position

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

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

MOVED that the Budget Committee approves the following, and forwards this recommendation to the full Town Council for approval:

Cheshire Police Department – Police Officer position #44 approved to be filled.

Positions #47, 48 and 49 will be reviewed for funding during in the new fiscal year.

VOTE 2-0-1; Mr. Falk recused.

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

MOVED that the Budget Committee approves filling the position of Plant Superintendent at the Waste Water Treatment Plant, and forwards this recommendation to the full Town Council for approval.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

5. DISCUSSION RE: VETERANS' DISCOUNT ON MIXVILLE PASSES

Councilor Ruocco informed the committee that a veteran in his district, Bob Tucker, requested a discount for veterans to use Mixville Park. This discount would be similar to that offered to senior citizens...50% discount.

Parks and Rec Director Medeiros stated he supports offering a discount for veterans to Mixville Park...a 50% discount on the cost of a pass. He talked about proof that the person is a veteran, and this could be verified through the Town Clerk's office as veterans file a DD214 form with the Town Clerk.

A veteran would complete the form with the Park and Rec Department, and Mr. Milone said their status could be verified with the Town Clerk, and a discounted pass issued.

Ms. Mane asked about a veteran showing the department staff their DD214 form and driver's license, without having to go to the Town Clerk's office.

These details can be worked out, and Mr. Milone noted there must be a Town Council public hearing on the veterans discount. It will be on the agenda of March 13th.

6. ADJOURNMENT

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

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk