

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2014, AT 7:30 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE, CT 06410

Present

Chairman Timothy Slocum; Vice Chairman David Schrumm; Patti Flynn-Harris, Liz Linehan, Sylvia Nichols, Robert Oris, Thomas Ruocco, James Sima, Peter Talbot. Staff Present: Michael A. Milone, Town Manager, James Jaskot, Finance Director; Gina DeFilio, Deputy Finance Director.

Vincent Masciana, Director of Management Services; Gerry Brittingham, BOE Chairman.

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. ADOPTION OF FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015 ANNUAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE BUDGET AND FIVE YEAR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PLAN.

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #081914-1

RESOLUTION #081914-1
ITEMS 1 THROUGH 27
SUMMARY

A copy of the Resolution is attached to the minutes of this Town Council meeting.

Discussion

Mr. Schrumm stated that there are two sections to the resolutions – the annual capital budget, items 1 through 27, in the first year of the CEP, and he read the items into the record of the meeting. There is also the Five Year Capital Budget, years 2 through 5, for spending on large capital projects.

Mr. Schrumm highlighted some of the items in the first year of the CEP – Road Repavement Program, \$1.750 million; Open Space Land Management, \$50,000; Sidewalk Program, \$200,000, Vehicle and Equipment Replacement Fund, \$230,000. Technology Enhancements, \$327,000, School Renovation Projects...for a total first year capital budget of \$9,664,000; \$7657,000 to be bonded; the rest paid for with grants, C.N.R. Funds and other funding sources.

Mr. Talbot commented on 2 items in the first year of the CEP. #10, Aerial Truck, \$1,080,000, which he has supported for 2 years. This project will go to referendum this

year rather than having the Council members deciding whether the Town needs this vehicle. Mr. Talbot cited item #27, \$250,000 for the CHS Locker Room Project, stating that the total appropriation would be \$800,000. He is not in favor of this project – but it will not prevent him from voting in favor of the capital budget. Mr. Talbot said there are better ways to spend money and fix more of the ADA compliance issues along with other things needed at the high school athletic complex. Mr. Talbot noted that the locker rooms are still a below grade facility, and even after an \$800,000 investment there will be more issues to be addressed.

Ms. Flynn-Harris stated her understanding of why the operating budget gets more attention than the capital budget, which is due to the immediate impact of the operating budget on the residents, mill rate and tax rate. The capital budget is done in the summer and people do not realize the impact of this budget until they see the referendum items. There are a number of capital projects to be bonded other than the larger referendum projects. She cited the replacement of playground equipment, Senior Center basement renovation and the small allocation of funding the capital planning account. Ms. Flynn-Harris noted the BOE requested the Council to allocate money for a professional study of the school system facilities, including demographics, 10 year study, trends towards birth rate and, most important, the school facilities. She wants to make sure this study goes forward and people are aware of the study. Cheshire is looking at schools over 60 years old. Ms. Flynn-Harris believes professional unbiased assistance is needed to help the Town assess and evaluate the school facilities to know what should be done with them in the next 10 years.

Ms. Flynn-Harris expressed thanks to Mr. Milone and Mr. Jaskot and their staff for their work on the capital budget.

Ms. Linehan commented on putting the CFD aerial ladder truck to referendum and its importance. In talking about monetary decisions, she said the Council debates three things – need, benefit to the Town, and financial impact. With the ladder truck, the people of Cheshire became a point of contention, in that some Councilors believe the people are not capable of making an informed decision on this item going to referendum. She has offered to hold town hall style meetings to educate citizens to the facts pertaining to the purchase of the aerial ladder truck, and she will still do that. Ms. Linehan stated she welcomes different view points so residents can remain informed, and make an informed decision. During the capital budget process she was told the town hall style of government ended years ago, and takes exception to that attitude. She believes in the people of Cheshire, the importance of their voices, and when it comes to public safety the Council needs to hear what people think. Mr. Linehan will be going door to door to discuss this referendum item, will answer questions, and said she welcomes communication from residents, and hopes to see people at the polls when it comes to this referendum item.

Mr. Oris stated the capital budget process was a collaborative budget with all Council members participating well, and the end result is a good capital budget. There were some philosophical differences, and the fire truck was one of them. Mr. Oris supports

the fire truck going to the people for a referendum vote, and implementation of this vehicle for the Fire Department. He will be voting for this fire truck as it is a public safety issue. Mr. Oris does not agree with retrofitting the CHS locker room as it sits today, as it is not the best viable option for the community because it is not the best use of taxpayer dollars. During the budget process, Mr. Oris reported he did state that if the project goes to referendum there must be enough money to do the project work. However, there are better options and better use of taxpayer dollars. He will not vote against the capital budget because of this one line item, and expressed appreciation for the collaborative efforts of the Council with this good budget.

Ms. Nichols echoed the comments about this being a collaborative effort, hard work of the Council, and she will support the budget. There were issues of discord that were worked out. Several items go to referendum, and among them is the fire truck. Ms. Nichols urged voters to do their homework, read minutes of the meetings, ask questions and get answers, and vote on facts not hearsay. She said the Council will be watching the development of the fire truck purchase for the best value for taxpayer money. It was noted by Ms. Nichols that Council members spent many hours away from families working on the capital budget. Voters will make decisions on whether items will pass at referendum. She thanked Mr. Milone, Mr. Jaskot and their staff for their work with the Council on the capital budget.

Stating he has concerns about future years, Mr. Sima noted the \$3 million increase in the debt service. He is not against any one of the items in the first year of the capital budget, understands the Fire Department need the aerial truck after 20 years of another piece of equipment, and he wants to make sure the equipment does the job required. The budget has \$1 million for Land Acquisition, \$1.75 million for the Road Repavement Project, \$2 million for Sidewalks. Without nibbling away at some of these things there is an undue burden on future operating budgets. Mr. Sima is not in complete favor of this budget, and will not support the capital budget. He questions where the future cuts will be made – in the BOE budget, Police Department. Mr. Sima commented that this capital budget is important and the voters have a say in it because they can vote up or down on the referendum items.

Mr. Ruocco said there were good budget discussions with differences on how to project long term spending and investments for the Town. This budget does have some points of contention which are costly and will have a significant impact on debt service and operating expenses. With regard to the ladder truck, a referendum item, Mr. Ruocco would support replacement of the 1998 ladder truck. But, the proposal is adding a second ladder truck with the CFD fleet having two ladder trucks. The current ladder truck is coming on 20 years of service, may get 25 years, and then need to be replaced for \$1 million. This is a lot of money for taxpayers to carry. The requested aerial ladder truck is an additional fire truck and not a replacement truck. Regarding the CHS Locker Room Project, Mr. Ruocco opposes this project because no more money should be spent on the locker rooms. He noted that in 2009 money was appropriated, but the project is still unfinished, and we are going back to the taxpayers for additional funding for this project which should have been done years ago. Mr. Ruocco commented on

the Council taking a \$10.6 million request from the Town Manager, reducing it by \$1 million in year #1, with many items deferred to year #2 of the CEP. He said some of these capital projects need to be scaled back. The BOE requested \$145,000 for a facilities study, and received Council support for some of the funding for this study. Mr. Ruocco questioned there being a right time to spend money for a consultant. He has received calls from taxpayers about their tax increases, and now there will be another increase for the taxpayers. Mr. Ruocco will not support the resolution for the capital budget...if he does not believe in something he does not support taxing for it.

Chairman Slocum thanked the Council, Mr. Milone, Mr. Jaskot and staff for their work and efforts on the capital budget at many meetings. The Council worked as a collegial group. He noted that many Town staff members, especially the Fire Chief, went out of their way to provide understanding of their department needs. Mr. Slocum informed the Council and the public that he met with Chief Casner for clarity on the CFD capital requests. For the record, he stated that the Chief assured him that when the 1998 fire truck is up for replacement, this truck can be refurbished. This information weighs on Mr. Slocum's decision to support the additional aerial truck for the CFD. Much of the budget is put in place to maintain what the Town owns and has to manage – roads, buildings, equipment. He has measured everything, and said this is a good budget.

VOTE In favor – 7; Slocum, Schrumm, Flynn-Harris, Linehan, Nichols, Oris, Talbot.
 Opposed – 2; Ruocco and Sima.
 THE MOTION PASSED 7-2

4. SUBMISSION OF RESOLUTIONS TO REFERENDUM AND AUTHORIZATION FOR EXPLANATORY TEXT.

MOTION by Mr. Schrumm; seconded by Mr. Ruocco

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #081914-2

RESOLUTION #081914-2

Resolution Providing for Submission of FY 2014-2015 Capital Expenditure Budget Resolutions to the Voters in Conjunction With the General Election on November 4, 2014.

A copy of the Resolution is attached to the minutes of this meeting.

Discussion

Mr. Schrumm explained there are five (5) items for the voters to read and consider. He cited the items for the record:

Land Acquisition - \$1 million

Additional Fire Aerial Apparatus Truck - \$1,080,000

Creamery Road Bridge over Honeypot Brook - \$850,000

Road Repavement Program - \$1,750,000
CHS Locker Room Project - \$250,000

VOTE In favor – 8; Slocum, Schrumm, Flynn-Harris, Linehan, Nichols
Oris, Sima, Talbot.
Opposed – 1; Ruocco.
THE MOTION PASSED 8-1.

MOTION by Mr. Schrumm; seconded by Mr. Ruocco

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #081914-3

RESOLUTION #081914-3

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council adopts the Five Year Omnibus Capital Expenditure Plan for Fiscal Years 2014-2015 through 2018-2019 in accordance with the recommendation of the Town Council Budget Committee.

Discussion

Mr. Schrumm explained that this five year plan lays out five years of capital spending for the Town with details of all the projects as best known at this time. Over the years, things change, priorities change, projects shift. Mr. Schrumm noted there is information on the Town's web site for the first year of the plan which the Council just passed, along with the five year plan information.

VOTE In favor – 7; Slocum, Schrumm, Flynn-Harris, Linehan, Nichols, Oris,
Talbot.
Opposed – 2; Ruocco and Sima.
THE MOTION PASSED 7-2

5. DE-AUTHORIZATION OF VARIOUS CAPITAL PROJECT BOND APPROPRIATIONS AND TRANSFER OF EXCESS BOND PROCEEDS.

MOTION by Mr. Schrumm; seconded by Mr. Ruocco

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #081914-4

RESOLUTION #081914-4

RESOLUTION TRANSFERRING UNEXPENDED BOND PROCEEDS AND REDUCING CERTAIN BOND AUTHORIZATIONS

A copy of this resolution is attached to the minutes of this meeting.

Discussion

Mr. Schrumm thanked Mr. Milone, Mr. Jaskot and staff for their hard work in getting everything right and keeping the Town in good financial condition. This resolution approves taking un-spent funds from certain projects and de-authorizing the funds to be used on other projects.

Finance Director Jaskot explained that the unspent project funds were some projects with remaining bond authorizations which will be de-authorized. Other projects were fully bonded, and the money was not totally spent. This money will be applied to other projects that need funding. There was about \$450,000 in excess bond proceeds to be applied to other projects.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

6. ADJOURNMENT

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

MOVED to adjourn the special meeting at 8:17 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk