

MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL ORGANIZATION MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2015, AT 7:30 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410.

Present

Council Members Paul Bowman, Michael Ecke, Patti Flynn-Harris, Liz Linehan, Sylvia Nichols, Robert Oris, Thomas Ruocco, Tim Slocum, Peter Talbot.

Staff: Carolyn Soltis, Town Clerk; Town Manager Michael A. Milone.

Department Heads: James Jaskot, Finance Director; William Voelker, Town Planner; George Noewatne, PW Director; Walter Gancarz, Town Engineer; Mario Panagrosso, Tax Assessor; William Donlin, Tax Collector; Robert Ceccolini, Parks and Rec Director; Ramona Burkey, Library Director; Michelle Piccerillo, Human Services Director. Arnett Talbot, Executive Assistant to Town Manager

1. Conducted by the Town Clerk.

A. Roll Call

The Clerk called the roll and a quorum was determined to be present.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

C. Election of Council Chairperson.

MOTION by Mr. Slocum; seconded by Mr. Ecke.

MOVED to elect Robert Oris as Chairperson of the Cheshire Town Council.

Discussion

Mr. Slocum read a statement for the record for his nomination of Robert Oris as Council Chairperson, stating Mr. Oris is committed to the service of the Town Council and the community for the betterment of Cheshire.

Mr. Slocum made a brief comment on his past responsibilities as Chairman of the Council,

Town Clerk Soltis called for nominations three times; there were no other nominations.

VOTE The motion to elect Robert Oris as Council Chairperson passed Unanimously by those present.

Chairman Oris thanked Mr. Slocum for his kind words, and for his support and nomination as Chair of the Council. Mr. Oris commented on Mr. Slocum's many years of service to the Council and other Boards and Commissions, and putting the community first before his own agenda.

2. Conducted by Council Chairperson

A. Election of Vice Chairperson

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

MOVED to elect Paul Bowman as Vice-Chairperson of the Cheshire Town Council.

Mr. Oris called for nominations three times; there were no other nominations.

VOTE The motion to elect Paul Bowman as Vice-Chairperson passed
 unanimously by those present.

Mr. Bowman thanked former Chairman Slocum and the Council members for their support.

B. Review of Town Council Rules of Procedure

Chairman Oris stated the Rules are the same as in the past, and will be adopted at the next Council meeting. He requested Councilors review the Rules, and contact him with their recommended modifications.

Ms. Flynn-Harris raised the question about moving the meeting start time to 7:00 P.m. She noted sub-committees meet at varied times, and setting a standard meeting time would be beneficial. She asked if there was anything in the Rules which would prohibit changing the meeting start time.

Stating he was not aware of a rule on meeting start times, Mr. Oris said this would be discussed at the future meeting where the Rules will be on the agenda.

C. Announcement of Council committee and liaison assignments.

Chairman Oris announced the assignments, and the list is attached to these minutes.

Town Council Committee Assignments

Audit:	Sylvia Nichols (Chair), Tom Ruocco, Liz Linehan
Budget:	Tim Slocum (Chair), Sylvia Nichols, Michael Ecke
Ordinance Review:	Patti Flynn-Harris (Chair), Tim Slocum, Paul Bowman
Personnel:	Tom Ruocco (Chair), Sylvia Nichols, Peter Talbot
Planning:	Paul Bowman (Chair), Tim Slocum, Patti Flynn-Harris
Solid Waste:	Peter Talbot (Chair), Paul Bowman, Tom Ruocco.

The liaison assignment list is attached to these minutes.

D. Approval of schedule of regular meeting dates for calendar 2016.

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution 120715-1

RESOLUTION #120715-1

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves the following meeting dates for the 2016 Town Council Regular Meetings. All meetings are held in Council Chambers on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. unless otherwise indicated.

January 12, February 9, March 8, April 12, May 10, June 14, July 12, August 9, September 13, October 11, November 8, December 13, and January 10, 2017.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

E. FOIA and email boxes

Ms. Talbot reviewed FOIA and email boxes for the Council, stating that the Council is a public agency, and must comply with requirements for meetings, public records, and emails. The Town Manager's office can create email boxes for the Council. Any questions on FOIA can be referred to Ms. Talbot, and staff will assist Councilors.

Chairman Oris is in favor of email boxes for Council members through Town Hall. He also believes it would be helpful for a tutorial on FOIA.

F. Introduction of Department Heads.

Town Manager Milone introduced the department heads in attendance at the meeting to the Town Council. The following department heads were present and each person introduced themselves.

William Voelker, Town Planner and Development Coordinator - 10 years working for the Town of Cheshire; formerly worked in Simsbury, Berlin, Meriden Planning Departments, and two regional agencies. Mr. Voelker has 34 years of experience, and will come before the Council with the final draft of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Jim Jaskot, Finance Director - 4 years serving as Finance Director, and was former deputy Finance Director; has 14 years specializing in municipal audit engagements; and looks forward to working with the new Council.

Keith Darin, Building Official - one year of service in Cheshire; worked in Haddam, Middlebury, and had a home improvement business for 23 years. He sees Cheshire moving forward; the department is working towards on-line permitting and streamlining record keeping; and town projects are moving along to be completed soon.

George Noewatne, Director of Public Works and Engineering - 11 1/2 years of service to Cheshire, as Deputy Director and now Director; former officer in the Army Corp of Engineers, construction project manager, assistant town engineer in Branford

CT. He enjoys working in Cheshire; the Town has excellent Public Work crews; 2016 projects are now being laid out with plans for 2016.

Community Pool Update - Mr. Noewatne informed the Council that Arizon will have construction substantially completed by December 23rd. Most of the steel is erected; ancillary steel is going in; pulling fabric next week; pouring pad for HVAC system next week; sprinkler system moving forward this week or next week; building will be more or less hole and an official building. After 12/23, staff will start the interior work and operational work for opening of the pool, which will take a few weeks.

Ramona Burkey, Library Director - 25 years experience in Library work in Cheshire, at Yale Academic Library, New Haven Free Library, and Assistant Director at Manchester CT Library. Ms. Burkey noted the Library is a 24/7 operation; is open 7 days a week; has outreach programs to schools, day care centers and senior center; and received a State grant to remodel the upper and lower levels of the Library.

Neil Dryfe, Police Chief - has been Chief in Cheshire for 5 years, and served 21 years as an officer in Hartford CT. Chief Dryfe said coming to Cheshire was an outstanding career move. The department has 2 officers at the Academy, and will be hiring 2 trained officers, bringing it to full strength of 48 officers in 2016. He noted that crime in town has significantly decreased in the last year, and CPD is in good shape. A major issue and #1 public concern is traffic calming - reducing speeding and traffic volume. The "canine officer" is doing well; community response has been positive; and the canine has been used on tracks and drug issues already.

Jack Casner, Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director - has spent 28 years with CFD, 12 years as Chief; oversees the Fire Department, full time staff and 60 active volunteer firefighters; and has been Emergency Management Director since 2011. Chief Casner said many programs are in place for emergency management, with practices twice a year.

Ladder Truck - Chief Casner informed the Council that bids are with the consultant in Pennsylvania; costs cited in the bids range from \$777,000 to \$950,000, with some concerns about the lowest bidder. By end of December he will report back to the Council on the bids. The Chief thanked the Council for support of the purchase of the new truck for CFD.

Michelle Piccerillo, Director of Human Services - she has been working in Cheshire for 18 years, and began her career as a Youth Activities Coordinator, experiencing her professional growth in Cheshire. Ms. Piccerillo looks forward to working with the new Council, keeping them informed of the department's support of Cheshire residents across the life span and meeting their needs.

Juvenile Review Board - The Council was updated by Ms. Piccerillo on the JRB, who reported they meet once a month looking at 3 or 4 cases each month. They review a variety of offenses; most cases are returned as completed; the board has been very successful; referrals are consistent; the board is very motivated and invested in its work;

and has taken interest in the kids and their families. All consequences from JRB stay within the Town; parental response is varied; most appreciate what is being done for their child and take everything seriously.

Carolyn Soltis, Retiring Town Clerk - has worked in the Clerk's office for 28 years, serving as Assistant Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, and 22 years as Town Clerk. The department has a variety of duties such as handling land records, minutes/agenda filings, issuing absentee ballots and accepting completed ballots. The biggest change has been with land records all computerized with better access for the public.

Chairman Oris thanked Ms. Soltis for her many years of work as Town Clerk, and on behalf of the Council and the community, wished her a happy retirement.

Louis Zullo, Personnel Director and Assistant Town Manager - has served in municipal government for 39 years, and 21 years with Cheshire. There are 5 union contracts expiring in 2016 and he will be working on the negotiations for the Town.

Robert Ceccolini, Parks and Rec Director - has been in the business 38 years, with 22 of them as director in Cheshire. He commented on Cheshire being a great town in which to work, the many changes during his tenure...Bartlem Park, Linear Trail, Community Pool, Dog Park, summer concert series, on-line program registration, new signboard at the Youth Center...and the great staff in the department. Mr. Ceccolini thanked the Council for its support of the department.

Councilor Linehan commended Mr. Ceccolini and his staff for the work done at Mixville Park, which is a Town gem, and getting lots of use.

Councilor Nichols stated her amazement at the long years of collective service by department heads, their professionalism, helpful expertise to the Council, and commitment to the Town, and being pleased to work with all of them.

Alfred Smith, Town Attorney - the firm of Murtha Cullina has served as Town Attorneys for several years, and Mr. Smith has been Town Attorney for 2 years. He was former Avon CT Town Attorney, and leads a great team of lawyers at the firm, who do most of the legal work for the Town. Mr. Smith considers it a pleasure to serve Cheshire and thanked the Council for the opportunity.

Gerald Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator - Mr. Sitko has 39 years of municipal experience, 24 years as Economic Development Coordinator, and 15 years with a variety of other employers.

Michael A. Milone, Town Manager - Mr. Milone has 39 years of municipal government experience; 13 years in New Haven CT; in 1990 he came to Cheshire as Finance Director; and in May 2000 was appointed Town Manager. It has been a great experience. Mr. Milone stated he has the finest department heads and staff in Connecticut, people of high integrity, energetic and who love what they do.

G. Town Manager review of projects and issues.

Mr. Milone gave a brief overview of the projects and issues (list attached to these minutes).

B. Key Issues - #1 through #7 are of utmost importance and priority for the Council.

Budget Pre-Planning meeting on December 16th.

Labor negotiations for five expiring union contracts.

Legislative proposals - resolution in January for submission to General Assembly.

STEAP grant for sidewalks on hold; another STEAP grant being applied for; this item goes to the Planning Committee.

Economic Development Initiative - Mr. Sitko is working with EDC for strategy and information for movement of the initiative in 2016.

Land Acquisition approval of \$500,000 at referendum; \$2.2 million in the fund; negotiations for special parcel of land will be revisited with the Council.

\$7.2 million claim against the State - hearing on December 14th; Mr. Milone and Town Engineer Gancarz will make the Town's case at the Claims Commission Officer.

Community Pool - construction almost complete; interior improvements to be done.

Town Council Specific Issues - Town Historian appointment, Town Attorney appointment, Clerk of Council appointment, and Rules of Procedure.

Pending Policies - many can be addressed as part of the budget process.

Chairman Oris thanked the department heads and staff for attending the Council meeting. He said they are a great staff of professionals, and the Council looks forward to working closely with each of them.

H. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Bowman; seconded by Mr. Slocum.

MOVED to adjourn the organizational meeting at 8:55 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk