

TOWN OF CHESHIRE

Cheshire Town Council
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MINUTES OF THE CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL AND BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2016 AT 7:00 P.M. ROOM 207, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present:

Town Council Members: Chairman Robert J. Oris, Jr., Patti Flynn-Harris, Liz Linehan, Sylvia Nichols, Tim Slocum and Peter Talbot

Staff: Michael A. Milone, Town Manager; Jim Jaskot, Finance Director; Gina DeFilio, Deputy Finance Director; Neil Dryfe, Police Chief; Brian Pichnarcik, Deputy Police Chief; Jack Casner, Fire Chief; Bob Ceccolini, Director Parks and Recreation (arrived at 7:45 p.m.); Ramona Burkey, Library Director and Deb Rutter, Deputy Library Director (both arrived at 8:45 p.m.)

Roll Call

The clerk called the roll and a quorum was determined to be present and the meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

The group pledged allegiance to the flag.

Police Department

Michael Milone briefly summarized the department's first project, a request for \$4.476M for the upgrade and expansion of the Town and Education Public Safety Radio System. Mr. Milone distributed a handout prepared by the project consultant which was a series of slides summarizing the key issues of this project, maps showing coverage areas of the existing communication system and the estimated project cost categorized by the various components. Mr. Milone indicated that Chief's Dryfe and Casner had collaborated on this project and would share the presentation. Mr. Milone also stated that the respective Chiefs would summarize the key components of the project and the need for this upgrade and expansion but asked that the Council allow the consultant to attend a future meeting to review the technical elements of the project, and the members agreed. Chief Dryfe summarized the components of the project cost and the distribution of costs among the various departments affected by this project. One of the cost components is for equipment to establish a microwave connectivity system between and among the tower transmitting sites and Chairman Oris expressed a concern about microwave exposure. Ms. Flynn-Harris did provide information in response to Mr. Oris' concern and Mr. Milone indicated that he will ask the consultants to address this issue when they meet with the Council.

Chief Casner explained the importance of this project on Fire Service operations, and the benefits of having this public safety communication system integrated with the schools.

In a response to a question from Mr. Oris regarding a proposed transmit and receiver site at the AT&T tower on Higgins Road Chief Dryfe indicated that this will necessitate negotiating a lease agreement with AT&T and we will determine the potential lease expense, estimated by the consultant.

Councilors also asked about the possible dispatch consolidation with Wallingford, North Haven, and North Branford and how a consolidation could affect this project. Chief Dryfe reiterated that after 2018 many of the console components in the dispatch center will not be supported by the manufacturer, so the equipment needs to be replaced regardless of the status of consolidation. Additionally our dispatch center equipment would be moved into

a new regional dispatch center, if it materializes. Chief Dryfe further indicated that all of the other components of this project need replacement and upgrading regardless of the location of the dispatch center.

Chief Dryfe briefly explained his additional capital budget requests, \$204,000 for replacement of mobile video car cameras and acquisition of body-worn cameras and the growing importance of this piece of equipment. Also, the five year vehicle replacement request of \$585,000, which would replace four vehicles on an annual basis and allow him to have a uniform fleet of a similar make of vehicles, which greatly reduces the expenses for maintenance and parts. Chief Dryfe also reported that he instituted the extra duty car rental program which yielded about \$2,300 over a two week period.

Fire Department

Chief Casner summarized the projects in his five year plan with special emphasis on the importance of the replacement of some of his pumping engines the oldest of which are currently 26, 24 and 22 years old and each is recommended for replacement in each of the next consecutive three fiscal years. In each case the vehicle will take at least one year to manufacture, which means they will endure a few more years of operation before possible replacement. Chief Casner reiterated the importance of a North End Fire Station but understands that until the Town has secured land for such a facility it is premature to request funding for construction, but requested it as a place holder.

The Chief also discussed the funding request for water main extensions and the high costs associated with the construction and maintenance fee imposed annually by the Regional Water Authority. He understood that this is a major impediment to advancing this project and also indicated that Cheshire has been the only municipality in this region that has extended water mains for fire suppression at their own cost.

Finally, the replacement of the existing aerial apparatus was discussed and the Chief voiced his agreement with the Town Manager's recommendation to attempt to refurbish the existing truck before considering a replacement vehicle.

Chief Casner then summarized his automobile replacement request contained in the General Services budget. Chairman Oris asked if the Chief could acquire the same vehicles as the Police Department, the Ford Police Interceptor Utility. Chief Casner indicated that he had planned to acquire these vehicles for the two Deputy Fire Marshals but needs a much larger S.U.V. for the Deputy or Assistant Fire Chief's because they need extensive storage capacity to house the equipment that they bring to a fire or rescue scene.

Parks and Recreation Department

Bob Ceccolini, Director of Parks and Recreation summarized his various requests and some of the revisions from the previous five year plan. Two of the noteworthy changes are the emphasis on bathroom restorations at various locations and renovations/resurfacing of tennis and basketball courts. The bathroom renovations have become a higher priority due to the increasing complaints voiced by one of the newly formed sports advocate groups in town while the courts, both tennis and basketball, are a growing liability due to their deteriorating surfaces.

Bob Ceccolini also spoke about the funds requested for the development of the Chapman property, \$2.7M, should the Town succeed in its acquisition. This estimate was provided by Milone and MacBroom as part of their plan design for this facility which was done about four years ago. Town Manager Milone mentioned that he reduced this request to \$2.0M because he felt that the Town's Public Works and Parks and Recreation maintainer crews could perform some of this work, thereby reducing the estimated cost.

Council members followed up on the discussion of Tuesday night's meeting regarding the idea of including funds for demolition, cleaning, excavating and landscaping etc. in the resolution for property acquisition.

Tim Slocum suggested that the funds needed for this purpose should be appropriated in this Parks and Recreation project account in F.Y. 16-17, and thereby not further complicate or confuse the referendum question. The members agreed and suggested that \$200,000-\$250,000 be moved from the year two recommendation of \$2.0M, into year one of the plan and year two reduced accordingly.

Given this information the Council agreed to have Bond Counsel develop the standard land acquisition resolution and clarify the reference to past appropriations, but not to add language about demolition, cleanup, etc. Mr. Milone reminded the Council members that at their meeting on July 26, the representative from Beta Group, the consultants who are conducting the environmental impact analysis on the property will provide the Council with a status report of his findings to date. Mr. Milone will ask Beta Group to provide an estimate of the cost of the property cleanup.

There was much discussion about the bathroom and court projects and which should be the priority for year one. There was a suggestion by Ms. Flynn-Harris to move the Rolling acres Tennis Courts (approximately \$150,000) to year two and move the \$180,000 for bathroom renovations to year one.

Mr. Ceccolini had pictures of the bathrooms and courts needing repair and rehabilitation and the Council decided to revisit these issues in more detail at the recap meeting.

Mr. Ceccolini then reviewed his vehicle requests which were consistent with his previous years request and over five years totaled approximately \$206,000. In year one Mr. Ceccolini is requesting a replacement 1 ½ cab pickup truck for one of his crew and Chairman Oris recommended that Mr. Ceccolini instead consider acquiring a crew cab pickup truck. Mr. Oris stated that for the amount of summer crew being shuttled around throughout the summer that the crew cab was a more spacious and practical vehicle and only approximately \$1,500 more. Mr. Ceccolini indicated that he will research the crew cab vehicle and get back to the Council.

Library

Ms. Ramona Burkey, Library Director, presented her request for the Library Reconfiguration and RFID conversion, a project that the Council was somewhat familiar with as it was discussed during last year's Capital Budget development.

Ms. Burkey reminded the Council that the State has awarded the Library a \$250,000 grant for this \$500,000 project, leaving the Town's net cost at \$250,000. Ms. Burkey informed the Council that after various discussions with the State Library Board that the RFID check in sorting equipment for \$60,000 should be taken out of the project and used as part of the reconfiguration project.

Ms. Burkey explained that the plan for this project is to renovate and reconfigure the lower and upper floors of the Library, similar to the project completed on the main floor of the Library a few years ago, which reconfigured and renovated the main level while also adding the RFID book check out system. Ms. Burkey said this proposed plan calls for a bathroom on the lower level, reconfiguring stacks to improve patrons' access to the collections, adding quiet space and programming space, new carpeting and paint.

Ms. Burkey did mention how the previous renovation was held up by almost eighteen months due to the State Bond Commission's failure to meet to approve the Library's grant, along with many other bonded projects. While this is unlikely with this new grant of \$250,000, it is still possible and with that Chairman Oris asked Ms. Burkey to modify her project to also

reflect a \$250,000 appropriation. Ms. Burkey will revise her plans accordingly and provide the Council with the components of a \$500,000 project and a \$250,000 project.

Adjournment

MOTION by: Sylvia Nichols

SECONDED by: Tim Slocum

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 p.m.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Michael A. Milone, Town Manager/Acting Clerk