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. AMENDMENT TO NATURAL GAS PURCHASING AUTHORIZATION DUE TO PRICE CHANGE

Mr. Milone explained to the Council that it must decide whether to lock in for FY 11-12 or blend and do two years FY 11-12 and FY 12-13.

Mr. Jaskot informed the Council that the consultant’s recommendation is to lock in for the two years.

Based on the information from the consultant, Mr. Milone reported that today’s rates were FY 11-12 $.86.ccf, and FY 11-12 and FY 12-13 combined $.88 ccf.

In the motion, Mr. Slocum suggested that it read “less than or equal to $.90 ccf.”

Mr. Sima stated that the Public Building Commission met and talked about performance contracting on some of the issues including buying gas back from vendors. He asked whether the Council’s decision precludes going into performance based contracting, and whether this vendor is to be the sole supplier to the Town.

Mr. Jaskot stated he does not believe it has to be the sole supplier or precludes performance based contracting. He will check on this and advise the Council.

Mr. Milone advised that the Town is not limited to quantities.

MOTION by Ms. Giddings; seconded by Mr. Sima.
BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #031610-1

RESOLUTION #031610-1

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes the Town Manager to enter into a contract to lock in natural gas rates for FY 22-12 and FY 12-13 combined at a rate of less than or equal to $.90 ccf.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.


POLICE DEPARTMENT, pages 64 and 101. Chief Cruess and Deputy Chief Popovich.

In developing the Police Department budget, Mr. Milone reported there is one vacant police officer position which has been frozen for the entire fiscal year. There is a small increase in the budget on the non-salary side, and the Chief and Deputy Chief did a good job in keeping costs consistent with this fiscal year. There is only an increase in the gasoline account, with many of the other accounts the same or slightly less than last year.

In comparing this budget to prior years, Mr. Milone noted it is traditional for the department to replace some of the rolling stock for an unmarked or marked vehicle. This fiscal year there is no vehicle acquisition for the rolling stock in the proposed budget. He advised that we need to be careful because in the past, as a result of delaying acquisition of police vehicles, it was necessary to purchase 6 or 7 vehicles in one year. From last year to this year the budget has a modest increase which is driven by the salary increases and a small increase in overtime costs.

Chief Cruess stated that he understands the difficult economic times. The non-salary area is up $4,600 to be offset against the $11,600 increase in gasoline. He is confident that the department can maintain the best and current level of services to the residents of Cheshire in these difficult economic times.

The areas which can, or will be, affected by the budget are community policing efforts. The department absorbs cost for large events such as Relay for Life, Memorial Day Parade, MS Walk, Music in Motion, high school graduation, Fall Festival and other Town events, and this may be difficult to do. At the Town events, the department puts the ATVs, the bicycle, motorcycles on duty, and this is for comp time which has a cost. The car seat program has been cancelled until support funding through the JAG grant can be obtained. The department obtained outside funding for the RAD program, Citizens Police Academy,
educational pamphlets. The department does the Bike Rodeo, Public Safety Commission signs, additional speed enforcement when school starts, and these are done outside normal working hours.

Chief Cruess stated the department wants to continue doing these services, but with the belt tightened the same level of service cannot be expected. The JAG grants for $30,000 covers mostly salaries, and next year this money will not be there if the grant is not received. The alcohol patrol costs $23,000 which pays for salaries of officers on overtime to do these duties. Ammunition costs have increased due to mandatory firearms training.

The costs of vehicle parts and maintenance continue to increase annually without an increase in the budget. The vehicles must be repaired immediately because the department cannot have a car down. The department works with the Public Works Department on vehicle repairs to control costs. One cruiser was purchased this year from the gift account, and the marked and unmarked fleet must be up to standards to respond to an emergency. These cars are the officer’s desk and office and they must be safe for the officers at all times.

Chief Cruess said we must consider where we will be when we come to next year’s budget. Abandoning purchase of vehicles results in an increase in repairs and maintenance and liability.

Technology is an important part of the Police Department and it must be maintained to work right.

Overtime – the increases do not reflect the salary increases and each year hours are lost. As officers make more money the overtime costs more. The four year average for patrol overtime is $233,000, not including grant funding, and Chief Cruess said it is not expected that this year’s target will be met. This does not include the grant money. A lot of training costs are paid out of the gift account and grants, and this $52,000 did not come out of the overtime budget. Overtime costs cover the Memorial Day Parade at $9,000; Fall Festival at $6,500; and the biggest issue with overtime is shift replacement. People call out sick, on vacation, injured, comp time, training, military leave, and this results in replacement of these people. Holidays and union meetings must be paid for out of the overtime budget and Chief Cruess said he is trying hard to control overtime. Other overtime payments are for case work, storms, meetings, community policing items, parades, court appearances, training.

Training – Chief Cruess said the department could always use a larger training budget. There is mandatory training which requires overtime, and he tries to stay within the minimum standards, but it sometimes does not work. Training costs money sending people outside the department. The classrooms in the department have been updated, training groups are brought into the Cheshire facility which saves money in travel, meals, overtime, and more people can be
trained at one time. Usually there are 8 or 9 officers in training at the Cheshire facility. The department participates in mandatory re-certification training with the South Central Chief’s Association and the Western Chief’s Association without a fee. Fifteen officers per year must receive mandatory re-certification which is 600 hours and this involves overtime. Other required training includes firearms and defensive tactics which are done in-house at 32 hours per year per officer. There are about 2,000 mandated hours of training each year. In FY 2009 there was 8,700 hours of training, so the Cheshire Police Department is doing more than is mandated. A supervisor’s training session was just held which cost quite a bit of overtime. This training is optional and the costs came out of the gift account. The University of New Haven held a 3 day training course on evidence handling, crime scene handling, interviewing and interrogation, at a cost of $5,000.

A new officer was hired, and she must go through 22 weeks of training, followed by a 10 week FTO program, and will not be available until October.

Chief Cruess explained that the department will always have officers on the threshold of retirement. With the reduced number of officers there will be overtime, including tasks which need to be done within the department.

Accomplishments of the department were cited by Chief Cruess (page 64), and they include the JAG grant of $30,000, successful RAD classes, Citizens Police Academy, alcohol awareness programs, the GPS system completed, up and running, implementation of a new software system CAD/RMS, increased supervisor training and officer training, updating of the department’s Rules and Regulations, employee evaluation process, and officer assigned to the Community Relations position.

Chief Cruess informed the Council that responses for the RFP for the computer software system are being reviewed with a decision to be made soon. This program will also benefit the Fire Department.

The objectives for FY 2010-11 include facilitating communication between the administration and rank and file; maintaining current programs, staffing, facilities and equipment, completion of the CAD/RMS project; complete State accreditation; continue facilities upgrade; seek cost saving measures for fuel usage and efficiency, and continuation of relevant personnel training.

Mr. Schrumm commented on the training and staffing with 49 officers, getting people through the training so they are ready to go when there is a turnover. He asked about the number of turnovers in the department below the rank of sergeant.

In response, Chief Cruess said that many times there is replacement of officers moving up through the ranks in the department. In the last few years there have
been 2 retirements and 4 resignations. There is the possibility of losing an officer in the near future to a State Police position in Florida. The Chief noted that sometimes when someone transfers from another department, he is getting another town’s problem.

Mr. Milone stated that one problem in Connecticut is that every officer must go through the 22 week training. Cheshire has an officer formerly with the Vermont State Police who must go through the academy training.

(Mr. White arrived at 7:12 p.m.)

On the overtime, Mr. Schrumm said there is a certain amount in the budget, and there are times when the department must pick up more overtime.

Without money in the budget, Chief Cruess said he would not run the RAD program. But for a requirement or emergency duty he can justify overtime. It comes down to "want to versus has to", i.e. a training class that is not mandated.

Mr. Slocum asked for clarification on the gift account, and if it shows up in this budget.

Mr. Milone advised the gift account does not show up on this budget.

Last year the department purchased a vehicle from the gift account, and Mr. Slocum asked for the cost of this vehicle.

Chief Cruess stated it was $22,287 for a cruiser.

Mr. Slocum stated that the gift account could keep the department on par with a car, if necessary. With respect to the personnel related challenges facing the department, he said it goes to costs associated with remediation of some issues within the department, with training as part of the operating budget. He asked whether this is an area which could be funded out of the gift account.

In reply, Chief Cruess said he is looking at the employee evaluation system, as recommended, but this money is not in the department budget. The funds will come from the gift account because this will be a benefit to all sides, and this expense will never be funded through the operating budget.

Regarding replacement of vehicles the Chief advised that 2 unmarked cars were purchases this year, one new and one used. With the used vehicles the department gets a 2 year warranty to save money on repairs.

Mr. Adinolfi asked about the assumption number for the salary increase for the dispatchers.
The Council was advised by Mr. Milone that the assumption is a 2% base for this year and 2.5% for next year, and this is across the board.

For the cars and replacement, Mr. Adinolfi asked how many are patrol cars and the total fleet number.

The Chief reported fleet inventory includes 14 marked, 9 unmarked cars, a pickup truck, DARE vehicle, and motorcycle.

In the worst case scenario, Mr. Adinolfi asked how many cars would need to be replaced next year and the year after.

Chief Cruess stated that to save the new cars they are taken off the road in the winter time. The cars all have technology equipment and this is hard on the batteries. Usually 3 cars are replaced each year, 2 marked and 1 unmarked. The mileage on the cars is looked at to determine replacement, and ideally, 3 cars should be replaced each year. There are 2 cars, one with 100,000+ miles and another with $125,000+ miles; both are in good shape; and the DARE vehicle came from a drug bust. Vehicles are purchased through a State bid process. The older cars are kept with only the lights on top, and are used for extra duty jobs at night, and sometimes the contractor wants a police vehicle at the job site at night and during the day. The costs are paid by the contractor.

With a new vehicle purchased for $22,000, Chief Cruess explained that this is a stripped version, and the department staff converts the care to a police vehicle. Sometimes the gift account is used for this cost of about $3,000 to $3,500. Ford Motor Co. will no longer produce the Crown Victoria, but the new car they are coming out with will be similar in size and space for a police vehicle.

Mr. Slocum asked about the DARE officer and whether this is a year round program.

In next year’s budget there will be no DARE officer, and Chief Cruess explained that this program will be gone due to it not being as successful as expected. It has been proven that it does not work. The DARE officer will be the full time SRO, working at Dodd and Cheshire High School.

Mr. Falvey asked about gasoline purchases, if they were in bulk, and if there is a pump at the police garage, and if the gas is exempt from taxes.

Chief Cruess advised that the Fire and Police Departments both have pumps, 400 gallon tanks, and gasoline is purchased through a State bid. The gas is tax exempt, and is about $2.31 per gallon.
Regarding the patrol cars and consumption of gasoline, Mr. Falvey asked if there is a program in place when cars are parked in high visible spots during shift, and not running the vehicle.

This was done years ago, but Chief Cruess explained that with all the technology equipment and electronics in the cars, they must idle to keep the batteries going.

Mr. Falvey asked about the overtime shift and if the Chief has an idea of the amount of time involved if someone is swapping a shift because of training. This person is paid and the other person is paid overtime.

Stating he would have to hand search this information, Chief Cruess advised that with the new system he will be able to retrieve this data and run a report.

The Chief cited the following information on overtime for November and December 2009 -- 35% due to contractual reasons; 8% training; 13% came out of grants; 21% case work loads; 23% holiday. This does not include comp time which is taken at a future date and can cost overtime.

Mr. Falvey asked if there is any reason to suspect anyone not working a full shift and swapping with time with someone else because they do not want to work a 40 hour week.

When a swap is done, a card is put in, and the swap goes into the schedule with the officer’s name showing up. Chief Cruess said the department looks for the officer to show up on that shift, and an officer cannot just “not show up.” If the officer does not show up for the swap shift, then the department is looking for the original office on the shift to show up. Swaps are usually for a full day, and it is rare for it to be a shorter time period. With a swap an officer may only work 30 hours in one week, and work 56 hours the next week, and these extra hours are not overtime pay.

With regard to the overtime for the Fall Festival and Relay for Life and other event costs, Mr. Sima questioned the reimbursement from the event to the department.

Chief Cruess advised that this is department overtime, and costs are not reimbursed. The police department does extra work for many events, i.e. Relay for Life includes planning, scheduling, signs. For extra duty on the day of the Relay, the Relay for Life absorbs the costs. The parade is the largest function, followed by the Relay for Life and Fall Festival. Two officers are on duty at the all night graduation party, and this is a good investment because the kids are not out all over the town. Bike patrols go to many events such as a football game, and officers get comp time. The parade is the most costly even though it is only for a few hours due to the department setting the signs, traffic division working all
day, shutting down roads, 75% of the officers work the parade, and this is all holiday pay at double time.

Mr. Slocum commented on the motor vehicle violation numbers projected to be 1550 in FY 2010-11.

Chief Cruess informed the Council that the crime rate in Cheshire has not increased, but there has been an increase in family problems and domestic issues.

Mr. Milone stated that the police department budget is expected to come in under budget by $6,400 this year.

PUBLIC
Derf Kleist, 251 Lancaster Way, asked about hiring part time employees, without benefits, for the police department.

In response, Chief Cruess said that hiring part time employees in the police department is difficult because they must receive the same mandatory training as full time officers, have the same equipment, and be State certified. Along the shore line towns there is some hiring of part time officers during the summer months, with full time officers getting first time refusal of the extra hours.

Mr. Kleist asked if there is a predicted pattern for officers wanting time off, i.e. on Mondays and Fridays, and if this is automatically scheduled and would reduce overtime.

The Chief explained that most of the replacement overtime for patrol officers is call-ins for sick, injury, military service related, etc. For some shifts there is minimal manning assigned; there are 2 supervisors assigned every day, and one is allowed to take time off.

Mr. Kleist asked for the cost figures for time officers spend in Meriden court.

These numbers are not available and the Chief said that officers are not in court that often.

Mr. Kleist asked for the cost of crossing guards unemployment benefits.

In reply, Mr. Milone said it is negligible or not at all as the line item for unemployment is small, and these people have not applied recently.

Mr. Kleist asked about going out to bid for cars and if there is a fleet cost.

The Chief said many times the department goes out to State bid, and sometimes there is a competitive bid process.
Mr. Kleist asked for the cost per resident for police services.

This is on page 65 of the small budget book, and Mr. Milone said it is projected to be $119.70 for FY 2010-11.

Mr. Kleist commended Chief Cruess for his detailed and informative explanation of the Police Department budget, and thanked him for his report.

**ANIMAL CONTROL, pages 117 and 38**

Mr. Milone reported a slight increase in the salary line of this budget which is offset by gas on the non-salary side. The gas costs increase +$180 to $900 this year.

Ms. Giddings asked if the Town receives reimbursement for vet costs from the dog owners.

Chief Cruess said that usually these dogs do not have owner, and the department keeps the dogs as long as possible. The Friends of the Animal Shelter help with the animals.

As more and more predators come into the State, Mr. Sima asked if Animal Control is addressing this issue.

They will come out for anything, but the Chief said many of these predators are protected by rights and the law. The department will assist when it is within the law. The staff does check up on dog licenses to determine whether an owner still has a dog.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT pages 131 and 51. Chief Casner and Deputy Chief Hershman.**

Mr. Milone advised that the budget increase is in the salary expense only; non-salary budget decreases; and the total budget increase is 1%.

Page 136 – line item 5603, Other Equipment. In 2008 the appropriation was $35,000, and it has been cut back and next year it is $12,500. The turn out gear and protective fire fighter equipment is paid out of C.N.R. every 3 years at $100,000 to $125,000. Mr. Milone emphasized that the fire fighters are not being exposed or compromised relative to public safety. The Chief has relied on the gift account for many of these costs.

Miscellaneous Account line items 5706, 5702, 5703 – are segregated because these are exclusively related to the volunteer firefighters.
Benefits related to full time Fire Department staff come under Employee Benefits.

Chief Casner explained that his department request was decreased by $14,000 by the Town Manager. Much of the increase hit throughout the year are absorbed by the gift account funds, such as painting buildings, buying thermal imagers, training, equipment. The department is able to keep its status quo or decrease costs by eating up more of the gift account.

The recruitment is on mark with 5 new regular fire fighters last year and 6 recruit people. Since 2006 the price per call has been $4.50 and Chief Casner said this issue must be addressed or restructured. This year the call volume is on target for about 1000 calls. With spring rain there were more than 70 to 80 calls in a 3 day period. Last year the town lost about $170,000 worth of property through fire damage.

Chief Casner cited the departments accomplishments including 100 carbon monoxide detectors donated to private homeowners through the gift account; new pumping engine outfitted and placed in service; continued acquisition of fire fighting safety gear; 74 fire fighters receiving physical exams as required by OSHA; and bidding and holding costs constant.

Objectives for 2010-11 include continued response to fires within 4 minutes and non-fire events in 8 minutes; continue to pursue grants; application for grants; possible construction of an emergency operations center; continuation of development opportunities for volunteer staff; implementation of the CAD system partnering with the Police Department.

Regarding the CAD system, Chief Casner explained there will be a data terminal in the fire engine and command car. The system will tell where the closest hydrants are located, building construction data, hazards, chemical information, and all this will be done en route to the emergency. The Fire and Police Departments are working together to get this system up and running.

The cost of the CAD system is $165,000 and Mr. Milone said some additional expenses will be paid out of the gift account. A consultant will be hired to see this project through from beginning to end, and this cost may be out of the gift account.

The Chief explained that the department has to enter all the information into the system. Alarm systems are already registered; the assessor cards will be utilized for the system information; and the CAD system will know all the details of a property.

A progress report will be provided to the Council by Mr. Milone on the CAD system once the contract is awarded.
Chief Casner said that everything on the CAD system will be housed at the Police Department and sent through modem to the mobile units.

Mr. Schrumm asked about use of the centralized 911 dispatch service.

The Council was informed by the Chief that about 30 departments out of New Haven use this centralized dispatch, including the Town of Prospect. Without a town’s own dispatch system, this is the most cost effective way to get a system in effect. If Cheshire had to go with this system it would not be cost effective.

Mr. Schrumm discussed the proposed cell tower down by the treatment plant, and noted this area is a dead zone. He asked whether this is a dead zone for the fire and police departments.

According to Chief Casner the whole northeast corner is a dead zone, and he has discussed this with the Town Manager. Avon Boulevard is also not conducive to service.

Mr. Milone has conveyed this information to the AT&T contact person, and it is understood this is a priority for Cheshire to have top position on that tower.

With this new cell tower Chief Casner said that, as part of the agreement, there will be storage space in the building for better service.

PUBLIC
Ray Squier, Cook Hill Road, asked about Elim Park having monitors or fire detectors.

Chief Casner said that Elim Park has a hard wired system for smoke and heat detection.

Town Manager Milone stated that Chief Casner is also the Director of Emergency Preparedness for the Town of Cheshire. More and more of his time is consumed with this activity, and he does a very good job.

Chief Casner commented on evacuation procedures for the towns around Millstone with a system in place for people to evacuate to another town.

Mr. Milone distributed a handout on C.N.R. 2009 appropriation and what was actually spent, the 2010 appropriation and what is frozen.

5. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Falvey; seconded by Mr. Schrumm.
MOVED to adjourn at 8:00 p.m.

VOTE  The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

____________________________________
Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk