Present
Tim Slocum, Chairman; David Schrumm, Vice-Chairman; Justin Adinolfi, Michael Ecke, Anne Giddings, Thomas Ruocco, James Sima, Timothy White.
Staff: Town Manager Michael A. Milone

1. ROLL CALL
The roll remained the same from the public hearing.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
The group Pledged Allegiance at the public hearing.

3. APPROPRIATION OF $7,068,000 FOR THE DESIGN, ACQUISITION AND CONSTRUCTION OF A PERMANENT POOL ENCLOSURE AT THE COMMUNITY POOL AND AUTHORIZATION FOR THE ISSUANCE OF $7,068,000 BONDS AND TEMPORARY BORROWINGS FOR SUCH PURPOSE.

MOTION by Mr. Schrumm; seconded by Mr. Ruocco.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council approves Resolution #052510-1

RESOLUTION #052510-1

RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING $7,068,000 FOR THE DESIGN, ACQUISITION, AND CONSTRUCTION OF A PERMANENT POOL ENCLOSURE AT THE COMMUNITY POOL AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF $7,068,000 BONDS OF THE TOWN TO MEET SAID APPROPRIATION AND PENDING THE ISSUANCE THEREOF THE MAKING OF TEMPORARY BORROWINGS FOR SUCH PURPOSE.

The full text of the resolution is attached to these minutes.

Discussion
Mr. Schrumm stated that under the Town Charter the Town Council must make an active appropriation for a dollar amount for a particular project. The Town cannot just go to referendum asking what people like or want, but under the Charter there must be a specific act by the Council before a matter can go to the voters. If that specific act calls for an expenditure of more than $350,000 the
authorization is made and the voters say yes or no to that authorization. On this matter the voters will have their say on June 22nd.

Mr. Sima stated he would support this resolution because the proposal is the best fix for the pool. The process started about 1 ½ years ago, and he served on the original pool subcommittee. There was an RFP, 6 vendors came forward, and the best of those were chosen for consideration by the committee. This committee spent many hours on the task of reviewing the proposals, and Mr. Sima has confidence that the permanent structure will solve a lot of problems with the pool becoming a pride for years to come, without the cost of years past. The Open Aire proposal is the best alternative, and the referendum should pass, with the Town going out two years before it starts to pay for this pool. It will be 2012 before the debt starts to be paid.

Mr. Adinolfi said he would not support the motion, and stated he is extremely supportive of a year round pool. His biggest concern is that the referendum is likely to fail given the dollars involved. This is a $7 million expenditure, and given the history of the pool and the economic situation, will not support the referendum. He said people should vote their conscience, but he has concerns it could fail, and the Council will not have the appetite to go to the next phase, which is proposal and referendum for a bubble. This may be the only viable option if the referendum fails.

However it is done, a referendum or survey, Mr. Adinolfi said it should be put forth. He had conversation with the town attorney, who led him to believe there could be a referendum giving people options, and this is what should be done. Mr. Adinolfi cannot support one option to be voted up or down. There are concerns about the costs involved, and he pointed out two of them. He said there was good work done by the PBC and Energy Commission, but they continue to state the bubble must be replaced every 9 years. Mr. Adinolfi has information from bubble manufacturers who say replacement is every 15 years, and this drives down costs. He believes there are energy savings that could be attributable to a bubble, both in its own operation and the cogeneration option. Stating he never thought he would be a fan of the bubble, Mr. Adinolfi said it may be the only option, reducing costs, and it is what we have now. The real mistake was made 10 years ago when a permanent structure and pool could have been built for $5 million. We have now spent close to $4 million, and plan to spend another $7 million. There is a need to make tough choices, and Mr. Adinolfi wants to put the option out to the people and then move forward.

According to Mr. Adinolfi this referendum could be done in November because there is enough useful life in the current bubble. He was told this by Mike Roach, that even with the November referendum, there would be time to put up the permanent structure before the useful life of this bubble is beyond us. For those trying to sell this option, which is a good one, the best and most costly, there should be no “bashing of the bubble” to sell this permanent structure to the
public. It is possible the Council will be back in 18 months asking the people to approve a replacement bubble. Mr. Adinolfi does not support the direction the Council is taking at this time and will vote against the resolution.

Mr. White had one concern about the absentee ballots because of the usual lower turnout for a special referendum in June as compared to November with a different result. He asked when these ballots will be available in Town Hall.

In response, Town Manager Milone explained that he is not sure when absentee ballots would be available. He also explained that the explanatory text will be available when people pick up these ballots. There will be a meeting with the Registrars of Voters and the Town Clerk to mobilize all of this as soon as possible.

There was a question raised by Mr. White about the annual number of pool users, annual passes, and he wants these numbers. The day user data has been available in the past, and Mr. White believes a good number of people use the pool for many reasons. He heard a summer only pool requires a larger subsidy than the structure going to referendum and it passes. He assumes these assertions were made on a fiscal analysis prepared by the Town Manager.

Mr. Schrumm said this was driven by information from Mr. Wetmore, when you take into consideration the savings, the subsidy is $109,000. At one of the pool subcommittee meetings there was an estimate of $150,000 to $225,000 for a summer only pool. If the projections are true, the net subsidy would be less for the structure than summer only. With the summer only, you are talking about June, July, August, and with 50% bad summer weather there is a loss of $50,000+ in revenue.

With a summer only facility Mr. White said there were only 2 full time employees, and he is not sure which direction the Town Council would go. Mr. White does not accept the assertion that a summer only facility will cost more than this structure. During the public hearing, Mr. Kleist commented on the swim teams and where they would swim and if anyone could speak to what happens to the teams in the Fall and Winter.

Mr. Kleist said that the construction would start after the girls’ swim team season.

In that regard, Mr. Sima said the swim team season ends when it is too cold for outdoor swimming, and there would be loss of two competition seasons during construction. Regarding starting now with the June referendum, he said it is really to make sure the facility is open for summer use and get this high revenue stream.

Mr. White said many people are concerned about the swim teams and where they would compete.
Doug Levens said there are some options and they include Wesleyan University, a facility in Beacon Falls, Cheshire Academy (which cannot support full time facility). Both high school teams are looking into alternatives, and would be going to safe facilities.

Regarding the reduction in the overall budget pool subsidy Mr. White asked if this will go down, but there is another debt line in the budget which will be hit with an increase and he wants clarity on this. Overall for the next 20 years there is increased cost and over 40 year life cycle we are talking about decreased cost.

Mr. Purtill explained for Mr. White that the increase only goes to 8 or 9 years looking at the debt service versus the pool budget.

Stating he will support the motion to get the voters ability to speak on the pool, Mr. White has heard from people on both sides. With a 20 year payback he would not vote for the project, but with 8 or 9 year payback he might consider it. He is not convinced a summer only pool would be more costly than a year round one, but believes the proposal is better than the bubble. He thanked everyone who participated in the process, especially the PBC, Pool Subcommittee, and Town Councilors.

Mr. Ruocco stated that this is a difficult vote and he is still undecided on his vote for the pool proposal. He believes the public has the right to vote on the referendum and solution for the pool because so many people have a vested interest in every referendum item. Mr. Ruocco wants the proposal for the pool to go to referendum, give it the chance it deserves to be a quality facility, and produce a long term savings expected from any municipal project. He requested that the PBC Pool Committee presentation be forwarded to him electronically for distribution to the public.

Ms. Giddings said this issue has been a divisive one, and people have complained about the annual subsidy, and there are many opinions. She thought the best way to handle this would be to have a November referendum, but understands the evidence presented, and there would be a tremendous revenue drop if the pool is not in operation during the summer months. The costs of materials/metals will increase; there is a $50,000 cost to put up and take down the bubble; and Ms. Giddings agrees a June referendum is what we need to get the issue in front of the voters. She urged all voters who will not be available to vote on June 22nd to get an absentee ballot. This proposal provides the lowest total cost of ownership to operate in a business like fashion. Over the lifetime of this permanent cover costs will be significantly lower, $15 million savings over 40 years.

MOTION by Ms. Giddings; seconded by Mr. White.
MOVED that the Town Council extend the meeting beyond the 11:00 p.m. curfew to the conclusion of business.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

With regard to his question about the payback or break even, Mr. White said it was 8 to 9 years and this is a comparison between the structure and the bubble, or summer only facility.

In response, Mr. Purtill clarified that he has used the number of 11-12 years as the break even point. In the first presentation the cogeneration was not included as a consideration, and with approval of this by the Council, the total number came to $7.1 million. The benefit of cogeneration was then considered in the payback estimate, and it is now shorter.

The Council was informed by Mr. Purtill that a question was raised on whether Open Aire could do better on the price, and the company is willing to hold the price. Aluminum is a commodity that rises and falls, and Open Aire is holding the price and this is an important concession along with guarantees and other things provided to the Town.

Stating the pool is a great facility at a high cost, Mr. White said he does not want to have only two options, bubble or permanent structure, and he does not believe a summer only pool is a high cost. He will not support the pool because of the high cost.

PUBLIC COMMENTS
Keith Goldberg informed the Council that on the bubble the committee put in 9 years, and he said Mr. Adinolfi was correct with his statement of 15 years life on the bubble from the manufacturers. Mr. Goldberg said this 15 year life span factors on a bubble which stays in place, not one taken down and put up each year.

According to Mr. Goldberg, Mr. Purtill had a conversation with Open Aire and G. F. Rhode about going to a November referendum, and the issue is the aluminum costs. Also, with later construction into the new year there is certified payrolls increase, labor costs increase and material costs go up. G.R. Rhode has guaranteed the price will not change even if the market changes, and the first thing they will do is buy the aluminum.

Mr. Ecke stated he cannot believe a company so commodity driven is not hedging in the market on aluminum. $7 million is a lot of money given the current state of the economy, and he would be more comfortable with a November referendum. Mr. Ecke does not believe there will be enough people out in June to vote, but we need to let the public decide. He will support the resolution to Mr. send this matter to referendum for a vote in June.
Mr. Schrumm will support sending this proposal to referendum, without hesitancy, stating he will vote in favor of the permanent structure for the pool. If the community wants a year round facility this is the best option, and without passage of the referendum the Town will continue with the bubble. Mr. Schrumm reported that the bubble partially collapsed this past winter, and this is why we need to go out to referendum in June. If successful, we will not have to worry about the bubble collapsing ever again. He wants the bubble to be gone, and the permanent enclosure is the way to do this. He said the pool exists, is used by a wide cross section of the community, and something must be done about it. Mr. Schrumm commended the PBC for the work it did on this project, which was truly vetted by the committee. When the pool opened 6 years ago, the Open Aire company was not around, and the pool was looked at as a new, innovative idea to get a year round pool. It has been found out that bubbles do not work over swimming pools in New England.

When he heard the Open Aire price, Mr. Schrumm was skeptical about supporting it, but he visited an Open Aire facility, became a believer that this is the right way to go for the community pool. It makes no sense to wait because we will never get lower interest rates or commodity and material costs. Now, it is up to the public to educate themselves on this matter for a pool which is a community asset.

Chairman Slocum stated his support of the proposal and appropriation for many reasons. Based on the evidence presented the proposal is a reasonable solution at a cost to the community which it can bear and benefit from. There is an investment in the pool, and it must be supported by improving the facility. With the new structure there will be less problems, and the facility will meet the needs of the various users. Mr. Slocum supports the permanent enclosure, and he will advocate this to all his constituents, and hopes the public will support it.

VOTE The motion passed 7-1; Adinolfi opposed.

4. CALL FOR SUBMISSION OF RESOLUTION FOR APPROPRIATION FOR COMMUNITY POOL ENCLOSURE PROJECT TO REFERENDUM.

MOTION by Mr. Schrumm; seconded by Mr. White.

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Town Council approves Resolution #052510-2.

RESOLUTION #052510-2

RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR SUBMISSION OF RESOLUTION TO REFERENDUM PURSUANT TO SECTION 7-3(G) OF THE TOWN CHARTER
RESOLVED: That the resolution entitled “Resolution Appropriating $7,068,000 for the Design, Acquisition and Construction of a Permanent Pool Enclosure At the Community Pool and Authorizing the Issuance of $7,068,000 Bonds of the Town to Meet Said Appropriation And Pending The Issuance Thereof the Making of Temporary Borrowings for Such Purpose”, be submitted to the Town electors for approval or disapproval at a referendum to be held pursuant to Section 7-3(G) of the Town Charter on Tuesday, June 22, 2010 between the hours of six o’clock A.M. and eight o’clock P.M. (E.D.T) that the warning of said referendum state the question to be voted on as follows:

Shall the resolution entitled “Resolution Appropriating $7,068,000 for the Design, Acquisition and Construction of a Permanent Pool Enclosure At The Community Pool And Authorizing The Issuance Of $7,068,000 Bonds Of The Town To Meet Said Appropriation And Pending The Issuance Thereof The Making Of Temporary Borrowings for Such Purpose”, adopted by the Town Council at its meeting held on May 25, 2010, be approved?

VOTE The motion passed 7-1; Adinolfi opposed.

5. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Schrumm; seconded by Ms. Giddings.

MOVED to adjourn the special meeting at 11:07 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk