Commissioners Present:
Chairman David Pelletier, Lelah Campo (arrived at 7:45 a.m. and departed at 8:45 a.m.) Robert Sepp and David Orsini (not yet a sworn in member, departed at 8:20 a.m.)

Commissioner Absent:
Richard Kaplan
Brian Miller and William Stanley

Staff Present:
Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:
John Lesky, Cheshire Chamber of Commerce Liaison; David Schrumm, Town Council Liaison; Bill Campion, Jr., President / Chief Executive Officer at Campion Ambulance Service and John Zarrella, Greater Waterbury Director of Operations at Campion Ambulance Service (departed at 8:20 a.m.)

I. CALL TO ORDER
Chairman Pelletier called the meeting to order at 7:36 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL
The roll was called.

III. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM
It was determined that a quorum was not present.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 15, 2010 Regular Meeting
Chairman Pelletier stated that the approval of the June 2010 meeting minutes would have to wait until the next meeting because there was not a quorum present to vote on their approval.
VI. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

VII. BUSINESS

A) Discussion with Campion Ambulance Service

Chairman Pelletier and Mr. Sitko welcomed Bill Campion, Jr., President / Chief Executive Officer at Campion Ambulance Service and John Zarrella, Greater Waterbury Director of Operations at Campion Ambulance Service who were present to talk with the Cheshire Economic Development Commission this morning.

Mr. Campion stated that Campion Ambulance Service was started in 1947 by his uncle with only 2 vehicles out of St. Mary’s Hospital in Waterbury. Mr. Campion’s father, Bill Campion, Sr. took over the Ambulance Service just over 30 years ago. Today, Campion Ambulance Service is still a family owned business that employees 240 people with their emergency and medical transportation servicing the needs for the people of Waterbury and surrounding towns. Campion Ambulance Service is a commercial, For-Profit Company that is regulated by the Public Health Department and Department of Transportation.

There is an emergency side of the business, which has set territories in Connecticut and the non-emergency side of the business which is competitive, with no boundaries for travel to transport a patient / client. These transports are for doctor’s appointments, non-emergent facility transfers and transporting to/from rehabilitation facilities.

The employees at Campion Ambulance Service consist of Paramedics, EMTs, dispatchers, billing and basic transport people. There are also vehicle maintenance personnel and training personnel on staff.

In 1982 Campion Ambulance Service purchased Cheshire Ambulance from John and Georgette Miller, who ran the ambulance service out of their garage, next to their house. The garage facility was used as the Cheshire “base” until earlier this year when a new larger “base” was built and the original house and garage were taken down. Mr. Campion noted that the majority of the work on the new facility in Cheshire was done by Cheshire contractors and businesses. The Cheshire base has a 3-person shift at the facility 24 hours a day, 7 days a week except for when they are on the road responding to calls for assistance. Mr. Campion noted that when a call comes in for assistance in Cheshire, an ambulance will move to the east side of Waterbury near the Cheshire town line to be available to cover Cheshire in case another call comes in.

Chairman Pelletier asked if the reimbursement rates for ambulance transports are different in each area of Connecticut? Mr. Campion replied no, it the rates are regulated by the State, it is the same rate for the emergency service with the only difference being the amount reimbursed based on the distance that is traveled for each call. Mr. Zarrella noted that if an ambulance responds to a call, assistance is given and there is no transport of a patient, there is no fee billed to the patient or reimbursed to
Campion Ambulance Services. He also noted that Campion’s is seeing a lot more patients with no insurance coverage that have to make personal payments for services, with the tough economy.

Mr. Campion talked about how Campion’s is ahead of the curve with regards to electronic medical records requirements, thanks to a State Grant that provided each ambulance car at Campion’s with the necessary computer equipment. Currently the hospitals do not electronically receive the patient information but there are dedicated printers at each of the local hospitals that allow the Campion Ambulance crews to print out each record to give to the hospital staff.

Chairman Pelletier asked when the gas prices rose dramatically, did the reimbursement rates increase as well? Mr. Campion replied that the livery, non-emergency services did receive additional reimbursements but there was no increase on the emergency service reimbursements.

When asked if the employees are unionized at Campion Ambulance Services, Mr. Zarrella replied no but the industry is very susceptible to unions. Mr. Campion stated that he believed the reason there was no union at his company is because they try to keep competitive pay rates and benefits, they listen to their employees and it is a real family environment. Mr. Zarrella added that Campion’s also make performance payments to the employees, which is not something you find at most ambulance service companies.

Chairman Pelletier asked if there is a shortage of employees? Mr. Campion replied that when the economy is good, it is a little harder to find people and employees are less likely to want to fill extra shifts. When the economy is bad more people are anxious to fill shifts. He also noted that the administrative staff at Campion’s has over 100 years of collective experience and upper management has between 70 and 80 years of collective experience. Mr. Campion stated that recently there have been a number of new employees coming from Quinnipiac University, which are willing to work the “off” shifts to further their physical therapy / EMT training. He added that a number of EMT and Paramedics go on into the fire, police, physician assistant and nursing fields.

When asked where Campion’s gets their reimbursements and payment from, Mr. Campion stated that Medicare is the primary source, followed by Federal / State Medicaid and then 3rd party insurers like Aetna, Anthem, etc. After that it is the private payers, those that are under or un-insured, homeless, etc.

Mr. Sitko commented that Campion Ambulance Service was really good to work with during their new base construction project. Mr. Zarrella stated that he over saw the majority of the project and he thought everyone at the Town Hall was great to work with, adding that it is nice to see different towns can operate differently.

Mr. Campion commented that if the Economic Development Commission were to ask what they could do for Campion Ambulance Services, he would say they could use assistance with small business regulations for items ranging from medical benefit requirements to storm water run off. These are all things that add up for a small business to be mandated with. Mr. Campion also explained that the Department of
Motor Vehicles and the Department of Public Health needs to inspect all of their vehicles 2 times per year but in order for this to happen, Campion Ambulance Services has to pay the overtime rate for a Motor Vehicle Inspector to come to their facility, which is also not easy to schedule.

Mr. Sitko suggested that perhaps Campion Ambulance Services could work with the Government Affairs group at the Chamber of Commerce. Chairman Pelletier noted that the commercial vehicle inspection locations have been greatly reduced in the State.

Chairman Pelletier thanked Mr. Campion and Mr. Zarrella for attending this morning’s Economic Development Commission meeting.

B) Meetings with Cheshire companies

Mr. Sitko stated that Jordan Caterers would be at the September 2010 Economic Development Commission meeting.

C) Pratt & Whitney

Mr. Sitko reported that Pratt & Whitney lost its appeal with the District Court, which means that they can not start shutting down their Cheshire and East Hartford facilities before December 5, 2010, which is when their union contract expires. New union contract negotiations will likely start in October.

D) Focus Group Meetings

Mr. Sitko stated that the Focus Group meeting scheduled for June with the local manufacturers has been postponed until September. There will be 2 additional focus group meetings in the Fall.

E) West Main Street Commercial Area Streetscape Improvements Project Update

Mr. Sitko reported that he was before the Town Council recently regarding a new STEAP Grant application for the West Main Street Streetscape project. This STEAP Grant application is for $350,000. Mr. Sitko also received approval from the Town Council for an amendment to Milone & MacBroom’s engineering contract for the next phase of this project, which will be paid with previously awarded STEAP Grant funding. The first phase of the West Main Street Commercial Area Streetscape Improvements Project should begin in the next week or so.
F) EDC Representative to Town Beautification Committee

An Economic Development Commission representative to the Town Beautification Committee is still needed; Chairman Pelletier stated that he would fill the vacancy until someone else steps up for the position.

G) Liaison Reports

Mr. Lesky commented that the Cheshire Chamber of Commerce’s Annual Golf Tournament is coming up this Monday.

Councilman Schrumm, Town Council Liaison noted that the Capital Budget season starts tonight and includes plans for the Waste Water Treatment Plant upgrade that is scheduled to start in approximately 2 years at an estimated cost of $30 million. Councilman Schrumm noted that the Town is in good shape financially as the long-term debt is starting to recede. Mr. Sepp asked how much of the Treatment Plant project would the State be reimbursing Cheshire? Councilman Schrumm replied he believed it would be 20% with 2% financing, but efforts are underway to try to receive additional State reimbursement because of the phosphorus limit requirements at the Plant. Mr. Sitko commented that the Waste Water Treatment Plant is an important project for the Town, even from an Economic Development point of view.

H) Coordinator’s Report

The Incentive Committee is made up of Mr. Pelletier, Mr. Stanley and Mr. Miller; Mr. Sitko will be trying to coordinate a meeting of this group in August.

The Business Appreciation Day Committee is made up Mr. Pelletier, Ms. Campo and Mr. DeJongh. Mr. Sitko will be planning a meeting for August with this group and Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, Sheldon Dill, to talk about possible guest speakers for the event.

Mr. Sitko has included in this meeting’s packet copies of recent articles relating to DanJon Manufacturing and Lane Construction, for the Commissioners to review.

Mr. Sitko stated that the former Hartman / Hulteen property on South Main Street has new owners that are planning to re-develop the property. Two medical condominium buildings will be constructed towards the back of the property.

Mr. Sitko reported that there have been some noise complaints recently regarding Consolidated Industries. During their “shop shut down” in the coming weeks, mitigation equipment will be installed to help reduce the noise from their facility.

In the recent Focus Group meeting with the local growers, there were complaints about the condition of Schoolhouse Road and Peck Lane. The Town is in the progress of prepping Peck Lane for paving and the Public Works Department is trying to address some of the issues on Schoolhouse Road. Councilman Schrumm noted that West
Johnson Avenue is also being prepared for paving; he noted that this was the only road in Town that was deemed “appropriate and ready” for improvement through the Federal Stimulus Program.

Mr. Sitko mentioned that he recently visited Goodrich Corporation, which is the former BAE / Allied-Bendix company located on Knotter Drive.

I) Other

Councilman Schrumm asked if there is anything happening with the former Huxley’s property on South Main Street, next to 7-11. Mr. Sitko replied that he did not know of anything but he would check with a representative for the property.

It was noted that Tom Scannell is now on the Water Pollution Control Authority and will no longer be serving on the Economic Development Commission.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Pelletier adjourned the meeting at 8:47 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Recording Secretary