MINUTES OF THE CHEHSIRE TOWN COUNCIL AND WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2010, AT 7:30 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Public Hearing Subject Matter:
FISCAL YEAR 2010-2011 ANNUAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE BUDGET

Present: Council Chairman Timothy Slocum; Vice Chairman David Schrumm; Justin Adinolfi, Anne Giddings, Michael Ecke, Andrew Falvey, James Sima, Timothy White.  
Absent: Thomas Ruocco.  
WPCA Members: Mr. Attwood, Mr. Gancarz, Mr. Pelton, Mr. Skanell.  
Staff: Michael A. Milone, Town Manager; Patti Lynn Ryan, Finance Director; James Jaskot, Deputy Finance Director; Dr. Greg Florio, Superintendent of Schools.

1. Roll Call  
The clerk called the roll and a quorum was determined to be present.

2. Explanation of Hearing Procedure and Agenda.  
Chairman Slocum explained the procedures for a public hearing of the Cheshire Town Council.

3. Reading of the Legal Notice.  
The Clerk of the Council read the legal notice.

4. Presentation on hearing subject.  
Chairman Slocum stated that this is a public hearing on the Town Manager’s Capital Expenditure Plan. The Council has not adopted the Plan yet, but will vote on the Plan at its August 31st meeting.

Town Manager Milone gave a presentation on the FY 2010-11 Capital Expenditure Plan. The Five Year Plan was available for review in the Council Chambers. Mr. Milone stated that the Council will be addressing the Five Year Plan and the Annual Capital Expenditure Budget over the next two weeks. This public hearing is on year one of the Plan, FY 2010-11.

There are 28 projects proposed for this fiscal year; the sum total of these projects is $8,885,000; the gross amount to be bonded for these projects is $7,795,000.

Mr. Milone explained that this budget was submitted to the Council, and over the next two weeks the Council will make decisions on what to appropriate and how much of the projects will be bonded or paid from other sources.
5. Questions at the discretion of the chair.

Dr. Florio thanked and complimented Town Manager Milone for an outstanding job on the capital budget presented to the Town Council, and for working with the BOE administration to look out for what is important for the community and public school system.

Dr. Florio requested that the Council approve the CEP as presented. He is impressed that such a Plan fits within the parameters set forth when looking forward to this fiscal year. There is not much in the Plan that is exciting, but Dr. Florio reminded everyone that the school buildings are well maintained, but old and tired. In this difficult economy he asked that deferment of some of these items not take place, because in a few years the buildings will be older and more tired. There are mundane items in the Plan such as roofs, indoor air quality, Smart Boards which are important to the quality of education, and that the turf field project move forward which will be a valuable asset to the community.

Dr. Florio applauded the group of community citizens who raised over $200,000 in the last few months, in this difficult economy, to move the turf field closer to installation without cost to the Town.

Vincent Masciano, Director of Management and Services, BOE, provided the Council with information on the initial cost of the turf field and track improvements project. This issue will be discussed by the BOE at its August 19th meeting.

Mr. Masciano reviewed the proposal for the turf field, and based on the estimate received from StanTec and decision made within this proposal, the cost will be $868,616. This is a high cost for today, and StanTec has indicated there would be a 10% reduction off this cost if the project moves forward now or while the economy is in a state of slow down. The cost estimate could range as low as $781,000. This is within the range of the $825,000 number in the Capital Budget. There is $500,000 from a State reimbursement grant through DEP, and an estimate of $300,000 raised by the turf committee.

This project would be timely for the Council to consider taking the resolution from November 2009. The resolution stated that if the turf committee raised at least 50% of the funds needed to build the field, the project should be taken forward to get the grant contract executed and lock up the $500,000.

Regarding the replacement of the track, which is the second component of the project, Mr. Masciano said the range of cost is estimated at $320,000 to as low as $288,000. With the track replacement there is an allocation for a drainage component to the field and track at $69,000 to the track project and $69,000 to the turf field. There is expectation of $30,000 in engineering costs.
Mr. Masciano cited the last section of the costs which includes future options/considerations for the high jump area at South “D” - $116,889; renovate pole vault and long jump areas - $130,557; new football goal posts and padding - $20,000; sleeves and 20 ft. high removable protective netting - $19,800. These prices would be reduced by the 10% savings.

Mr. Masciano said these projects do not need to be done at this time; they could be future projects; but, they need to be handled.

Regarding the engineer costs, Chairman Slocum asked if they would be in their budget process or factored into the entire package of the projects. Mr. Slocum stated that the Council has not voted to appropriate the money from the DEP grant. There is sort of a dovetailing, that if this is approved in the capital budget, the Council would have to vote on the money, and this must be done at the same time.

According to Mr. Masciano there is a contract out there which the DEP wants executed, but he is not sure if this starts the five year clock for this grant. Signing the contract does not obligate Cheshire to accept the grant, but locks up the money for Cheshire.

John Attwood, 140 Mountain Brook Place, Chairman of the WPCA, asked about the turf field life span, 10-12 years, and if the budget has included putting money aside for future needs such as replacement of the turf. He also asked about cost savings, and assurance that there is money for replacing the turf.

Matt Bowman, 315 Oregon Road, stated his support of the turf field project. With regard to replacement costs of the turf field, he informed the Council and the public that there will be savings in landscaping, lining the field, fertilizer, cutting the grass, watering the field – over a period of 12 to 15 years. He noted that the products get better and better so the life span of the field is in the 15 year range.

Mr. Bowman reported that studies have been done by the Cheshire turf committee and other towns regarding the safety of the turf field. The reports state there are fewer injuries on a turf field than on a natural grass field; there is less stress; it is more cushioned; and it is better for athletes.

It was pointed out by Mr. Bowman that all of the projects that come forth with donated money have never had the Council asking about costs of replacement. The people raising the money were never asked to provide replacement costs. Over time everything wears out and has to be replaced.

According to Mr. Bowman the turf committee has raised $220,000+ for the field, and this is excellent during difficult economic times. Mr. Bowman thanked the Council for giving the committee the opportunity to raise the money for the turf
project, and the committee is returning to the Council with 50% of the costs raised, and these are hard numbers.

West Main Street Streetscape Project – Mr. Bowman reported the project was budgeted at $400,000, and it came in at $277,000, which is a substantial savings. He expects that the turf field project will also come in at much less than anticipated. Mr. Bowman stated his support of many of the items in the first year of the CEP because of savings to the Town and getting these projects completed, and Cheshire will be a better place.

Robert Behrer, 435 Squire Hill Road, addressed the Council on the replacement costs of the turf field. He said StanTec is a professional design firm which has built the turf field at Gillette Stadium, MIT, and many other places. They reinforced and confirmed the numbers developed by the turf committee. In terms of replacement costs, numbers were recast based on information the committee had received. At this time, after 8 years with the field, it is possible the project will break even with replacement costs. After 10-12 years the numbers show a slight surplus. Mr. Behrer emphasized that replacement costs are serious to the committee, and they have been doing their work. Most of the replacement costs will be covered, but he would not state this as a guarantee.

It was noted by Mr. Behrer that other public donated projects were not asked to come up with replacement costs. The turf committee has taken this on as part of their obligation.

Steve Trifone, CHS Athletic Director, spoke on behalf of the coaches and athletes in support of the turf field and track project at the high school. He said that the entire facility needs to be upgraded. The football season officially kicked off and during practice a player sprained his ankle on the field in the weeds. This would be eliminated with a turf field. Mr. Trifone reported that studies on the safety of turf fields have been released, along with environmental concerns. There have not been any negative statements. The committee believes the turf fields are safe to the environment, to everyone who plays on them, and to anyone use uses them.

The impact of this turf field was cited by Mr. Trifone who said there is better utilization of the facilities, more programs will be allowed to grow, with teams having a place to practice and play. The field and track will be state of the art. With the product now being considered for the turf field, we are getting into the 15 year life cycle in New England.

Mr. Trifone also reported that Mr. Kuhner, Ram Band Director, supports the turf field for the music program at the high school. With this new field, Cheshire High School will have a state of the art facility and programs.

6. Proponents and Opponents statements alternately expressed.
7. Rebuttal at the discretion of the chair.

8. ADJOURNMENT
Chairman Slocum closed the public hearing at 8:07 p.m.

Attest:

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Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk