

MINUTES OF THE JOINT CHESHIRE TOWN COUNCIL AND BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, MARCH 29, 2018, AT 7:00 P.M. IN TOWN HALL, ROOM 207-209, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410.

Present

Budget Committee Members: Sylvia Nichols and Jeffrey Falk.
Thomas Ruocco, Peter Talbot, David Veleber.

Absent: Paul A. Bowman, Patti Flynn-Harris, Robert J. Oris, Jr., Timothy Slocum

Staff: Michael A. Milone, Town Manager; James Jaskot, Finance Director; Arnett Talbot, Assistant Town Manager; Joshua Mederios, Director of Parks and Recreation; Michelle Piccerillo, Director of Human Services.

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. APPROVAL OF SPONSOR LOGO ON CHESHIRE COMMUNITY POOL STARTING BLOCKS.

Mr. Milone explained that the Sea Dogs Swim Team offered to be the sponsor for the starting blocks and timing system at the Community Pool, and wanted recognition for their sponsorship. The Sea Dogs logo would be on the starting blocks. The Town Council was amenable to this offer, and must approve the sponsorship.

Mr. Mederios informed the Council that the Parks and Recreation Commission and Department are ready to move forward with the order for the starting blocks.

According to Mr. Mederios, the YMCA has decided that it wants to also have the "Y" logo on the blocks. Mr. Mederios, Ms. Adams and Mr. Milone met to discuss this issue, and determined it was not appropriate, nor was it going in the right direction. The funding for the sponsorship was raised by the Sea Dogs parents group, and is not the Y's money. There were two options offered for the Y's consideration.

In his memo, Mr. Mederios outlined the two options. Option #1 was having the Sea Dogs logo and Y name, which is not the proposal endorsed by the town. Option #2 was no logo on the blocks, but a sponsorship plaque (11x17) prominently displayed in the pool lobby. Option #2 is the recommendation of the Parks and Rec Department.

When town staff met with the Sea Dogs group, Mr. Milone said the group made it clear it is their contribution and asked for their logo on the blocks. The Council was amenable to this, and wanted to see what the logo would look like. There was never mention of the YMCA. Mr. Milone did not like the idea of the Y name on the blocks, and said this was not what was represented to the Council. Therefore, he wanted to bring this issue back to the Council for discussion and consideration. The goal is to have sponsorships, promotions and logos that are subtle and very indiscrete, which is what the town wants. With gift account donations, the money comes to the town, and

is provided back to the department, with the town giving credit to the organization. In the Sea Dogs sponsorship, the Y is just the treasurer of the money, and did not raise the money.

Ms. Nichols clarified that the YMCA Sea Dogs Swim Team is not a high school program...but many of their swimmers graduate up to the high school program. She asked who raised the money for the logo.

Mr. Mederios' understanding is that the Sea Dogs Parents Group raised the money. He also said the starting blocks last a long time in the pool, up to 15+ years.

With regard to the plaque or board in the pool lobby, Ms. Nichols asked if there is a way to streamline it with names of organizations making donations without delineating the amount of the donations.

This can be done, and Mr. Mederios noted it could be a wall with bubbles on it, and a bubble having the sponsorship name.

The town has a policy on sponsorships that is vetted by the Council, and Mr. Milone outlined the steps in the policy. For the pool, the first step is oversight and recommendation by the Parks and Rec Commission; it is sent to the Council for review; and the decision/approval is based on adherence to the policy in place.

Mr. Veleber asked for clarification on the original sponsorship proposal for the blocks with the Sea Dogs logo. It would be subtle, without other names.

Mr. Milone said that was correct...the blocks would have the Sea Dogs logo. We do not want to represent to the public that it is not positive. His underlying objection is that the Y did not raise the money, so they should not get credit for this gift to the town.

We do not want brand confusion, and Mr. Mederios said it is a community pool, not a YMCA pool.

It was noted by Mr. Veleber that this would be free advertising for the YMCA.

Regarding the option #2, Mr. Falk asked if the Sea Dogs group is agreeing to this option.

The head coach has reviewed the proposal of a plaque in the lobby, and Mr. Mederios said the group is okay with this option. The blocks have not yet been ordered; they are out to bid; and the town does not yet have the money to fund the purchase. The YMCA was contacted for the funds; YMCA board then wanted the Y name on the blocks; and this has delayed the process. Mr. Mederios is awaiting Council approval on the option 1 or 2, so the order can be placed, funds received, and vendor paid. The parents

group was once a 501(c)3 organization, and the Y is now their bank account. The Y's stipulation is signing off on any check from this account.

When the check is received, Mr. Talbot stated the selected logo for the blocks or wording on a plaque should also be submitted. Then, the Council can approve the wording and blocks can be ordered.

Ms. Nichols commented on the Y having an event at the pool, wanting to advertise, and asked if a decal could be on the blocks for a Y event.

This is a \$40,000 sponsorship contribution by the Sea Dogs, and Mr. Mederios said the YMCA prefers option #1, which he will not endorse. He prefers option #2 which is amicable for everyone involved.

Mr. Milone clarified that any change to the original sponsorship proposal must come back to the Town Council for approval. When the check is received from the Y, the order for the blocks will be placed, and the recognition plaque will be in the pool lobby.

4. PROPOSED FY 2018-2019 OPERTING BUDGET

LEISURE: Recreation Department, Parks and Recreation Commission; Community Pool – pages 169 and 84; handout 5-10. Joshua Mederios, Director.

Mr. Milone reviewed the budget, stating it has a 4.74% increase; the largest increase is due to the +\$69,588 for the pool subsidy; otherwise the budget would have decreased.

Page 178 Community Pool- the subsidy in FY 18-19 is \$281,745; this is \$16,000 more than last year's subsidy. There has been a decrease in summer season membership at the pool, which resulted in the subsidy increase.

Program Coordinator Position - With the department reorganization last year, Mr. Milone noted a savings of \$200,000. One critical element was to make the reorganization work was hiring a Program Coordinator to provide support services during the program seasons, particularly the summer. The plans are underway for summer programs, and it is important to bring a person on board.

Mr. Milone stated that Mr. Mederios has been an incredible and wonderful addition to the town organization. He is creative, energetic, passionate, has wide experience in parks and recreation, good and successful track record, experience as an aquatics director, recreation director, has put concerts together, and is working to generate revenue and costs down.

Mr. Mederios has been in the Director position for four months, and has met many challenges. He understands the fiscal challenges in the state and impact on the town. He evaluates expenses, fee structure, revenue opportunities, seeking alternate revenue

opportunities, new programs, services, development of a brand and marketing the department, and general review of operations, finding ways to improve efficiency.

Recreation Budget – Mr. Mederios noted reductions in major categories, and minor increase in utilities. There is \$26,000 overall decrease in operations without the pool subsidy.

Page 84 – Accomplishments for FY 17-18 are in the budget book for Council review.

Community Satisfaction and Needs Assessment Survey – this survey is on the web site; responses close on April 6th; the survey will define what people believe is needed in Cheshire, what is going well; areas no longer needed; to date 354 responses and many comments have been received; all the feedback is being reviewed, and overall it is positive. Mr. Mederios will give a presentation to staff and the Parks and Rec Commission upon completion of the data review.

Chapman Property – The department staff is thinking of what will be done with this property, and Mr. Mederios said this subject was included in the survey.

Training and Marketing Strategy – Mr. Mederios is exploring what competitors are doing, pricing structure, develops a monthly report to staff, Commission and Town Manager which reflects department activity, accomplishments, revenue and expenditures.

Mr. Milone noted that Mr. Mederios recognizes transparency and accountability, and has made everyone aware of it, and easy to find on the web site.

Department Processes – Mr. Mederios talked about the processes in place for registration, handling reservation requests for parks and Youth Center, putting in place a formal process for use of parks with forms and ways to use town space.

The department oversees 500 activities in a year with programs, services, activities, special events, coordination of use of town fields, Youth Center rentals and pool operation. The PW Department handles the maintenance duties.

With the department reorganization last year, Mr. Milone advised it went well. At the time he became director, Mr. Mederios walked into a new environment, and learning where the line is drawn between Parks and Public Works. He has done a great job working with PW Director Noewatne to insure nothing falls through the cracks. There is collaboration between the two departments. Parks organizes, schedules and has policies for the events...and PW puts the field together. It is a new organization and new model. Mr. Milone pointed out there has been negligence in not pushing through more revenue opportunities, and this has become a priority for Mr. Mederios. Some programs have modest fees while some programs have no fees. This is all being revisited.

Program Offerings – Mr. Mederios plans on increasing programs; the majority of things are revenue producing; and cutting staff results in lost revenue. Some new events have taken place, including the ice-skating event, under water egg hunt with hundreds of people in attendance, and staff works with Ms. Adams to come up with new programs at the pool.

Line item 5408 – Mr. Talbot asked about \$17,000 Program Services, and if some of this funding is for the summer.

Mr. Milone advised \$8,000-\$10,000 was cut in the concert series with the hope of getting sponsorships.

This is a decrease for the summer concerts, and Mr. Mederios informed the Council he has secured sponsorships/funding (\$5,000) from local businesses for some of the concerts. This money was put in the temporary part-time line. The goal is to get to \$10,000.

5104 Salary – Salary Increase - some funding came out of program services.

Handout Page 7-Summer Concert Series – FY 18 cost - \$25,613; FY 19 - \$20,000.

Mr. Milone commented on the concerts being very expensive. For set up of the band shell, lights, music...\$5,500 to \$6,000, plus \$2,000 for the band group. Last year Mr. Milone worked with the two companies doing the programming part; it was reduced; and last year's bands were inexpensive, but not high quality.

\$22,000 was being spent annually on stage, audio and lights. Mr. Mederios is working on sponsorship campaign to offset these costs; it is at \$5,000; and he wants to visit businesses, one to one, to offer sponsorship opportunities. The town pays for the entire setup of the concerts.

Concert Series Options – Mr. Mederios referenced two options.

1) All-Terrain Outdoor Stage at a cost of \$31,000; return on investment in 1-2 years.

This stage could be used for other events i.e. Fall Festival, Parades.

2) Showmobile – cost of \$110,000-\$130,000; return on investment 4 years.

Mr. Mederios displayed photographs of both options for the Council.

There is the future concept of an amphi-theater at the Chapman Property.

The concert equipment could be stored at the Parks Dept. garage, and most of the equipment can be stored in pieces.

The town spends about \$17,000 to \$18,000 on stage, lights, audio...and the balance was spent on the bands.

Modification to Concert Series – To reduce costs the number of concerts could be decreased, but Mr. Mederios does not recommend this option. The quality of the setup could be reduced (lights, stage, audio); the band costs can be reduced by holding the concert on a night other than Friday; the concert times could be changed to 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. with no lighting costs; the present plans can be maintained; or, concerts could be eliminated. The bands could bring in their own sound systems. The concerts are a popular community event, and Mr. Mederios recommends there be food trucks (at a charge to be at the park) so people can purchase food.

It was pointed out by Mr. Talbot that a “Stage or Showmobile” would be a capital budget item for Council to discuss during that budget process.

Handout Page 5 – Facility Use Fee Structure – At the present time, the town does not impose any fees for use of parks and facilities. Mr. Mederios recommends there be a formal fee structure for use of town parks and fields, for private and non-resident based organizations. This would be in line with fees cited for Wallingford and Southington. The fees would not apply to Town of Cheshire, Cheshire BOE, or Cheshire based non-profit organizations. Most communities charge for use of their town fields with varied rates for residents and non-residents. There is no uniform, consistent policy in place, and one would have to be developed.

Fee structure - One field - \$25 per hour; 1 field with lights - \$40 per hour.

For larger, athletic competitions held in town parks, the group would pay these proposed fees, unless it can be proven that 80% or more of the participants are Cheshire residents (from a roster). For some of these larger events, there could be a caveat for charges related to Public Works or Police Officers, with the organization paying these fees.

Mr. Mederios will be working on the fee schedules and policies, and present them to the Council for approval. He informed the Council that the Parks and Rec Commission endorses the proposed fee structure.

The consensus of the Councilors was to move forward with the proposed fee structure to generate department revenue.

Pages 126-127 Community Pool – Mr. Mederios reported that the starting blocks project is moving forward; there are plans for future special events to increase revenue i.e. having a master swim team and possible pool pass incentives. The 2017 summer saw a decrease in season passes, and normal attendance dropped. The goal is to add more value to the passes to generate revenue. The ongoing survey response indicates that people consider the membership to be expensive.

The pool had a minor increase in salaries, utilities and water expenditures. Mr. Milone noted that utilities have slightly increased. Electric +\$5,000; Water +\$4,000; water

consumption is the biggest expense but consistent with past costs; money is being saved on natural gas and electric which had modest increases. In 2013 electricity was \$69,000, and with the \$5,000 increase it is still less than five years ago; gas was \$178,000 in 2013, and in 2007 it was \$272,000.

The budget has a reduction of \$12,000 in contracted services; professional expenses and special equipment is status quo; miscellaneous is +\$16,000 associated with pension contributions.

Pool Budget - \$931,484; \$54,000 less than in 2009 when it was \$985,000.

Handout Page 9 – Pool Amenities – Mr. Mederios has discussed pool amenities with Ms. Adams to increase summer membership in 2018. The goal is to make the pool a “recreation destination”, and make the facility unique.

Two amenities were reviewed and discussed.

#1 – Aquatic Climbing Wall, \$10,000 to \$25,000; and #2 – Inflatable Obstacle Course, \$5,000 to \$12,000. Other ideas were to have a sand volley ball court or bocce court. Mr. Mederios and Ms. Adams strongly recommend one or both of these amenities to bring new life and excitement to the community pool. He also talked about an outside volleyball court as an amenity on the Chapman Property project.

Program Coordinator – Mr. Milone stated his support of this 19 hour per week position for the Parks and Rec Department, and requested authority to move forward on hiring for this position. The position is budgeted; it was part of the reorganization plan; and is not something new for the department. The full fiscal year financial impact is \$20,000, and for this fiscal year it would be about \$4,000. The Program Coordinator handles summer camps, registration, quality programs for campers, safety programs, expands programs and generates revenue.

MOTION by Mr. Falk; seconded by Mr. Talbot.

MOVED that the Town Council approves Resolution 032918-1

RESOLUTION #032918-1

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes the part-time 19 hours per week position of Program Coordinator in the Parks and Rec Department to be unfrozen; and further authorizes Town Manager Michael A. Milone to fill this vacant position.

Discussion

Mr. Veleber introduced the fact that there are only five (5) Councilors present to take action on this resolution. He recommended the matter be tabled to a special meeting of the Council during the week of April 2, 2018.

The Councilors present agreed with this recommendation; the matter was tabled.

Mr. Falk and Mr. Talbot withdrew their motion from the floor.

Mr. Mederios thanked the Council for their attention to his budget presentation.

SOCIAL SERVICES: Human Services Department, Youth Services Committee, Human Services Committee – pages 141 and 70, Handout 11-16.
Michelle Piccerillo, Director.

Mr. Milone reviewed the department budget, noting an increase of 1.49%; it is a meager budget; and there are additional staffing needs for critical counseling areas and mental health.

Ms. Piccerillo commented on the dramatic changes at the State level. As President of the Connecticut Youth Services Bureau, she is aware of the social services/senior services cuts, and people becoming more dependent on local services.

Juvenile Review Board – Ms. Piccerillo informed the Council that the JRB is a wonderful program; it works very well; it identifies at risk kids early on, and stops them from getting into further trouble; youths receive counseling, drug testing, perform community service; kids are turned in the right direction. She noted the State court system is changing how it handles juveniles, with them now coming to the local system. DCF refers family needs to the local community services. There is pressure on local communities to manage justice issues, and this will impact Cheshire's counseling programs, and youth and senior services.

Social Services – Limits for food stamps are changing; people are becoming more dependent on local services, food voucher program, community food pantry, adopt-a-family program...and other programs. People on a fixed income can no longer manage on state assistance, and are seeking local assistance. This will impact Cheshire's Social Services Department.

Community Approach – Ms. Piccerillo reported that a substantial issue is the opioid crisis; last year nine (9) overdoses were reported, and people died due to drug usage. This crisis is being addressed as a community; early intervention education is in place; Chesprocott is educating drug prescribers; real estate offices with open house events are told to secure prescription drugs; there will be a youth education effort with older children working with younger children on the dangers of opioid and drug abuse. At-risk children are being identified; there are counseling programs at the elementary level with early intervention; and all of this is having an impact on counseling services. There are months long waiting list for private professional services, so there is a crisis with regards to mental health and town services.

Senior Services – The Human Services staff is looking to educate senior citizens. Some are grandparents raising grandchildren; some children and seniors have mental

health issues and need to know about community mental health services; many seniors have been denied resources at the state level, and now must receive local services.

Municipal Housing Rehabilitation Program – Ms. Piccerillo explained that the Town has applied for another DOH grant; there is lots of interest from people who qualify for the program; 15 projects were done last year with the grant funding. Human Services Department received \$200,000 in grants and other resources last year; the department continues to focus on alternative funding sources; and continues to be as fiscally responsible as possible.

Veterans Affairs – This is an area of growth, and Cheshire has a Veterans Affairs Person in the Human Services Department (Social Worker), to assist veterans with any help they need.

With regard to the requested increase in hours for Youth and Family Counselors, Ms. Piccerillo advised that they were not included in the original department budget.

Decision Package – Youth and Family Counselor - increase hours to 35 hours per week (from 30 hours per week). Youth and Family Counselor – increase hours to 30 hours per week (from 20 hours per week).

Ms. Piccerillo stated the need for the increase in hours for the Youth and Family Counselors came about as a result of dealing with school safety crisis, and identifying mental health as a significant piece to keeping young people and schools safe.

Page 11 – Youth and Family Counselor –increase to 35 hours per week.

Total position costs - \$66,607.60 (up from \$63,555).

Ms. Piccerillo is requesting an increase in the Counselor's hours from 30 to 35 hours per week. The Counselor is a licensed Clinical Social Worker; supervises social work interns from the SCSU graduate program; currently the department has two social work interns and one marriage and therapy intern. The department contracts out for supervision of marriage and family therapy interns.

The Counselor is already a full-time employee, receives benefits, and the move from 30 to 35 hours per week will have a budget increase of \$3,100, mostly for supervising interns. It also means an additional intern could come into the department, 20 hours a week, non-paid, leading to providing additional mental health services.

Page 13 – Youth and Family Counselor – increase to 30 hours per week.

Total position costs - \$56,424 w/benefits of \$8,454 (from \$31,980); increase of \$24,485.

Ms. Piccerillo explained this position request is to increase from 20 to 30 hours per week. Right now it is a job share between two people; one person will be leaving the half-time job; and the remaining Clinician plans to remain in the department. Increasing

these work hours will enable servicing more clients, provide continuity for clients receiving services, and having a steady presence is important to clients.

The Council was informed by Ms. Piccerillo that the Counselor working the job share position came to Cheshire as an intern, is a wonderful and highly skilled counselor, has created a great rapport with the school system, and is a good fit for the department.

For all of the department decision packages, Mr. Milone informed the Council that he would aggregate them for decision making.

Mr. Falk commented on more awareness being spread out there, the increased demand for services, and the phenomenal job done by the Human Services Department. The state is dumping other unfunded programs on the social service departments. He said the more early intervention we get, the more savings down the road for services.

Handout Page 15- Senior Center Social Worker – 24 hours per week to 30 hours per week. Total position costs - \$43,976 (from \$31,181); +\$12,000 increase.

Ms. Piccerillo is requesting an increase in work hours for this Social Worker.

Mr. Milone and Ms. Piccerillo attended a meeting in which senior citizens talked about the needs at the senior center, and one major request was more staff hours. Ms. Piccerillo is proposing an increase in the Social Worker's hours; state level services are decreasing; there are more demands for local services by seniors to meet their needs.

For the Senior Center Social Worker position, the request is to increase hours to 30 hours per week; the person does not take the benefit package; the increase is \$12,000. This Social Worker handles many responsibilities...makes home visits, transportation evaluation, responsible for homebound seniors, case management, works with protective services for elderly, performs wellness checks, is involved in unsafe living conditions, conducts the safety programs for seniors, and she can do much more with increased hours.

Mr. Milone cited the statistics for the over 62 population in Cheshire, 2005 to 2015. 2005 – 4,552 residents over 62 years of age/15.9%; 2015 – 6,404 residents over 62 years of age/+22%; an increase of 1,852 residents over 62 years of age.

Ms. Nichols commented on the fact that the Human Services Department does very well with what it has right now...and she questions how they do it, every day.

5. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Talbot; seconded by Mr. Falk.

MOVED to adjourn the special meeting at 8:50 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk