

JOINT TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING  
AND BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING  
6:30 P.M., TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2019  
ROOM 207-209, TOWN HALL  
84 SOUTH MAIN STREET, CHESHIRE CT 06410

Present

Robert J. Oris, Chairman, Jeffrey Falk, Sylvia Nichols, Thomas Ruocco, Timothy Slocum, Peter Talbot, David Veleber, Patti Flynn-Harris

Absent: Paul A. Bowman, Vice Chairman

Staff: Sean Kimball, Town Manager, Arnett Talbot, Assistant Town Manager, James Jaskot, Finance Director

1. ROLL CALL

The Clerk called the roll and a quorum was determined.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

3. DISCUSSION RE: PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020 OPERATING BUDGET

Neil Dryfe, Chief of Police addressed the Town Council regarding the funding of additional dispatchers. Chief Dryfe directed the members of the Town Council to his memo dated April 16, 2019 regarding this matter. Chief Dryfe explained that according to the union contract, each shift must have three officers and one sergeant on duty. Chief Dryfe explained that with the parameters of the union contract, the way the schedule is designed (5 days on, 2 days off, 5 days on, 3 days off) and the shortage of dispatchers, it is challenging to appropriately staff each shift. When a dispatcher takes time off or is out sick, police officers are pulled to cover the shift. Chief Dryfe stated pulling police officers off the street takes resources away from the community and requires additional training in order for the police officers to stay certified for dispatch duty. Chief Dryfe stated he would prefer to be staffed well enough with dispatchers to keep police officers on the street. Chairman Oris stated the times of having only one dispatcher is on duty should be limited, even if it means pulling police officers. Chief Dryfe stated the current Department policy does not pull police officers to serve as second dispatchers and he is not in favor of doing so. The only time police officers are pulled is to cover the shift as the only dispatcher. Chief Dryfe stated he would like the Department to be in a position where police officers can be police officers and dispatchers can be dispatchers. Chairman Oris stated he would like a better understanding of the average weekly coverage and coverage during peak times. The discussion concluded with the understanding that 8 dispatchers were better than 5 and this matter can be revisited next year.

Mr. Kimball presented a comprehensive mill rate calculator and explained how it will affect the Town's budget and the taxpayers. With a mill rate increase to 33.53 (.79% increase), the impact on the average taxpayer will be \$112/year with an average tax increase of \$209/year. There was a lengthy discussion about the Board of Education budget.

Chairman Oris stated he was not in favor of raising the mill rate, a sentiment echoed by the Town Council. Mr. Ruocco stated he was not comfortable with an increase of .79%. Mr. Kimball was able to plug in different mill rates and show the impact on the budget. After much discussion and consideration, it was determined that if a mill rate increase were passed, the Town Council would be more comfortable with a .60% increase.

Mr. Kimball stated there are current and anticipated personnel vacancies that will offset some of the budget through reorganization and staggered hiring.

Mr. Kimball stated there is a proposal to support bike signage in Town that would come out of a \$1,500.00 allocation in the Police Department budget. There was a brief discussion.

Mr. Veleber addressed the email that all Town Council members received regarding the reclassification of the Deputy Town Clerk position and asked what happened at the Personnel Committee meeting on April 15, 2019. Mr. Talbot stated that the Personnel Committee made a motion to include the Deputy Town Clerk reclassification with the other five proposed reclassification and move it back to the full Council for consideration. Ms. Nichols explained that this was the only fair thing to do under the circumstances. Mr. Talbot stated his position is that the Town Council should let the work of the Labor Management Committee and the Personnel Committee stand and the Deputy Town Clerk position should not be reclassified at this time. It was noted that funds have been allocated in the budget to compensate positions that require special training or certification and the Deputy Town Clerk will be eligible for this compensation. After a brief discussion, the Town Council agreed to consider only the five positions that were originally referred by the Labor Management Committee and the Personnel Committee.

Mr. Kimball stated Artsplace requested and was able to find in their budget the \$7,500 requested for 10 additional hours. Mr. Kimball stated this matter was budget neutral and he support it.

#### 4. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Slocum; seconded by Ms. Patti Flynn-Harris.

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 p.m.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

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Karen M. Gill, Clerk