



TOWN OF CHESHIRE
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TO: Town Council
FROM: Sean M. Kimball, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Town Manager's Report – March 2024
DATE: March 12, 2024

FY25 Operating and Capital Budget Proposal

The FY 25 Town Manager's Recommended Operating and Capital Budget has been submitted to the Town Council, thus beginning the annual process of review and consideration before eventual adoption and establishment of the property tax mill rate for next fiscal year (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025). The Operating Budget approval process must be completed by April 30th, the Capital Budget must be approved by November, however those projects requiring a referendum vote must be approved by late August.

The recommended FY 25 Operating Budget represents a 5.97% (\$7.94 million) increase in total expenditures driven by increases to the Board of Education proposed budget of 5.97% (\$5.07 million) to support the Cheshire Public Schools, the General Government increase of 4.74% (\$1.82 million) for all other municipal services, and an increase in Debt Service costs of 24.2% (\$1.85 million) to fund principal and interest payments on debt incurred to fund previously approved capital projects.

To fund this recommended budget, the townwide tax levy (net of non-tax revenues, state aid and use of fund balance) would need to increase by 7.4% (\$7.7 million) with a mill rate established at 28.38 mills (down from 35.09 last year). This 6.71 mill reduction is a result of the state-mandated process of revaluation which occurs every five years and this year has reflected significant increases in property values (on average 37.3% for residential properties) when compared to values from the last townwide revaluation in 2018. For the average residential property owner with two average vehicles, the proposed mill rate would equate to an estimated 8.2% total tax increase, or \$694 per year.

Much work remains to consider and likely revise the operating budget as presented to the Town Council with the shared goal of continuing to provide the high-quality services that our residents and businesses expect at the lowest cost possible. The upcoming schedule for Town Council budget workshops and public hearings/information sessions can be found at the end of this month's report. The first workshop (**Tuesday, March 19th at 7:00PM in Council Chambers**) will include a Town Manager's Overview of the budget, a Public Hearing offering the public an opportunity to provide comments and a workshop discussion with Superintendent Solan and COO Vin Masciana on the Board of Education's proposed budget.

2024 Neighborhood Assistance Applications – Due June 3, 2024

The Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) Tax Credit Program is designed to provide funding for municipal and tax-exempt organizations by providing a corporation business tax credit for businesses who make cash contributions to these entities. Each municipal agency or tax-exempt organization that wishes to participate in the NAA Program must complete in its entirety Form NAA-01. Applications are due by Friday, June 3, 2024 and must be submitted directly to the Town Manager's Office, 84 South Main St., Cheshire, CT 06410. Interested organizations wishing to learn more about the program and/or have specific questions should visit the State of Connecticut Department of Revenue Services website as the Town's role is primarily administrative.

Applications are approved by the municipality's governing body and forwarded to Department of Revenue Services (DRS). Once an organization is approved by the state, businesses can receive a credit of 60% of their approved contribution to certain programs (or 100% in the case of certain energy conservation programs) approved by the DRS.

Land Use Decision-Making Presentation – April 10th at 6:30PM

The Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, in partnership with the Town of Cheshire and the Coalition for a Sustainable Cheshire will be making an informative presentation on how local development decisions are made and how residents can best participate in the process. The event will be held at the Cheshire Public Library on **Wednesday, April 10th at 6:30pm**, no RSVP required.

Early Voting Information

Early Voting for the April 2, 2024 Presidential Primary Election will take place in the lobby of Town Hall from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 26th, Wednesday, March 27th, Thursday, March 28th, and Saturday, March 30th, 2024. The Registrars of Voters have asked that we spread the word that poll workers are needed for both this primary and the November election. Questions should be directed to the Registrar of Voters office at 203 271-6680.

Senior Center Income Tax Program and Elderly/Disabled Tax Credit Programs

- The Senior Center is accepting appointments for the AARP Income Tax Program, which runs through the end of March. Please contact the Senior Center for details and to schedule an appointment.
- The filing period is currently open for the Elderly (65+) / 100% Disabled Tax relief for homeowners which runs from February 1st to May 15th. Income thresholds and credit amounts are available on the Town website at: https://www.cheshirect.org/government/departments_and_divisions/assessor/tax_relief_programs . For more information, please contact the Assessor's Office at 203-271-6620.

Projects Around Town

Just a reminder to check out our Project Around Town page which is frequently updated to provide more information on many Town and State capital projects occurring across town:

<https://www.cheshirect.org/spotlight/projects>

Upcoming Town Council & Committee Meetings:

***FY 24-25 Operating and Capital Budget Schedule
As of 3/11/24 (subject to amendments)***

All Budget Committee meetings posted as Special Council meetings.

Tuesday, March 19, 6:30 p.m., Council Chambers
Public Hearing and Town Manager's General Overview
Budget presentations: Board of Education

Thursday, March 21, 6:30 p.m., Room 207
Budget presentations: Public Works (Public Property), Engineering, Water Pollution Control

Saturday, March 23, 9:30 a.m., Council Chambers
Budget presentations: Fire, Police (Animal Control), Library, Recreation (Pool, Artsplace), Revenues

Tuesday, March 26, 6:30 p.m., Council Chambers
Budget presentations: Planning, Economic Development, Building, Town Clerk, Elections, Human Services, Public Health

Thursday, March 28, 6:30 p.m., Room 207
Budget presentations: Finance (Debt Service, CNR, Employee Benefits), Town Council, Town Manager, Town Attorney, Human Resources

Tuesday, April 9, 7:00 p.m., Council Chambers
Regula Monthly Town Council Meeting

Monday, April 15, 7:00 p.m., Room 207
Review

Tuesday, April 16, 6:30 p.m., Council Chambers
Public Information Session
Review

Thursday, April 18, 6:30 p.m., Room 207
Final Budget Review

Wednesday, April 24, 7:00 p.m., Council Chambers
Town Council Meeting for Adoption

Note: *Additional meetings for CEP may be scheduled in May.*