

## Cheshire council OKs contract to find savings in town buildings

*Published: January 29, 2014 | Last Modified: January 29, 2014 12:36PM*  
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CHESHIRE — The Town Council approved entering into a \$10.2 million energy and cost savings performance contract Tuesday night.

The contract with Ameresco will include 157 separate projects in town and school buildings. It will not cost taxpayers anything, and, if executed properly, will provide cost savings to the town, according to Ameresco and town officials.

The projects will include energy saving changes to the buildings, ranging from replacing boilers and changing from electric heating to gas to changing out the energy use of vending machines. About 80 percent of the projects will be at the schools.

The money will come from a third-party source, with repayment to come from the savings the changes provide and cash-back incentives from utility companies, said Jim Daylor, senior account executive at Ameresco. "This is a unique funding vehicle that does not rely on the capital budget," he said. "It will certainly reduce future capital burdens."

Ameresco would be responsible for seeking out the third party funding, conservatively estimated at the rate of a 3.75 percent loan, securing the products, hiring the labor, a project manager, and holding weekly or bi-weekly meetings as the projects progress, Daylor said.

He estimated that after the contract is approved, the loan secured and approved by the town's finance team and projects lined up, work could begin as early as April 1, in time for the crucial school summer break work time.

"We've been working at getting this for several years," said Vincent Masciana, director of management services for the school district. "It will provide significant contributions to the town's infrastructure at no cost to the town's taxpayers. The goal is to make improvements to the town's facilities."

The financing would be based on a 16-year payback, with none of the loan paybacks beginning until each project is completed, Masciana and Daylor said. With the estimated utility incentives that would come immediately, the town is looking for financing for about \$9 million of the \$10.2 million cost of the projects.

One of the major projects would be converting part of Cheshire High School's heating system that still uses electric heat to gas and making Highland School not only gas-heated, but equipped with air conditioning, as that is the school used for district summer programs, Masciana said.

Other energy-saving measures would be taken at other schools, Town Hall, police headquarters, fire headquarters, the library, senior center, community pool and the yellow house recreation center.