



Town Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday January 19, 2017, at 6:00 PM, in the Matthew Thornton Room

Chairman Harrington called the meeting of the Town Council to order at 6:00 p.m. Present at the meeting were Vice Chairman Rothhaus, Councilor Boyd, Councilor Dwyer, Councilor Flood, Councilor Koenig, Councilor Mahon, Town Manager Eileen Cabanel, and Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Paul Micali.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Harrington led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment - None

Review of Proposed FY17 Budget

Town Manager Cabanel noted, although contractual increases are accounted for in the proposed FY18 budget, the 53rd week of payroll that was captured in the FY17 budget has been subtracted. Another similarity throughout the budget is increases associated with retirement and health insurance.

Community Development

Tim Thompson, Director, Community Development, stated the budget to be essentially flat outside of contractual and benefit items (proposed increase of 1.72% over FY17).

The largest difference is the absence of the \$135,000 expenditure for the Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) for the GIS project. The department is working on getting the Request for Quote (RFQ) out shortly. It is hoped the flyover will occur this spring. Some funds have been moved around between line items based upon operational needs within the department, e.g., some funds going towards copier maintenance given the age of the equipment.

Director Thompson remarked for the first time since he has been here, he can report there have been no staff changes in his department over the course of the year. That stability in staff has paid dividends. The professional growth by Jillian Harris, Planning & Zoning Administrator, and Robert Price, Assistant Planner, has been impressive. Ms. Harris has graduated from the Economic Development Academy that is put together by the UNH Cooperative Extension. Her final project for that was a development guide, which identifies the process for doing development in Merrimack from start to finish.

The number of applications to the planning and zoning boards that department staff has had to deal with over this past year has essentially been level. There were 100 individual agenda items for the two boards combined (212 in 2015). The department spent 67 staff hours staffing those meetings (77 in 2015). Director Thompson stated his belief the number of hours has been able to be reduced because the level of staff experience allows the meetings to be staffed by a single individual.

Councilor Boyd questioned what the Council should be concerned from a community development perspective, over the next 3-5 years. Director Thompson stated his belief the biggest challenges facing Southern New Hampshire and the State in general are going to be workforce issues. We continue to deal with slow population growth and the exodus of a lot of the younger population to other places within the country and region. That is one of the biggest challenges being faced in terms of trying to attract economic development; ensuring we have the right kind of workforce to fill those positions. One of the things he is hopeful about and excited to see happen are some of the mixed-use projects that are coming across. It is those types of developments that try to integrate different types of land use and different styles of housing development that he believes will be key here and in the region to try to attract the younger workers back to New Hampshire. From a larger policy perspective he would like to bring forward to the Planning Board mixed-use regulations within the ordinance and how it might be applicable to other parts of the community, per the Master Plan's recommendations from 2013, to look at how we might expand that beyond just the industrial zones on D.W. Highway that have 500' of frontage and 50 acres. He believes different results and a wider variety of opportunities both in housing and commercial/industrial space could be seen if we look strategically at how we encourage and approve mixed-use projects in town.

From a planning and zoning standpoint it will be continuing to work through those recommendations from the Master Plan. A lot of that work remains to be done. Now that he has stability in staff and has started to delegate a little bit of ordinance writing, he believes the department is getting to the point where they can begin working on some of those implementation steps in the near future.

Councilor Koenig noted Line Item 01-21-8351-0-Consultation, identifies \$3,000 as Master Plan Implementation. He questioned if, as part of the effort just discussed, consultants would be brought on board. Director Thompson stated a lot of what he initially plans to do will be done in-house. If particular expertise is needed in a particular area, he would look to utilize those funds, e.g., economic impact analysis, etc.

When asked what CRF monies are being expended on this year, Director Thompson responded it is being utilized for the GIS update and maintenance, which includes a new flyover of the community; digital orthophotography, which will be converted into new base data for the GIS system. He noted the last update the system is working off of was done in 2005.

When asked for clarification on the process for changes that will be proposed relative to the Master Plan, Director Thompson stated 99.9% of the changes will be able to be approved by the Council under the Charter. Most of the Zoning Ordinance amendments would go through the same process as has been done with other issues; most recently the Accessory Dwelling Units and the sign section. Typically the department will work on those matters with the Planning Board developing a set of strategies, work on actual ordinance language, and hold the public hearings and initial recommendation stage at the Planning Board. They will make a formal recommendation, which will be brought forth to the Council. The Council will do its readings, conduct hearings, and go through the normal process as it would for any ordinance adoption. That is the process he would expect to be gone through for anything zoning related.

Councilor Dwyer questioned what would prevent the department from bringing matters forward. Director Thompson stated the first priority the Planning Board had initially put on staff was sidewalks

and pedestrian and bicycle facilities. There was the process that was brought forth to the Council to engage the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) on that, which kind of got stopped in its tracks. A sub-committee of the Planning Board was working on that, and after the decision by the Council, they regrouped and decided to put their efforts on hold. The other Master Plan implementation step that was undertaken was the Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance, which was held up by the Legislature and how they were handling the changes to State Law. The Economic Overlay was put on hold given the fact that the properties in question started working through development under the existing zoning.

Director Thompson commented the one thing he is most proud of from the 5+ years he has been here is his efforts to try to change the culture of the process for development in Merrimack. To make sure people understand it is a cooperative process not an adversarial one. Chairman Harrington remarked she believes he has accomplished that goal. She has received positive feedback on not only improvement of the process, but the manner in which individuals participating in the process are assisted through the process.

Councilor Flood questioned the relationship the department has with the NRPC. Director Thompson stated it to be transportation related for the most part. They have provided the department with mapping services. Given the shortcomings and age of the data in the Town's GIS, they rely significantly on their GIS capabilities. In terms of the community as a whole, it is hazard mitigation planning, transportation planning, and assistance in a wide variety of other areas they are able to provide given the diversity of their staff and the expertise that they have, which are at levels that most communities don't have. They are an invaluable resource that is available when needed.

Parks and Recreation

Town Manager Cabanel spoke of a previous discussion around swapping the secretarial position for a Program Director to assist the Director in the numerous activities that take place after hours. With the Council's approval, that change was made. Director Casparius has recently hired an individual for that position. She stated her wholehearted support of this position being full-time. The individual hired is very enthusiastic, has a lot of good ideas, and is a good fit for the department, which has gone from being day camp related to a community resource for all of the different ages and interests.

Matthew Casparius, CPRE, Director, Parks & Recreation, remarked it has been another busy year for the department. When he arrived three years ago the department ran about 25 activities over the course of the year. This past year 180 different activities were offered. Beyond that, a lot of improvements have been made, particularly at Wasserman Park. Record enrollments are being seen in a lot of the programs and community special events.

The department's overall budget has an increase of \$130,495, which is centered largely in a few areas. The first change is the personnel change. Under 01-13-8107-0-Wages-Part-time, the Maintainer I position was in the budget last year, but had identified funding in the area of \$500 whereas the proposed budget shows an amount of \$15,787. Director Casparius spoke of the nearly \$200,000 investment that has been made at Wasserman Park during his tenure, and the need to maintain that investment. The current \$500 budget allows for someone to come in one day a month for 5 hours to do

light repairs. There are 17 buildings on the property, and other things that require focus. The part-time, year-round maintenance person (22 hours/week) would help stay on top of those needs.

Under 01-13-8505-0-Infrastructure, there are two projects the department is looking to accomplish this year. One of the projects is the removal of the abandoned underground oil tank located outside of the Function Hall at Wasserman Park. The old buried oil tank has two pipe stacks that stick out of the ground about 3', and represent a safety hazard. The second project has an allocation of \$8,000 for the MYA cabin, which is the last building on the property that remains in disrepair. That building has been sitting vacant for about 10 years. The building is at a tipping point where you could either spend \$8,000 to fix it up and use it or spend \$8,000 and tear it down.

Line Item 01-13-8910-0-Capital Reserve Fund Purchases, identifies a \$50,000 allocation intended for netting at Twardosky Ball Field. Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali spoke of prior discussions regarding the installation of netting along the left field foul line. The cost is between \$175 and \$200/linear foot for a 40' fence. It is believed 230' would be required, which would go from the area of home plate to the foul line in left field. Expected cost is \$40,000 installed. The additional \$10,000 would cover additional costs such as reconditioning of the parking lot, striping, moving some of the parking spaces around, etc. This project has been discussed several times during the Council Retreats. Proposed funding is the CRF. The cost would not be coming directly out of taxpayer dollars.

When asked if any issues are anticipated with the removal of the oil tank Director Casparius stated he had a company come out and provide an estimate. They did not expect to find any issues.

Councilor Boyd questioned Line Item 01-13-8321-0-Maintenance, Buildings & Grounds; specifically repairs skate park ramps. Director Casparius stated the skatelite sheets are something the department holds in the budget every year. They end up replacing 6-8 panels/year. The asphalt those half pipes sit on tends to sink into the ground. When they do that the panels bend and break.

Councilor Boyd commented on the policy decision made by the Council last year to eliminate the funding for the part-time attendant, and questioned how things worked out this year in the absence of an attendant. Director Casparius responded they have not had any problems. They did not receive any complaints. It was a good year, and people liked the fact that it was open longer than it used to be.

Councilor Boyd noted Line Item 01-13-8322-0-Maintenance-Grounds, which identifies funding (\$2,000) to fix the wash-out at the beach. Director Casparius stated that to be standard yearly maintenance; minor repairs.

Councilor Dwyer remarked the Parks and Recreation Department is under-funded. When coming against Community Development, they have similar budgets and yet they are a 5 man team and he is 1. Since he started in 2010 every year the Council has done something for that, and he is proud of that, but sometimes he does not believe it is quite enough. He stated his desire for more to be done to ensure we have the personnel in place to keeps the programs going.

Town Manager Cabanel reiterated it is Director Casparius and currently a part-time person in terms of administration, but every year the Town hires a large contingent of people from lifeguards to nurses, etc. to do the day camp and other programs. The department is different than others. She stated

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agreement with regard to staffing concerns, and noted it is being built up to. She stated there to be nothing that was requested in the budget that she removed.

Councilor Mahon spoke of having challenged the Council, at a previous Retreat, to either step up to the plate or eliminate the program. The Council stepped up as did the townspeople. He stated his belief it is moving at a very nice rate. Councilor Flood stated her belief you proceed at a pace. She commended Director Casparius for his work.

When asked, Director Casparius stated between September and December they had about 130 hours of usage in the Function Hall. Normally it would have been closed at that point for the year. Some are private rentals for Birthday parties, etc. The Library did their big fundraising event there this year. The Fire Department has done training in there.

Councilor Boyd requested the topics of future planning with regard to P&R and community development be included in the discussions for this year's Retreat.

Town Manager Cabanel stated Director Casparius has a plan for Wasserman Park. Some of the issues have been able to be addressed because of the funding that has been provided.

Councilor Koenig noted Line Item 01-13-8371-0-Merrimack Youth Association indicates a reduction (\$7,948), and questioned the impetus. Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali responded he reached out to the President of the MYA after receiving their budget, and was informed the soccer program has some large reserves, and they have indicated they do not need the Town's appropriation this year.

Councilor Koenig questioned why the "open and close" line under Line Item 01-13-8377-0-Adult Community Center, has been zeroed out. Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali stated the proposed budget reflects precisely what was requested.

Councilor Koenig requested additional information on Line Item 01-13-8505-0-Infrastructure; actual expenditure in FY16 was \$97,616 and proposed for FY18 is \$10,400, which is \$7,000 lower than what was requested. Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali stated the FY16 allocation was part of the renovation; included getting heat and water to the Function Hall, code compliance, and renovations done in other buildings, e.g., electricity, etc.

When asked what his recommendation would be with regard to the MYA cabin, Director Casparius stated he has been told that is one of the original buildings to the property. If it can be saved he would like to save it.

Summer Day Camp

Town Manager Cabanel addressed the Parks & Recreation Revolving Fund noting last year the day camp portion was \$221,429. The request for FY18 is \$262,604. Those costs are paid through user fees. There is no impact on the tax rate.

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Councilor Koenig noted the information provided for the revolving fund includes numerous programs beyond summer camp, and totals \$262,604. The amount listed for the summer camp specifically is \$189,721. Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director stated his belief what the Director has done is broken out a lot of the programs such as swimming, tennis, etc. that were previously included in the day camp line item. With the establishment of the revolving fund, the intent of the Director is to track the programs; participation, revenue, etc., to see if programs should be expanded, etc.

Director Casparius stated there are currently approx. 50 seasonal employees. They used to have programs like tennis and swimming lessons where the wages of those seasonal employees were funded through the general budget and offset by revenue when it came. With the creation of the revolving fund, all monies go in and out of the fund. The desire is to be able to provide information on the type of programs being run. The department is continuing with the same programs included in the current year's budget with the exception of adding to the preschool program (6-week program in FY17 and proposed as an 8-week program) and the teen field trip based camp and drama camp (1-week program in FY17 and proposed as an 8-week program in FY18; \$40,000 increase). Nothing new has been added. All of the programs pay for themselves. There is no tax impact.

Public Works Administration

Kyle Fox, Director, Public Works Department, provided a PowerPoint presentation ([copy attached](#)). He stated the overall Administration budget represents a 2.3% reduction largely due to turnover in the positions of Director and Town Engineer.

Councilor Boyd questioned why the part-time position of Farmers Market Assistant is included within the Administration budget; Line Item 01-07-8107-0-Wages-Part-Time. Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali responded the previous Director provided services for set up/tear down at the Farmers Market. As such, when he requested a part-time person, it simply ended up in his budget. It was his employee who was conducting the work.

Highway

Director Fox stated the operating budget, e.g., personnel costs, etc. is down 0.2% from FY17. Some of the notable differences are the addition to Line Item 01-08-8335-0-Maintenance-Communications Equip., of \$15,000 to add a repeater station at the Hutchinson Road water tower. That will allow trucks, no matter where they are in Town, to be able to talk to one another.

Lin Item 01-08-8341-0-Sand & Salt is down \$10,000 as a result of the department's continued efforts to reduce salt and sand use while still providing a high level of service. All of the employees have been through the Green SnowPro Training course offered through the UNH Extension.

Line Item 01-08-8361-0-Street Lights is reduced by \$55,625. Nearly 200 of the new LED streetlights have been installed. About 400 remain to be installed. That rollout will come by this coming spring. By the time the new fiscal year is upon us all of the street lights will be LED lights.

Director Fox stated the intent to purchase four (4) pieces of equipment in the coming year (Line Item 01-08-8109-0-Capital Reserve Fund Purchases); two 6-wheel dump trucks (fitted with plowing

capability and material spreading), one paint trailer, which will replace the current paint trailer (1990 model), and replacement of the SUV for the Operations Manager, which is at the end of its useful life.

Director Fox identified projects intended for FY18 (identified in the CIP presentation made last month); drainage improvements, Executive Park Drive reconstruction, Bedford Road Bridge reconstruction (80% State / 20% Town grant match), U.S. 3 Bridge replacement design (80/20), D.W. Highway & Woodbury Sidewalk Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) (80/20), Merrimack River boat ramp, and updating the traffic preemption system in our traffic signals and the State's traffic signals. This system allows the Fire Department to change the signals from red to green.

Vice Chairman Rothhaus questioned if all of the trucks in the fleet have groundspeed control; when the truck slows the disbursement of sand or salt slows as well. Director Fox responded all of the trucks, with the exception of the 1 tons, have groundspeed control. Vice Chairman Rothhaus questioned the cost allocated for the boat ramp (\$67,000). Director Fox stated preliminary engineering work had been done on using Griffin Street. That calculation was identified as what was called Phase I; to get from Griffin Street down underneath the railroad trestle. To do the next stretch was very costly. The department began looking at other options, and believes they have identified a really good option; utilizing the Mast Road location. They felt keeping the budget the same would accomplish a really great boat ramp. With the \$67,000 allocation, they anticipate being able to do the entire boat ramp project by utilizing that location.

Councilor Koenig questioned if a definitive statement has been made regarding that project, and was informed it has not. Monies are proposed for that project with the hope it will be approved. Town Manager Cabanel noted were the allocation to be removed from the budget, it would not result in a reduction as the funds are intended to come from the CRF. Councilor Dwyer commented 95% of the project is roadway and the last 5% the boat ramp.

Councilor Flood spoke of the Griffin Street area commenting she has been to the area and found it to be a complete mess; dangerously so. She would think incorporating the boat ramp would improve the area and make it safer. Councilor Boyd stated doing something down there to improve access to the river would improve the aesthetics in that area. Improving the area and increasing the level of visibility might detract people from continuing current behavior. Chairman Harrington remarked the amount of money proposed would get the project to the area; would not include cleaning up the area being discussed. Councilor Boyd remarked it would extenuate that bridge to nowhere.

Town Manager Cabanel remarked the topography, etc. of the area is not conducive to a boat ramp. She commented she is not suggesting that the area should not be cleaned up, but it shouldn't be the reason why the existing boat ramp should be repaired/enhanced. The boat ramp should be located in a proper location, and if there is a desire to incorporate funds into the budget to address the Griffin Street area that is another issue.

Chairman Harrington commented what is occurring down there really prevents citizens from enjoying the shoreline. It was suggested that be another item discussed at the Retreat. Councilor Dwyer stated there should be an opinion stated by the Council and a vote taken on the two options available. Director Fox has indicated the least obtrusive or the easiest to fix with the best access is Mast Road. What is proposed is the beginning stage, and mainly road work to make the area available to the

citizens. The bottom line for some was to create a usable access to the Merrimack River as cost effectively as possible.

Councilor Flood questioned why a boat ramp is important for Merrimack. Vice Chairman Rothhaus responded that is for the Council to determine. He stated his belief some members of the Council are a little skeptical. He stated he is pleased to see it proposed in the budget so that a decision can be reached. He provided his viewpoint; Merrimack has a river that parallels our Town (is named after it) and we have minimal access. A canoe port was put in years ago and that works. He does not believe there to be access by boat. The Mast Road location he had not contemplated until the goals meetings when it was thrown out as an idea. He believes it to be a perfect location as there are people working there for a good chunk of the day, and it would be less of a headache than the other location. It may be that having such an amenity in the other location might help bring it back, but it is a chore down there right now and a long road to get to that location. Councilor Boyd commented the logistics of getting to the end of the railroad tracks is a huge obstacle to overcome.

Chairman Harrington questioned Line Item 01-08-8510-0-Capital Reserve Fund; specifically the difference between D.W. Highway CRF and Road Infrastructure CRF. Assistant Town Manager/Finance Manager Micali responded the Town had voted to set up a CRF for the paving of D.W. Highway because that road gets paved more frequently. Money is allocated to that to pave from the Common Man restaurant all the way up to Walgreens. The Road Infrastructure CRF is a combination of the old sidewalk CRF, bike path CRF, drainage CRF, bridge CRF, and the road improvement CRF. About 6 years ago the Town voted to consolidate those into the Road Infrastructure CRF.

Chairman Harrington questioned if it would be an accurate statement to state under any CRF when we have expenditure it does not affect the tax rate. Town Manager Cabanel stated in the Highway budget the CRF purchases also include the grant portion. She indicated reference to bridge replacement - Bedford Road, under the CRF line item, should identify the Town portion as \$225,808, which is 20% of the cost Town will incur in FY18.

Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali noted any CRF purchase in the budget (for any department) is offset by revenue. The expenditure has to be identified in the budget even though the cost will be paid through the CRF, which is money held in reserve for a specific purpose (savings). There is no tax impact associated with purchases through a CRF. Town Manager Cabanel noted, in this instance, a portion of the revenue utilized to cover the cost of the purchases is also coming from the State.

Councilor Koenig noted Line Item 01-08-8510-0-Capital Reserve Fund, shows FY16 actual at \$960,000 yet in a column to the left it shows \$750,000. Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali reviewed the budget for that year, and indicated the amounts should read \$300,000 for highway equipment, \$10,000 for traffic light preemption, \$50,000 for D.W. Highway, and \$600,000 for road infrastructure. Those total \$960,000.

Equipment Maintenance

Director Fox stated the overall budget for Equipment Maintenance is up 4.2% (\$18,591). The largest increase from FY17 is the addition of \$9,300 in Line Item 01-16-8334-0-Maintenance-Office Equipment for the purchase of diagnostic software to allow staff to self-diagnose the 6-wheel dump trucks and police vehicles.

Town Manager Cabanel remarked this is something that was discussed at the Council Retreat, e.g., sophistication of equipment in vehicles that have been purchased. If going to have a maintenance division, it needs to be equipped to diagnose issues for the new vehicles being purchased.

Director Fox noted the department maintains all of the Town-wide fleet, e.g., Police, Fire, Public Works, and all of the pool cars in the other divisions. It is very economical in comparison to having to take vehicles to an outside mechanic in both cost and time without vehicles.

Councilor Mahon questioned what is believed to be the Town's ability to maintain vehicles going forward. Lori Barrett, Operations Manager, stated if we don't keep up on the diagnostic systems and equipment it would be difficult. All of the vehicles talk to you now, but you need to be able to talk back. Director Fox added one of the newer mechanics has spent a significant amount of time receiving specialized training on the fire trucks. We're increasing our capabilities to be able to work on those as well.

Councilor Koenig questioned if the \$9,300 increase for diagnostic equipment is expected to be a one-time expense or an ongoing expense. Ms. Barrett responded that includes the initial investment for the software and a laptop to run it. There will be an annual fee that will be seen each year for updates (\$1,800). Councilor Koenig commented the Police Chief had commented on the SUVs being better in so many ways, but we are probably going to have more training required to be able to continue to maintain the sophistication we are seeing in those cars that allow them to get the better gas mileage, etc.

Councilor Koenig questioned if the anticipation is that Line Item 01-16-8352-0-Education & Training, will increase as well. Director Fox stated his belief the amount requested (\$1,500) is adequate. Unless new opportunities come forward, he does not predict it going up. There is a lot of training provided through the American Public Works Association (APWA), which they are members of.

Councilor Dwyer spoke of the future of technology coupled with the problem of the workforce being so tight, and questioned if the future of the department is seen as this being an in-house job for years to come or if there even is a company in another town to which the fire truck could be taken where there may be mechanics and other diagnostic specialists.

Town Manager Cabanel stated that to be something that they are always thinking and talking about. She had requested a report on in-house versus outside services from the prior individual who held the position of Operations Manager, and his conclusion was that, at this point, in-house maintenance makes more sense. That is evaluated every year and will continue to be.

Councilor Koenig asked if the Director wished to comment on the overall state of the Highway garage and the equipment maintenance facilities. Ms. Barrett commented the facility is undersized for the

needs of the Town. The size of the facility has impaired progress. Adding indoor storage and/or indoor work area would be beneficial.

It was noted on the agenda for the Council's meeting on January 26th is a presentation on the Highway Garage. Director Fox commented the Council is aware of the need, and he is excited to have presented, hopefully in a different way than previously, what the needs are.

Councilor Koenig commented the Town has more sophisticated equipment and more equipment. That building is not getting any better, and it is inadequate; woefully undersized and underequipped.

Solid Waste Disposal

Director Fox stated the operating expenses and personnel costs are up 6.2% from FY17. Most of that is related to disposal fees, Line Item 01-09-8355-0-Solid Waste Disposal, (\$77,200 increase). Tipping fees have increased by \$1.00/ton from last year. The largest increase is that the trash quantity has increased by 800 tons. At the same time, the single-stream recycling fee has also increased from \$15 to \$25/ton. He noted the increase in the tipping fee is \$63,000 whereas the increase in the single-stream is \$14,000. Even though, at this point, the way the commodities market it, we are not receiving money for the single-stream as in the past, it still does save the Town and taxpayers a ton of money to utilize the very simple process of single-stream recycling.

Town Manager Cabanel commented although the total tonnage of trash that is going into the waste stream has increased by 800 tons, the single-stream tonnage has remained fairly consistent over the life of the program. Director Fox spoke of efforts to promote single-stream recycling, e.g., a campaign conducted in the month of December.

Councilor Koenig questioned if an estimate could be provided of how much the cost is impacted by cardboard and glass alone, e.g., if that were placed in the single-stream recycling what the savings could be. Steve Dumas, Solid Waste Foreman, stated his belief the increase seen (800 tons) is also related to demolition material. There are a lot of older homes in Town and people are doing a lot of renovations. That material is very heavy.

The Council expressed a desire for continued educational efforts to promote recycling. Mr. Dumas commented the facility is set up for disposal to be done the right way; the last place you come to in the facility is the trash building. It is very easy to drive through and take care of recycling before the rest.

Town Manager Cabanel commented a few years back there was a concerted effort to educate school children. A recycling committee was formed, and put together a presentation that was provided at the schools. A representative of the Northeast Resource Recovery Association (NRRA) participated, and provided information on the different kinds of activities kids could be engaged in. That information was presented to the school Administration. Chairman Harrington requested that be placed on a future agenda for a joint meeting with the School Board.

Councilor Dwyer requested additional signage be placed at the facility encouraging residents to recycle cardboard and glass. Councilor Mahon questioned if recycling increased during the December campaign. Director Fox responded the first 11 months of 2016 the recycling rate was almost dead

consistent at about 20-21%. In December the rate was 28%. The NRRA was asked to review the month of December for prior years, which indicated it to have been a typical trend.

Director Fox commented recycling is the single easiest way for residents to participate in lowering taxes. The ease of recycling is what needs to be driven home.

Director Fox spoke of projects included in the budget for the coming year (Line Item 01-09-8502-0-Buildings). A number of months ago he and Mr. Doumas started talking about how to get more signage onto the building and what kind of signage would be used, e.g., static poster boards, video boards with dynamic messages, etc. There are pigeons roosting at the top of the building where the signage would go. For both aesthetic and health reasons they propose a project of netting the overhang area to prevent that from occurring. An outside vendor would be utilized. Once that project is complete the intent is to put some significant signage on the side of the building to try and drive more people to recognize the importance of recycling.

Another project is HVAC replacement for the office trailer. The current one is original with the trailer from when the Transfer Station opened (2004). It provides both heat and air conditioning, and is failing.

Director Fox remarked for equipment purchases this year, they are looking to replace one of the four trash trailers. This past year the equipment maintenance staff did some pretty extensive repairs on two of the trailers (extended lifespan). All four trailers were purchased in 2005. As was included in the CIP presentation, the department is proposing the purchase of one trailer this coming year, one the next, skipping a year, and then doing the next two in consecutive years. The trailers are live floor trailers meaning they actually move on a conveyor type system; back and forth to take the trash and debris. All you have to do is open up the back door. When asked if that is also required at the other end for dumping, Director Fox stated it is.

Buildings and Grounds

Director Fox stated the division takes care of all of the indoors and outdoors of the town Hall facility, Adult Community Center, and the Police Station. Overall the budget is up 15% from FY17 (\$33,706). Projects planned for FY18 include replacement of window trim on the east wing of the Police Department, rehabilitation of the HVAC ducts on the roof at the Police Department, and replacement of the panic alarm in the Town Clerk/Tax Collector area (Line Item 01-17-8321-0-Maintenance-Buildings). The windows were replaced a few years ago, but the trim was never replaced. There are 6 HVACs in the roof. One is fairly new, but the other 5 require replacement.

Line Item 01-17-8359-0-Other Outside Services, shows an increase of \$15,000 for contract plowing in the municipal lots. The contract was able to start this year. The contractor hired is the same utilized by the School District. They are doing the Town Hall buildings, South Fire Station, Central Fire Station, Adult Community Center, Library, MYA, and the Police Department. With the changes to personnel in the department's budgets over the last number of years, they simply could not provide the level of services that each of the departments needed. All of the Highway employees are out plowing roads. To divert employees from plowing roads to plow parking lots just does not make sense. Even

after the storm is over, to ask guys who have just worked 20-30 hours straight to do parking lots is irresponsible.

Director Fox stated the service the Town is getting is really outstanding. The contractor utilizes big pushers on the end of a loader. They are able to drag all of the snow from the Town Hall parking lots to that front corner, which means no loss of parking spaces like has been seen in past years. Having it all centrally located makes it really easy for the Highway employees, when they are in between storms, to come and load it out and give the full parking back. Police and Fire are also really happy with it.

Under Line Item 01-17-8502-0-Buildings (\$9,200 increase), planned projects include replacement of one of the HVAC units at the Police Department, repair existing and install additional emergency lighting at the Adult Community Center, and continue the window replacement project at Town Hall.

Vice Chairman Rothhaus questioned the cost identified for the emergency lighting (\$4,000). Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali remarked now that the renovation has completed, a review was conducted of the emergency lighting. One or both of the bathrooms has no emergency lighting, there is the need to re-do the exit signs, and some of the emergency lighting that is in the building itself is inadequate and would have to be replaced.

When asked how long the HVAC unit at the Police Department has been leaking, Director Fox stated he became aware of it two months ago. Councilor Mahon questioned why repairs would wait until July when risking further structural damage because of the leaks. Director Fox responded part of the problem was identifying where the leak comes from. They have been working diligently to try to identify that by tarping different parts of the unit. The location seems to have been identified during the past storm. When asked, he stated his belief it can be protected until able to be addressed. The tarp seems to have solved the issue and does not affect the function of the system.

Wastewater Treatment Fund

Director Fox stated the Wastewater budget is funded entirely from sewer user fees; does not come out of the tax base. For the proposed budget, operating expenses have increased 0.7%, while the overall budget is up 14.4%. The Wastewater facility in Merrimack remains in the lowest 10 sewer rates in the State. The average rate statewide in 2013 was approx. \$500/household and Merrimack's current rate is \$226. Proposed is a 7% increase, which would bring the residential rate up to \$242.

The largest project/increase in the proposed budget is the preliminary design (30% design phase plans) for Phase III of the Treatment Plant upgrade and pump station improvements at the two oldest and biggest pump stations. Being proposed is utilizing \$350,000 from the Sewer Infrastructure CRF. That will allow for an accurate cost when going before the voters in 2 years requesting a bond to support the project. Total project cost is estimated to be approx. \$13 million.

When asked, Jim Taylor, Assistant Director/Wastewater Superintendent, stated the 7% increase was part of the rate study that was approved back in 2009. Expenses and revenue are projected out over at least a 6-year period. That was recently expanded out over 10 years. The proposal would maintain the \$2 million fund balance that the rate study recommended be maintained. Vice Chairman Rothhaus

Approved: February 14, 2017

Posted: February 15, 2017

questioned when the last increase on residential rate occurred and was informed it was two years ago (7 or 8%). The rate study recommended an increase every two years for smoothing.

Adjourn

MOTION made by Councilor Boyd and seconded by Councilor Mahon to adjourn the meeting.
MOTION CARRIED 7-0-0

The January 19, 2017 meeting of the Town Council was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Submitted by Dawn MacMillan