



Special Town Council Meeting Minutes



Wednesday May 15, 2019 at 7:00 PM, in the Matthew Thornton Room

Chairman Koenig called the special meeting of the Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m. Present at the meeting were Vice Chairman Boyd, Councilor Albert, Councilor Harrington, Councilor Rothhaus, Councilor Woods and Town Manager Eileen Cabanel. Councilor Healey and Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Paul Micali were excused.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Koenig led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements

The following letter was read into the record:

“The Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance is calling on all firefighters to light up their fire apparatus Friday night at 9:00 p.m. to remember those who have taken their own lives. Mental health has become a major concern in the fire service, and the Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance remains committed to honoring those firefighters and first responders who struggle with issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. As part of this day of remembrance and awareness, the Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance is calling on all firefighters across the country to light up the night by placing their fire apparatus outside the stations and turning on the emergency lights for one minute this night, 5-17-19 at 9:00 p.m.

The Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance also encourages anyone who wants to participate to join the local firefighters or simply stand in their driveways with a lit candle to remember the families who are suffering through these preventable losses.

This Friday, we, the Merrimack Fire Department, will be participating in this event.”

Town Manager Cabanel remarked sometimes we forget the things our first responders witness on a daily basis. The Town makes counseling services available after particularly difficult events.

Councilor Albert commended the first responders for the work they do.

Comments from the Press and Public - None

New Business

1. Approval of Letter of Support for Boston University’s Research Proposal

Submitted by Town Council Chairman Tom Koenig and Vice Chair Bill Boyd

The Town Council to consider the approval of a Letter of Support for the Boston University’s research proposal entitled “Health Implications of Exposure to PFAS-Contaminated Drinking Water in the Merrimack, NH Area”.

Approved: June 13, 2019

Posted: June 18, 2019

Chairman Koenig spoke of the request made that the Council sign on in support of the program. The CDC sponsored grant is being applied for by Boston University. The request was for the Council to forward a letter to Dr. Heiger-Bernays, School of Environmental Health, Boston University. The Council was provided examples of language that could be utilized for the letter as well as a copy of the CDC's Request for Application.

Councilor Harrington stated she read the backup information provided and had some confusion around the original letter proposed. The letter states "provide support for Boston University's research proposal entitled Health Implications of Exposure to PFAS Contaminated Drinking Water in Merrimack....". The Council did not receive Boston University's proposal. What the Council received was a copy of the CDC's Request for Application, which is what Boston University is responding to. That is what the Council is supporting, the CDC's Request for Application.

She suggested the letter be amended in the first sentence so that it begins "We wish to provide support for Boston University to receive positive consideration in response to the Center...." The change would remove reference to the material the Council has not had the opportunity to review/consider. She is supportive of sending a letter; however, wishes for the language of the letter to be amended.

Councilor Albert suggested further amending by replacing "positive consideration" with "grant funding". Councilor Harrington and Chairman Koenig noted the intent of the language is similar.

Councilor Harrington requested the letter be further amended by adding the following sentence to the end of the second page: "The Merrimack Town Council would appreciate receiving a copy of the report with study results."

Chairman Koenig noted although Councilor Healey was unable to be in attendance, she has expressed her support of the study and the efforts of the CDC.

Councilor Rothhaus asked for clarification on the accuracy of the statement "DES has collected thousands of private well samples". Town Manager Cabanel commented Councilor Woods brought the issue up. She noted "thousands" represents the entire area including Litchfield, etc. Councilor Woods suggested the use of a different number. Councilor Rothhaus remarked if accurate, he is acceptable to the language. Chairman Koenig stated the question to be whether the sentence requires limiting the number to Merrimack's geographical area as it follows a sentence that speaks specifically of Merrimack's municipal water supply.

Town Manager Cabanel was of the opinion the sentence and whether the reference to the number of private wells tested was intended to be specific to Merrimack or the State would not diminish the impact of the letter.

Councilor Woods stated concern the sentence would indicate to residents the Council believes there to have been thousands of tests on private wells in Merrimack. He suggested the number be changed from thousands to hundreds.

Vice Chairman Boyd requested the date of the letter be changed to May 15, 2019.

Approved: June 13, 2019

Posted: June 18, 2019

MOTION made by Vice Chairman Boyd and seconded by Councilor Albert to amend, as stated, and approve, as amended

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Koenig asked for clarity with regard to the change recommended by Councilor Albert relative to replacing “positive consideration” with “grant funding”. Councilor Albert stated he was agreeable to the amended language as proposed by Councilor Harrington.

MOTION CARRIED 6-0-0

Comments from the Press - None

Comments from the Public

Laurene Allen, 16 French Court

Stated appreciation to the Council for its time, consideration, and support. She noted the team at Boston University is very familiar having had a great many discussions with her, NHDES, DHHS, etc. If they are not successful in the grant application to the Agency of Toxic and Substances Disease Registry (ATSDR), she is of the belief they will seek out another national grant opportunity.

Asked if the School Board has been asked to provide a letter of support, Ms. Allen responded they were made aware; however are not meeting again until May 20th. She is of the belief it will be noted they were contacted. What they would do to provide support is lend some space for testing.

Comments from the Council

Councilor Rothhaus reminded the viewing audience the Public Works Department is having an Open House/Ribbon Cutting for the new Highway Garage on Saturday, May 18th from 9:00 a.m. – Noon.

A celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Merrimack Youth Association will be held on May 18th from 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. at the Biergarten at Anheuser Busch.

Vice Chairman Boyd noted the Reeds Ferry Elementary School is having their Art & Ice Cream Social on Thursday, May 23rd from 5:15 – 7:00 p.m.

Adjourn

MOTION made by Vice Chairman Boyd and seconded by Councilor Harrington to adjourn the special meeting. MOTION CARRIED 6-0-0

The May 15, 2019 special meeting of the Town Council was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Submitted by Dawn MacMillan