



Town Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 8, 2020 at 6:30 PM, in the Matthew Thornton Room

Vice Chairman Boyd called the meeting of the Town Council to order at 6:30 p.m. Present at the meeting were Councilor Albert, Councilor Harrington, Councilor Healey, Councilor Rothhaus, Councilor Woods, Town Manager, Eileen Cabanel, and Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Paul Micali. Chairman Koenig was excused.

Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Chairman Boyd led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilor Harrington explained at the onset of the budget process, a [schedule](#) is approved identifying dates of regular and budget meetings leading up to the Annual Meetings as well as deadlines imposed by the State. The schedule identifies the dates on which each of the departments will make budget presentations. In December, the Town Manager presents her recommended budget to the Town Council. The presentation includes the entirety of the budget; proposed appropriations/expenditures, anticipated revenue, fund balance, the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and Capital Reserve Funds (CRFs).

The [budget detail](#) provided the Council and the public identifies the requests of the departments as well as the recommendations of the Town Manager.

Beginning in January, each of the departments present their budget, provide an explanation of the proposed expenditures, and respond to questions.

Once the department presentations have concluded, the Council begins its deliberation (January 29, 2020). The public is welcome and encouraged to provide input at any point in the process leading up to formal action by the Council.

Town Manager Cabanel commented the Town's process is very thorough. There is a great deal of information available to the public on the Town's website. The level of detail provides the opportunity for residents to view historical information as well. She stated a willingness to sit down with any citizen wishing to discuss the budget and/or process.

Review of Proposed FY19 Budget

Assessing

Loren Martin, Contract Assessor, Avitar Associates, remarked the majority of the budget remains unchanged from FY20. There is a change in how the Town receives Deeds from the Hillsborough County Registry of Deeds. Currently deeds are provided in an online forum where they can be downloaded or printed. If research is required, there is a cost for printing through the new system, which has not been the case previously. The Town recently received an email from the Town of Hudson in regard to this. They are looking for support for legislation to ban the registries from charging municipalities for past deeds ([SB425](#)).

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Line Item #01-02-8910-0 - Capital Reserve Fund Purchases, identifies \$75,000 for the Town Wide valuation. The Town is obligated (per State law) to conduct the five-year assessment and update of values. The CRF was established for and will be utilized to address this expense.

Line Item #01-02-8504-0 - Office Equipment, includes 3 computer work stations at a cost of \$3,000. Existing equipment is 10⁺ years old.

Councilor Albert questioned if \$75,000 is the actual cost of performing the revaluation. Ms. Martin stated that to be what was charged the last time the function was performed. During the update year, a full field review of the Town is conducted that includes 2 Assessors out on the road (process takes approx. 6 weeks), notifications of new values are mailed to all taxpayers, income/expense forms sent out to all commercial and industrial properties to work to properly develop an income approach to value, informal hearings are held, inquiries responded to, etc. The process is intensive/burdensome. During the last revaluation a number of hearings were conducted as we were in an appreciating market. We have continued to appreciate since the last update in 2016.

Asked about the number of staff involved, Ms. Martin stated she conducts the bulk of the analysis along with another Assessor, Ten or so of her staff were involved in the hearing process as well as assisting the Assistant Assessor in the inspections for that process. It involves the measuring and listing of all sale properties in Town. In a good year there are 600-800 properties that need to be listed and data collected for that process.

She has not yet provided the Town with the anticipated cost for the coming budget. However, a contract will be provided the Town Manager for review shortly.

Councilor Albert questioned Line Item #01-02-8359-0 - Other Outside Services, wherein amounts are listed for mapping maintenance (\$3,000) and contractual assessor services (\$37,000). Ms. Martin stated those amounts represent her position as Assessor.

Councilor Healey noted a workstation cost (\$300) is also identified under Line Item #01-02-8334-0 - Maintenance-Office Equipment. Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali stated that cost to be associated with regular maintenance.

Councilor Albert questioned if the salary line item is expected to increase based on current vacancies. Town Manager Cabanel remarked, over the years, the Council has discussed whether to hire a full-time assessor, etc. She reached the conclusion some time ago that the contract assessor model is really what we need to continue with. She is uncertain a professional assessor needs to be a full-time job. With other staff, having the technical expertise, collecting and inputting the data, the Assessor can analyze that data (more of an oversight).

When a turnover such as this occurs, the opportunity is used to review the current practice, and determine if there is a more efficient manner to proceed. That has taken place. An existing employee has applied for and been hired as the Administrative Assessor. The technician position remains vacant. That individual would go door to door inspecting properties. There is the need for a particular type of individual to fill that role. That position has been discussed in detail. That one position may require additional funding; that remains uncertain. Salary cost associated with the Administrative Assessor position will represent a decrease.

Vice Chairman Boyd questioned if the town may consider having the contract with Avitar include the field personnel piece, and, if so, if it is possible an efficiency could be achieved in regard to the line item.

Town Manager Cabanel stated that has been discussed. They met earlier in the day. Ms. Martin will do her best, in the interim, to try to fill in for that need. She also has a very difficult time finding someone to do that type of job and assessors. All viable options will be considered. Asked about the cost of the Field Assessor position, Town Manager Cabanel stated wages to be \$58,500, and total cost, inclusive of benefits, to be \$94,867.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector

Diane Trippett, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, stated the budget before the Council is not that which was originally submitted. The original submission included a request to reclassify the current part-time position to that of full-time as a result of increased demands for service, additional duties placed on the department, and the inability to keep up with service requests and daily workload. During the FY08 budget cycle, a full-time position within the department was changed to part-time. Over the past 12 years, workload and demands for service have increased. In 2008, the State implemented their state-wide motor vehicle registration program (MAP). Motor vehicle transactions account for approx. 90% of a counter employee's daily workload. Transaction numbers have steadily increased over this time. Since the MAP program implementation, the State has also consistently increased the types of transactions municipalities can conduct. There are now very few transactions the department is not able to do within the Town office. Since 2008, State transactions have increased by over 5,000/annually.

In addition to transaction numbers there are additional duties, e.g., inventory, record-keeping (fallen behind), reconciliation. Current transactions require constant phone contact with the DMV. With 234 cities and towns processing transactions and a limited personnel at the DMV, wait times and the ability for Town personnel to get customers through the door quickly is hampered.

According to the Community Development Department, there are approximately 1,400 new residential housing units in the works. As these become occupied, the new residents will also require services. Every resident in the Town needs to do business with the office in one form or another. An average household has 3 registrations. The expectation is an increase of 4,200 annually (11 additional transactions/hour). In the first few months of the current fiscal year, the department has seen an increase of over 300 vehicle registrations and 100 voter registrations (from new housing developments).

The department has had difficulty with the ability to serve customers via telephone, record-keeping, and filing. The department annually receives the highest call volume of all departments with the exception of police (24/7 operation). Staff in the Town Manager's Office fields a lot of calls for the department.

There has been a change to RSA 654:13-a; retention of voter registration forms, which will now place all record-keeping responsibility of voter registration records with the Town Clerk's Office. This was previously vested solely with the Supervisors of the Checklist. In reviewing their hours, it appears they average about 275 hours filing.

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Attempts have been made to formulate long-range planning to set priorities with staff to try to cross-train. Unfortunately, there has been a good deal of turnover during the past few years. Since 2018 the department has lost 6 employees (2 to retirements). Currently, there is 1 individual on the counter who is a 10-year employee.

It is understood moving from part-time to full-time would result in an increase to the budget. Ms. Trippett requested the change be considered. Beyond that, the proposed budget is nearly level funded.

Councilor Albert questioned if the position change is reflected in the proposed budget. Town Manager Cabanel stated what will be seen in a number of departments is the cost associated with such requests listed under Line Item #01-24-8136-0 - Unemployment Compensation (dept. column). The amount identified represents the additional amount that would be added to the position (salary and benefits) should it be changed from part-time to full-time.

Councilor Albert stated his support for the requested change. Vice Chairman Boyd questioned if the requested addition would be sufficient to address the need. Ms. Trippett stated uncertainty, and the desire to limit the scope of the request. This is viewed as a starting point. It is hoped, if staff can be retained, it will result in proficiency. Vice Chairman Boyd spoke of the volume of work and stated the desire to understand if this change would result in the situation becoming manageable.

Ms. Trippett noted inclusion in the budget under Line Item #01-24-8107-0 - Wages - Part-Time, funding for an on-call person to assist during tax time as well as temporary help during the November Presidential Election.

Councilor Rothhaus spoke of appreciation for a slow approach to any increase in staffing. Councilor Healey questioned if the root cause of turnover has been able to be identified. Ms. Trippett responded her thought process is that it is two jobs and there is a lot of responsibility for two jobs; the individual has to learn a Town Clerk job and a Tax Collector job. Merrimack is one of the few large communities left having a combined position with employees having to learn 2 jobs. We have been working on salaries/wages steadily over the past few years; however are lagging behind. Job ads have been seen with a starting salary of \$18-\$22 and the Town starts at \$16 or \$16.50. Staff is lost to other departments offering higher wages.

Councilor Albert stated a desire to receive a comparison of wages/positions within communities similar in size. Vice Chairman Boyd suggested the comparison identify whether single or dual responsibilities.

Councilor Rothhaus indicated he would be happy to review the information; however, is aware 3 out of the 6 individuals who have left employ did not do so for salary reasons. Although he would like to be competitive, it is not always necessary to chase other communities.

Councilor Woods spoke of his level of confidence with regard to the department managing the workload.

Councilor Harrington spoke of the current economy being good, and of competition with the private sector.

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Media

Nicholas Lavalley, Media Services Coordinator, stated the Town's media division includes the Town Hall TV studio, two conference rooms, and the 3 cable television channels. The department is funded by way of Comcast cable subscribers; percentage of bill (franchise fee) goes back to the Town. The department consists of 2.5 employees.

The bulk of the proposed budget remains unchanged. Line Item #32-32-8504-0-Office Equipment includes several proposed purchases. Remote equipment (\$20,000) would replace existing equipment; some up to 10 years in age, bulky, and requiring more than 1 for set-up. The desire is to continue to offer coverage of board and committee meetings as well as offsite events such as the Deliberative Sessions and special events in the community. One of the initiatives over the past year has been in the covering of additional community events and more staff produced content. The desire is for equipment that only requires 1 to set-up. Using equipment purchased last year, meetings could be covered by multi-camera and less staff, and offered live on the public channel as well as through social media.

Justin Slez, Assistant Media Services Coordinator, spoke of upgrades that were done several years back to the Memorial Conference Room. The equipment is aging, particularly the audio equipment. The amount listed under "Other CATV Equipment" (\$10,000) is intended for the Merrimack Memorial Conference Room.

The desire is to make some changes to the infrastructure, e.g., run wires under the floor, mounted projector (if possible). A soundboard would be beneficial. There is also the desire to stream some of the meetings that occur in that room live. Upgraded equipment is needed to be able to do that. Mr. Lavalley remarked they would like to match the same sort of services provided for meetings taking place in the Matthew Thornton Room.

Councilor Albert commented the Conservation Commission meetings take place in the Memorial Conference Room. Currently presentations provided to and by the Commission are difficult for the public to view because of the current configuration/equipment. He stated his support of the request.

Councilor Harrington reiterated the department is funded through the cable franchise fee not through monies raised through taxes.

Vice Chairman Boyd stated his support of the request citing the number of meetings/events that take place in that room.

Councilor Rothhaus commented the funding source continues as long as residents subscribe to cable television. Mr. Lavalley commented on the number of residents who utilize online resources and the reasoning for offering more of the content online.

Vice Chairman Boyd questioned the thoughts in regard to future infrastructure needs. Mr. Lavalley commented on the discussions had regarding what the division can become. He believes the division and what it offers will have more to do with social media and content found on the internet.

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Councilor Healey questioned if a future is seen in interactive meetings, e.g., viewers being able to post questions online in real time. Mr. Lavallee stated it to be a possibility. However, it would require an individual to monitor the comments and bring them up during the discussion.

Fire

Town Manager Cabanel remarked for the past 3[±] years the Council has engaged in discussions around new residences in Town and the impact(s) on Town departments/services. The concept of beefing up staffing has been a topic of discussion. This has been done in some of the departments. Last year a part-time person in the Tax Collector's Office was moved to a full-time position. A few Police Officers have been added, etc. Positions have been added based on priority understanding everything cannot be funded in a single year.

During the course of discussions and in her budget presentation, she indicated she would be looking into hiring four firefighters. There was the belief the Town could be the recipient of grant funding. It was never presented to her in a fashion that allowed her to be confident enough to present it to the Council. The addition of four individuals equates to half a million dollars annually. In order to identify the need you must look at the needs on an annual basis.

During the budget process, she spoke of grant applications and the possibility of hiring four firefighters utilizing grant funding. She also noted additional funding included under overtime to be able to staff to 9 (not below) with the understanding that might be the match for the grant.

The positions were not included in the budget. The grant cannot be used to supplant the budget. This is the first time, since the past four firefighter positions were added, that a request has been made for additional staffing. The information she received the previous day did not provide a factual basis with which to bring the request to the Council. She spoke of charts that were displayed as the indicator that staffing is needed.

Councilor Albert suggested the presentation on the department budget be delayed until the necessary information can be provided. Councilor Rothhaus stated agreement. Town Manager Cabanel stated there to be indicators gleaned from the detailed reports that there are times during a particular month where the department is stretched very thin. When looking at issues such as mutual aid, e.g., is the give and take out of balance, it is not. She agreed with postponing the presentation until the desired information can be provided.

Vice Chairman Boyd stated agreement with postponing the presentation. He commented on how the community is growing and there are challenges coming our way. In his conversations with the Fire Chief he has learned that 70% of the calls are either basic or advanced life support calls. That is what the first responders have been doing in this community over the past several years. The information provided on increased number of residential units indicates 1,379 individual residential units being proposed for the community. There is the desire to ensure adequate personnel/services can be provided.

Town Manager Cabanel spoke of the need for factual information when making a business decision/proposal. She does not have, in her hands, that information. Until she is provided with it, she would not make a recommendation to the Council.

Councilor Harrington questioned the grant status.

Councilor Rothhaus commented on being disappointed the conversation had to occur, and that it was forced because there is a communication issue. The Facebook page is where the information is coming from and is one-sided. He is a little shocked that people would base all of their desires off of a Facebook page. Now we have to put this out on the table. He is uncertain why we wouldn't be able to get the grant based on the wealth of the community. Understanding Londonderry received a grant, he is unclear why Merrimack would not. He needs the data in hand to be able to make a decision.

There being no objection, the Council took a five-minute recess at 8:20 p.m.

The Council reconvened at 8:25 p.m.

Matthew Duke, Assistant Chief, Merrimack Fire & Rescue, stated the 2019 FEMA Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant is a Federal grant provided to municipalities to increase the staffing level to meet the growing needs. The purposes and objectives of the grant are to provide funding directly to fire departments to assist in increasing staffing help meet industry minimum standards and provide adequate protection, assist with improving staffing and deployment capabilities so fire departments can safely and effectively respond to emergencies, and preferred that SAFER recipients enhance staffing to meet the recommendations of NFPA 1710 (national consensus standard considered industry best practice) to help achieve safer and more efficient responses.

Applications are submitted to FEMA and are selected through two means; pre-scoring, which is based on program funding priorities (50% of scoring). Those are determined annually by an industry panel that determines what sort of things are most important in the fire and emergency industry this year. The 2018 priorities included communities working toward NFPA 1710 compliance, communities who are currently conducting NFPA 1582 health and wellness physicals for their pre-employment and annual screening. Grants that were going to provide significant regional benefits were highly scored in 2018. Population size and call volume were considered. 2019 priorities are not yet known.

The second means is through independent peer review, which is made up of at least 3 reviewers, based on evaluation of four criteria (50% of scoring). The four criteria are project description; what will be done with additional staffing, impact on daily operations; how will the additional firefighters reduce community risk, financial need; address budget shortfalls, other attempts to obtain funding, etc., and cost benefit; quantify any anticipated savings or increased efficiencies.

The 2018 SAFER program funding was \$350 million (approx. 374 grants awarded). Assistant Chief Duke stated he has heard the number of applications was 8,000. The grant is a three-year increasing cost share after which the Town pays 100%. When considering four Firefighters/Paramedics, the costs break down as follows: Years 1 and 2 are 75% SAFER Grant (\$311,062) and 25% budget funded (\$103,687), year 3 is 35% SAFER Grant (\$269,587) and 65% budget (\$145,162). Year 4 would be 100% budget funded (\$414,749).

The Regional FEMA representative has indicated uncertainty with what the 2019 timeline will be. In their conversation earlier in the day, he indicated the application window should open mid-March 2020.

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In 2018, the Federal Government shut down mid-year, which threw the award date of the 2018 grants out (last round of awards made in October timeframe).

Councilor Albert questioned if the department has spoken with the Londonderry department regarding their application and received a copy of it, and was informed that interaction has occurred with Londonderry and other departments that have been successful in the grant process. He questioned, and was told FEMA.gov provides information on 2018 and previous SAFER Grants. Information is also available on the AFG Grant, which is more equipment related.

Asked who is responsible for grant preparation, Assistant Chief Duke indicated, at the moment, he is. A volunteer working group consisting of individuals having grant writing or related experience has been selected. Asked if any formal grant writing training has been provided, Assistant Chief Duke spoke of having attended seminars held at the NH Fire Academy. A two-day grant writing course is coming up in Salem, and is being looked at.

Councilor Albert questioned if monies could be set aside in a CRF in preparation for the outyears when 100% of the cost would be incurred by the Town, and was told wages cannot be placed into a CRF.

Vice Chairman Boyd commented with an anticipated award date at the start of July, the Town would already be in the start of the fiscal year. The positions would have to be posted, interviews conducted, training undergone, etc.

Assistant Chief Duke stated there are times when an indication can be received of how the application is doing in the process. Money would not be available to hire until the funding is released some time late in the 2020 calendar year. Noted was that in 2018 awards were disbursed in a series of rounds (several months apart). Town Manager Cabanel remarked because the Town operates on an entire year, if awarded a grant during the fiscal year, the department could go about hiring knowing the funds would be forthcoming.

Asked if, within the grant requirements, there is any type of commitment on the part of the employee to stay on with the Town once the grant has expired, Assistant Chief Duke stated there is not.

Councilor Woods commented on the scoring information and questioned the criteria used to quantify any anticipated savings or increased efficiencies. Assistant Chief Duke stated that is left open-ended. He would speculate they are looking for things such as reduction in overtime costs or the ability to staff apparatus with additional personnel to operate in a more efficient manner.

Councilor Harrington suggested focusing on what the four positions would do to get the department closer to the standards. Councilor Healey asked if the Town is currently compliant with NFPA 1710, and was told it is not entirely. She suggested concentrating in those areas of deficiencies.

Vice Chairman Boyd questioned whether there would be any unintended consequences of a successful applicant declining the grant award. Michael Currier, Chief, Merrimack Fire & Rescue, stated there is no language that requires acceptance of the grant. There is a period of time after the offer is made to accept the funding. In the absence of acceptance, funds roll back into the process.

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Councilor Albert spoke of the odds of a successful grant application. Councilor Rothhaus spoke of a grant received in prior years to cover the initial cost of two police officers (similar cost share approach). Town Manager Cabanel spoke of a grant Assistant Chief Borneman was able to obtain in a prior year for breathing apparatus. She suggested the Town seek the support of those in the Federal Government who represent the Town.

Vice Chairman Boyd stated concern with how the timeline of the grant fits in with the Town's ability to budget and plan.

Councilor Harrington stated the need to consider were the Council to determine to increase staffing by the four positions, it would negate the grant opportunity entirely. If not moving in that direction, there is the risk of not being staffed in a manner deemed most appropriate. She reiterated the need for the call data to make such a determination.

The personnel portion of the department's budget presentation will be rescheduled as a workshop to take place beginning at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 23, 2020.

Code Enforcement

Chief Currier commented Code Enforcement consists of the Building and Health departments. The budget itself has very little change. The largest change is found under Line Item # 01-06-8107-0 - Wages - Part-Time. Proposed is moving the part-time Health inspector to a full-time position. Under Line Item #01-06-8136-0 - Unemployment Compensation, the differential between the part-time position and full-time position (salary and benefits) is listed.

Chief Currier commented health inspectors provide a needed service in the community. They exist to protect people's health and welfare. They are the type of individuals having a specific education and training, and typically stay in their positions for a long period of time. It is hard to find a part-time health inspector that will remain with the department. The last 3 the department has had were younger individuals who attended college for that career, and were able to gain experience here and move on.

In Merrimack, there are 130 food establishments that must be inspected at a minimum of twice a year. That does not include any other complaints that occur weekly. Out of the 130, many of the businesses are frequent flyers where they have to visit 4-6 times/year to ensure they maintain their health standards.

Vice Chairman Boyd stated his support for the increased position. He spoke of the growth of the Town and the likelihood additional food establishments will result. He questioned if there is an obligation to inspect medical facilities, e.g., urgent care facilities. Chief Currier stated that is not under the food code, and therefore, no requirement for the fire or health department to inspect. Those businesses are required to abide by State standards/inspections.

Councilor Albert questioned the types of facilities, outside of food service, that the Health Inspector inspects, and was informed the position also inspects schools, daycares, assisted living facilities, public pools and beach areas, and foster homes.

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Chief Currier commented currently the department does not have the position of health inspector filled. As a result the Building Official and he go out and do the best they can with the food safety training they have had as there is the need to meet the minimum requirements.

General Government

Town Manager Cabanel stated the budget is near level funded. The variation that is seen on a yearly basis is Line Item #01-01-8142-0 - Compensated Absences. Compensated absences are absences for which employees will be paid, such as vacation, sick leave and sabbatical leave. The standards for recording and reporting come from the governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement No. 16.

The compensated absences liability should be calculated based on the pay or salary rates in effect at the balance sheet dates or as agreed upon based on contract, regulation or policy.

In addition, amounts should be accrued as a liability for salary-related payments (employer benefits) associated with the payment of compensated absences, such as social security and state retirement, using the rates in effect at the balance sheet date. The accrual should be made based on the entire liability for each type of compensated absence to which the salary related payments apply.

The funds must be placed into a separate account to prepare for such instances of absences. Town Manager Cabanel indicated this may be an area where small adjustments can be made as time progresses.

Noted was that the increase associated with a more experienced individual in the area of technology is not reflected in the current draft.

Councilor Harrington questioned Line Item #01-01-8270-0 - Dues & Fees; specifically New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA) (\$8,319 increase). The Line Item went from a total of 1,378 in FY19 to \$18,815 in FY20 and is proposed at \$27,134 in FY21. It was noted the Town was not utilizing them in years past. The \$1,378 from prior years was based on course attendance. Last year the Town was provided a reduced rate to reinstate membership. Councilor Harrington indicated all departments, committees, etc. were to keep track of how the service was utilized so that a determination could be made regarding continuing. She questioned if that information is available.

Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali stated the Community Development Department as well as their boards and commissions are utilizing the training. The training is of a high quality and reasonably priced. The Library has started utilizing some of the programs. The PWD and Assessing departments are taking advantage of the opportunities. There are a lot of good programs for finance that the department is beginning to look at. The Deputy Finance Director attends some training with the Trustee for the Trust Funds, e.g., budget purposes. There are offerings for IT staff, Human Resource staff, etc. The Town has only been reconnected since July, and not all of the training that will be utilized has come about in the schedule as of yet.

Town Manager Cabanel remarked over time some of the department heads sought training elsewhere. She has notified them if not taking advantage of this opportunity, it would be lost. There is an enormous amount of training available to the Town. She suggested it may be beneficial to have

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someone from NHMA meet with department heads to make them aware of the multitude of programs available.

Councilor Albert stated the desire to understand the number of employees who participated in the courses. With regard to the budget in general, he questioned if the salaries listed include proposed increases for non-union personnel, and was informed they do not.

Councilor Healey questioned if there is a cost associated with the courses offered, and was informed it is typically at a reduced rate. Further information will be provided, e.g., number of courses taken, availability of courses if not a member, actual cost. Town Manager Cabanel stated what we cannot overlook are the things the NHMA does for municipalities in terms of lobbying activities.

Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali noted the NHMA is bringing back the wage study, which is a useful tool for communities.

Vice Chairman Boyd stated concern that the NHMA is the lead Plaintiff on the PFOA limits where NHDES reduced it down to the lower MCLs. The NHMA was able to get an injunction. For him, philosophically, he has a hard time where this community has made a commitment to bonding through another agency to provide clean water to this community. Us funding a philosophy that is the exact opposite of what we have taken steps towards is something he struggles with. Town Manager Cabanel stated the NHMA is not a plaintiff in the lawsuit. They may have written an Amicus Brief, but the lead plaintiff is the Plymouth Village Water District.

They have not indicated the numbers are bad. They have stated the numbers need to be carefully reviewed. She does not see what is wrong with that position. There is the need for a cost benefit analysis.

Vice Chairman Boyd questioned Line Item #01-01-8104-0 - Wages - Other Full-Time; specifically if the amount identified for Technology Assistant (\$51,168) is the amount that was agreed upon for reclassifying the position as Assistant Technology Coordinator, and was told it is not.

Revenues

Town Manager Cabanel stated revenue received through auto registrations continues to increase. The budgeted amount for FY21 shows an increase of \$175,000 over FY20 actuals. Some of the other areas where increases are proposed include ambulance revenue (\$25,000) and highway block grant (\$10,000).

Monies transferred from CRFs have an equal offsetting expenditure. Monies have to be transferred (seen as revenue) before they can be expended. A reduction is seen in the revenue from the School Resource Officer grant (\$29,000).

Councilor Harrington questioned if it is accurate to state \$2,454,000 is going to be reflected in the budget, but will not affect the tax rate because it is expending funds that have been saved over time (CRF). Town Manager Cabanel stated that to be correct.

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Town Manager Cabanel stated \$11 million comes into the general fund from revenue sources other than taxes. The largest is motor vehicle registrations at \$5.6 million. Other sources of revenue include building permit fees, etc. An increase of \$153,000 is shown for projected revenues. The amount gained through revenues reduces the amount that has to be raised through taxes.

Councilor Healey spoke of revenue received from the State, and questioned how that impacts the budget. Town Manager Cabanel spoke of unanticipated revenue received this past year from the State. In that instance, because the tax rate had not been set, the DRA changed the revenue number, which automatically reduced the tax rate. Because the \$222,000 will be received again in FY21, it is listed as revenue in the proposed budget.

In general, appropriations are reduced by revenue. Items such as veterans' exemptions and abatements are added in, and that is the net amount that has to be raised through taxes.

Comments from the Press - None

Comments from the Public - None

Comments from the Council - None

Adjourn

MOTION made by Councilor Harrington and seconded by Councilor Healey to adjourn the meeting. **MOTION CARRIED** 6-0-0

The January 8, 2020 meeting of the Town Council was adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

Submitted by Dawn MacMillan