



Town Council Meeting Minutes



Monday, January 21, 2013, at 6:00 PM, in the Matthew Thornton Room

Chairman Mahon called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Present at the meeting were Chairman Mahon, Councilor Koenig, Councilor Dwyer, Councilor Boyd, Councilor Flood, Councilor Harrington, Town Manager Eileen Cabanel and Finance Director Paul Micali. Vice Chair Rothhaus was not in attendance.

- The Town Council deliberated on the 2013/14 Budget and Special Warrant Articles. Finance Director Paul Micali advised the Council that there are three housekeeping issues that the Council needs to address tonight regarding the Ambulance CRF deposit of \$12,000, the Wastewater Dewatering fund schedule requires an additional \$5,284 to the bond principal and increase the interest \$3,276. Councilor Koenig questioned what cuts were made to address the housekeeping issues. Town Manager Eileen Cabanel stated the NHMA would be eliminated. Chairman Mahon stated that he would recuse himself from the NHMA vote due to the affiliation with his previous employer.

Chairman Mahon called a brief recess.

Chairman Mahon stated that the Council still has to address the non-union wage adjustment. He suggested waiting until Thursday night when they address outstanding union contract issues. Councilor Harrington advised the Council that she will be recusing herself from the Fire Department budget adjustments. Chairman Mahon advised the Council that the proposed appropriations are \$23,530,752 not including the Ambulance and Wastewater adjustments. Councilor Koenig proposed that the Council take action on the three housekeeping adjustments. Town Manager Eileen Cabanel suggested they be done in two separate actions. Chairman Mahon stated that with the \$12,000, the appropriations are \$23,542,752

MOTION was made by Councilor Koenig and seconded by Councilor Boyd to move the amount of \$23,542,752 as the general fund total for 2013-2014. MOTION CARRIES 6-0-0

MOTION was made by Councilor Boyd and seconded by Councilor Dwyer to cut \$19,195 from line item 8270 Dues and Fees under General Government for the appropriation for the NHMA. MOTION FAILED 2-3-1 Councilor Koenig, Councilor Harrington and Councilor Flood voted in the negative. Chairman Mahon abstained

Councilor Koenig feels that the Town receives sufficient value from the NHMA and does not support the cut. Councilor Dwyer feels that the information that the NHMA provides is available. Town Manager Eileen Cabanel stated that the information is available but the Town would lose its ability to give input. Councilor Flood stated she is uncomfortable with the cut.

Councilor Boyd asked if the budget includes an allocation for milfoil removal in Horseshoe Pond. Town Manager Eileen Cabanel stated that there is not an allocation in the budget.

Councilor Flood spoke of the Function Hall at Wasserman Park. She stated that she would like to add \$2,000 to the budget for the Function Hall at Wasserman Park. Councilor Flood stated that the MYA building is a building that serves a small group of people and she would reduce that budget. Paul Micali advised the Council that it would be more than \$2,000 to heat the Function Hall. He reminded the Council that a new oil burner would be needed at the Function Hall which was a

factor in the past decision to close the Function Hall. Paul Micali stated that there would be additional costs to get the boiler up and running. He stated that the basement would still have to be heated. He estimated fuel costs to be \$4,000 to \$5,000 and an additional \$3,000 to \$5,000 for installation costs.

MOTION was made by Councilor Flood and seconded by Councilor Dwyer to appropriate \$4,500 to enable the Function Hall to be heated. Motion withdrawn.

Councilor Dwyer stated that he supports the motion for discussion because until the Council has a better understanding of total costs to heat the Function Hall. Town Manager Eileen Cabanel stated that it is her intention to shore up the issues at Wasserman Park this year. She stated that other more permanent improvements need to be made to the Function Hall. Town Manager Eileen Cabanel suggested addressing the Wasserman Park Function Hall when there is a clearer picture of what money is available. She advised the Council that funds might be available to address the boiler issue in this year's budget but the funding of fuel needs to be considered for the 2013-2014 budget. Councilor Flood stated that she would still like to move forward with her motion. Chairman Mahon reminded the Council of previous discussions and concerns regarding the Function Hall. Chairman Mahon spoke about the need to have a comprehensive plan for Wasserman Park. Councilor Dwyer echoed the comments of Chairman Mahon, and that he does not support the motion. Councilor Flood agreed and she withdrew her motion. Councilor Dwyer concurred and agreed to withdraw.

Councilor Koenig spoke about the 4th of July parade. He feels they can reduce some of the costs by having a parade without paying for bands to march. Paul Micali indicated that \$21,500 was spent last year on the 4th of July. Town Manager Eileen Cabanel advised the Council that the Rotary did not spend any of the Town's money last year. Councilor Flood agreed that the event could be scaled back and would still be enjoyable. Councilor Boyd spoke about the enjoyment that marching bands bring to parades. He stated that the parade should feature groups that accentuate the community. Town Manager Eileen Cabanel stated that she feels it is important to say that they fully support the Rotary and the midway. She is confident based on the Rotary's success last year that the line item can be reduced by \$10,000. Councilor Koenig stressed the Town's appreciation towards the Rotary and their efforts.

MOTION was made by Councilor Koenig and seconded by Councilor Dwyer to reduce the 4th of July funding by \$10,000. MOTION CARRIES 6-0-0

Town Manager Eileen Cabanel asked the Council to add \$5,284 to the interest on the Dewatering Bond in the Wastewater Fund, to add \$3,596 to the principal of the Dewatering Bond and to increase revenue by \$8,880. Paul Micali stated that Wastewater Fund amount would now be \$4,104,776.

MOTION was made by Councilor Harrington and seconded by Councilor Boyd to add \$5,284 to the interest on the Dewatering Bond in the Wastewater Fund, to add \$3,596 to the principal of the Dewatering Bond and to increase revenue by \$8,880. MOTION CARRIES 6-0-0

Finance Director Paul Micali advised the Council that the new appropriation amount is \$28,698,782 and the municipal portion of the tax rate is still \$5.25.

MOTION was made by Councilor Boyd and seconded by Councilor Harrington that the Town Council recommends to the voters of Merrimack a proposed 2013-2014 budget of

\$28,698,782 which will reflect the municipal portion of the tax rate of \$5.25 per \$1,000 by today's estimates. MOTION CARRIES 6-0-0

Councilor Boyd commended Town Manager Eileen Cabanel and Finance Director Paul Micali for their efforts. He stated that their efforts made his job a lot easier. Councilor Harrington expressed her appreciation towards the Town's employees for their sacrifice. She hopes the citizens of Merrimack will appreciate this as well. Councilor Koenig echoed those comments and thanked the department managers for their assistance in the budget process. He recognizes the difficulties facing each department. Councilor Koenig hopes that the Council will have the opportunity to consider what can be done for the non-union employees. Chairman Mahon echoed the comments from the Council.

ADJOURN

MOTION was made by Councilor Boyd and seconded by Councilor Harrington to adjourn the meeting. MOTION CARRIES 6-0-0

Submitted by Tracy Doherty