



Town Council Meeting Minutes



Thursday, August 18, 2022, at 7:00 PM, in the Matthew Thornton Room

Call to Order

Chairman Rothhaus called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Present at the meeting were Chairman Rothhaus, Vice Chair Harrington, Councilor Healey, Councilor Koenig, Councilor Murphy, Councilor Woods, and Town Manager Paul Micali. Councilor Hunter was excused.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Rothhaus led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements

The Town Hall offices will be closed on Monday, September 5th for the observance of Labor Day.

Upcoming Town Council Meetings:

- Thursday, September 8, 2022, 7:00 PM Regular meeting
- Thursday, September 22, 2022, 7:00 PM Regular meeting
- Thursday, October 13, 2022, 7:00 PM Regular meeting

Come and celebrate Labor Day weekend with the Parks & Recreation Department and the final Free Movie Night of the summer. They will be showing the movie "Sing 2" at Wasserman Park.

The movie begins at 7:30 pm on Saturday, September 3rd and there will be free popsicles for all attendees. The movie night is sponsored by the Lions Club of Merrimack and Comcast / Xfinity.

As of September 20, the Planning Board meeting start time is changing from 7PM to 6:30PM as was decided by the Board in early August.

Comments from the Press and Public

Laurene Allen of 16 French Court was present to thank the Council for all their work on the grant program for private well owners and shared that she was present at the meeting in June when the EPA made their announcement of the new health advisory recommendation. She stated that she was part of a breakout session that discussed how the EPA determines their health advisory, which is 0.004 parts per trillion, stating that this is not a maximum contamination level, but is below detection. She wanted to let the Council know this in person and see if there were any questions. Additionally, when they start the MCL process in a few months, the assumption is that 4-10 parts is where they should land. She also stated that she is concerned this may cause some confusion among residents, but there are a lot of moving parts coming up within the next year and she feels she can answer any questions the Council or community may have about all these upcoming changes.

John Debelis of 62 Meetinghouse Rd was present to speak about the fence in Watson Park, sharing that since the fence was opened about 3 weeks ago, there have been no problems aside from water quality. He states he volunteered to take water samples for testing at the wastewater plant, and the samples came back a little high but within state ranges, so there should be no problems assuming residents do not drink the water. He further stated that there had been a trash problem along the water, but there are a number of volunteers that have come together to suggest ways to control the trash for the future since the season is ending soon. Mr. Debelis also shared that he plans to ask the boy scouts to see if they would be interested in helping plant grapes around the picnic table/pergola area to make the area nicer and more enjoyable, but he wants to get the opinion of the Council first at a future meeting.

Recognitions, Resignations and Retirements

1. Recognition of Retirement of Town Employee

Submitted by Human Resources Director Sharon Marunicz

The Town Council will present a recognition award to School Resource Officer/Detective 1st Thomas Prentice in recognition of his retirement from the Merrimack Police Department after more than 21 years of full time service to the Merrimack: November 2, 2000 - June 30, 2022. Employees with at least 10 years of service receive a recognition plaque upon retirement.

2. Recognition of Retirement of Town Employee

Submitted by Human Resources Director Sharon Marunicz

The Town Council will present a recognition award to Brian Friolet in recognition of his retirement from the Merrimack Public Works Department after more than 37 years of full time service to the Merrimack: May 6, 1985 - August 12, 2022. Employees with at least 30 years of service receive a Boston Rocking Chair with Town Seal upon retirement.

Appointments

1. Annual Review with the Heritage Commission

Submitted by Heritage Commission Co-Chair John Frechette and Co-Chair Chip Pollard

Per Town of Merrimack Charter Section 6-6, at least annually, there should be an annual review with the Heritage Commission. This agenda item is to highlight the commission's significant actions, current projects, anticipated actions, and to raise any concerns the Council should know or could act on.

Tabled for next meeting as Co-Chairs were unable to attend tonight.

Public Hearing

1. Public Hearing – New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant Acceptance

Submitted by Assistant Director Public Works/Wastewater Sarita Croce

The Town Council will hold a public hearing to consider the acceptance and expenditure of an ARPA grant in the amount of \$2,000,000 made available through the NHDES to be used towards the Phase V Upgrade at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and Charter Article 8-15.

Assistant Director Public Works/Wastewater Sarita Croce was present to discuss the process for accepting the \$2,000,000 grant, stating that a public hearing needs to be held and the Council needs to grant the Town Manager permission to sign both the grant agreement and any and all agreements associated with this grant, as well as communicate on behalf of the Town Council to NHDES or his representative on this grant.

The public hearing was opened at 7:25pm and closed at 7:26pm.

MOTION made by Councilor Koenig and seconded by Councilor Murphy accept the grant and authorize the Town Manager to sign any and all necessary documents and follow up with NHDES as necessary to fulfill the requirements.

MOTION CARRIES 6-0-0

Legislative Updates from State Representatives

None.

Town Manager's Report

•The deck replacement project for the access bridge at the east end of Watson Park began on Tuesday. The work includes removing the guardrail, removing the existing deck timbers, installing new deck timbers, and reinstalling the guardrail. The project is expected to be completed by September 9.

•Public Works currently has nine vacant positions in Highway Maintenance, Equipment Maintenance or Wastewater Divisions. Please visit the Town website at merrimacknh.gov to apply.

Consent Agenda

None.

Old Business

1. Merrimack Private Well Owners PFAS Grant Program Reimbursement Policy Follow-up Discussion

Submitted by Town Manager Paul T. Micali

The Town Council to discuss a Merrimack Private Well Owners PFAS Grant Program Reimbursement Policy for reimbursement for the installation of a Point of Entry System (POET), Point of Use System (POU) or hook-up to MVD public water.

Town Manager Paul Micali shared that he received a call from NHDES about the PFAS removal rebate program, sharing that the process originally started when they applied for a \$6,500 grant to connect POET/POU systems for residents with well water. Since then, the state has received ARPA money and has upped their reimbursement funds to \$10,000 for anyone connecting to a public water supply and \$5,000 for a POET/POU system. The reason for the phone call was to see if Merrimack was still interested in applying for this grant since there are new changes, in which Mr. Micali stated he wants to ask the Council for their thoughts and see if they want to continue with their grant or apply for the state grant as you can only apply for one grant. Mr. Micali then shared the following information via PowerPoint:

PFAS Removal Rebate Program for Private Wells

- State
 - Reimburse up to \$10,000 for connecting to public water supply
 - Reimburse up to \$5,000 for POET system or POU systems
 - State has list of homes over the Ambient Groundwater Quality Standard (AGQS) limits
 - State will test before installation to verify over the AGQS limit and after installation showing that the property is below AGQS limits
 - Need to be a state vendor but the state handles everything
 - Can only apply to one grant
- Town
 - Reimburse up to \$6,500 for connecting to public water supply or POET or POU systems
 - Property owner will be required to provide proof showing that the property is over the AGQS limits
 - Property owner will be required to provide proof after the installation showing that the property is below AGQS limits
 - Town will have to get reimbursed by the state for any funds it pays out
 - Can only apply to one grant

The Council discussed these options at length, with Councilor Murphy sharing that she believes the best option is for the town to go with the town option, solely because although the state option sounds great, there are a number of areas in town that people may want to get hooked up but there is no water line to get to them. She feels that the town option would allow more residents to take advantage of the options and open more opportunities for Merrimack as a whole. Chairman Koenig asked if the town program will cost the town to manage and maintain it, or if this comes out of the reimbursement fees, in which Mr. Micali stated that there are funds to cover this in the grant cost. Vice Chair Harrington shared that residents will need to get educated on the options and figure out the best option for their location, suggesting the town develops something like a decision tree to help with education. Mr. Micali shared that they direct any questions from residents to NHDES directly so that they can speak with professionals for the best advice. Councilor Woods agreed with Councilor Murphy and Councilor Harrington, stating that keeping both town options viable for the residents and educating them on the selections is the best route for the community. Councilor Murphy then stated that she would be happy to work with anyone in town hall to help organize a way for helping residents make decisions as to which hook up would work best for their property.

MOTION made by Councilor Murphy and seconded by Vice Chair Harrington to approve moving forward with the Merrimack Private Well Owners PFAS Grant Program for reimbursement for a Point of Entry System (POET), Point of Use System (POU) or hook-up to MVD public water as outlined in April, with amendment to the language to note that the reimbursement program will run from 3/3/21 to 12/12/26 latest or as long as grant funds are available.

MOTION CARRIES 6-0-0

New Business

None.

Minutes

Approve the minutes from the following Town Council meeting:

♦ July 14, 2022

MOTION made by Vice Chair Harrington and seconded by Councilor Healey to approve the minutes from July 14, 2022 as amended.

MOTION CARRIES 6-0-0

Amendments:

Page 2 Line 49: Councilor Healey was present to “meet quorum” not avoid a quandary

Page 1 at the top: Change “agenda” to “minutes”

Page 5 Line 33: after “equipment supplier” should have a period to create a new sentence for clarity

Comments from the Press

None.

Comments from the Public

None.

Approved: September 8, 2022

Posted: September 9, 2022

Comments from the Council

Chairman Rothhaus shared that Merrimack VFW Post 8641 will have an information session on August 27th from 12-4pm on Living with Trauma that is open to the public.

Adjourn

MOTION made by Councilor Woods and seconded by Councilor Healey to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION CARRIES 6-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 7:56pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Steagald