



Town Council Meeting Minutes



Thursday, May 25, 2023, 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 Hunter, Councilor Koenig, Councilor M. Murphy, Councilor N. Murphy, and Town Manager Paul Micali.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Rothhaus led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements

The Town offices will be closed on Monday, May 29th for the observance of Memorial Day. Thank you to the brave men and women who have courageously made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

Upcoming Town Council Meetings:

- Thursday, June 8, 2023, 7:00 PM Regular meeting (TENTATIVE)
- Wednesday, June 21, 2023, 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM Town Council Retreat / Goal Session- Buckley's Great Steaks located at 436 DW Highway
- Thursday, June 22, 2023, 7:00 PM Regular meeting
- Thursday, July 20, 2023, 7:00 PM Regular meeting

Researchers from Dartmouth College are studying PFAS found in fish at 6 lakes across southern New Hampshire during the summer of 2023. This project is a collaboration with the NH DES and funded by the US Geological Survey. The goal of this project is to better understand the occurrence of PFAS in these lake ecosystems. The study will take place at Horseshoe Pond in Merrimack, along with 5 other lakes in the southern NH area. If you catch a yellow perch, smallmouth bass or largemouth bass in Horseshoe Pond during the summer of 2023 these fish can be donated for the purpose of the study. More details can be found on the Town website at www.merrimacknh.gov.

Come and join Merrimack VFW Post 8641 on Memorial Day on Monday, May 29th. Parade kicks off at 10:30 am from the Rite Aid Parking Lot and travels down Daniel Webster Highway to Baboosic Lake Road and ends at the Last Rest Cemetery.

Comments from the Press and Public

None.

Recognitions, Resignations and Retirements

None.

Appointments

1. Annual Review with the Planning Board

Submitted by Planning Board Chair Robert Best

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

Planning Board Chairman Robert Best was present to share the annual review with the Council. He stated that they have a full board and have recently held their annual elections, in which he was reelected as Chair and Paul McLaughlin was reelected as Vice Chair. They met about 20 times over the past year, with about three or four projects on the agenda, mostly of residential housing areas and commercial and residential development near the outlet mall. He also shared that they voted against a proposed development for the McDonald's by exit 11 in which they wanted to add a second drive through site which would have caused too many issues for traffic in the area. Mr. Best also stated that they are working on initiating the next master CIP plan as they are at the 10 year mark to develop a revised plan.

Public Hearing

None.

Legislative Updates from State Representatives

None.

Town Manager's Report

None.

Consent Agenda

None.

Old Business

None.

New Business

1. "The Longest Day" 2023 Proclamation / 8th Annual NH Hot Dogz for ALZ

Submitted by Bob Bergin

The Town Council to issue a proclamation designating June 22, 2023, as "The Longest Day" to promote efforts of raising funds and awareness for the care and support of those facing Alzheimer's disease.

Mr. Bergin was present regarding "the Longest Day", sharing that this is his 8th year for the NH Hot Dogz for ALZ fundraiser. This will be the first year that they will not need to purchase anything for the event as they have had condiments and other supplies and food items donated from various restaurants and companies in Merrimack, totaling over \$3,000 in savings. He then discussed Puzzles for a Cause, which was an idea by Silvia White to sell various jigsaw puzzles, and additional exhibits that will be showcased during this event. The folling was read into the record:

Town of Merrimack
Town Council Proclamation
National Alzheimer's Longest Day
The Longest Day in Merrimack, NH – June 22, 2023

WHEREAS, Alzheimer's disease, a progressive degenerative brain disease and the most common form of dementia, that tragically robs individuals of their memories and leads to progressive mental and physical impairments; and

WHEREAS, there are no known treatments to prevent, cure, or even delay the onset or slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease; and

Approved: June 22, 2023

Posted: June 23, 2023

WHEREAS, 1 in 3 seniors dies with Alzheimer's or another dementia. It kills more than breast cancer and prostate cancer combined; and

WHEREAS, worldwide, 55 million people are living with dementia; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, Alzheimer's and other dementias will cost the nation \$345 billion; and

WHEREAS, by 2050 these costs could rise to nearly \$1 trillion; and

WHEREAS, more than 6 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's; and

WHEREAS, 12.7 million people age 65 and older are projected to have Alzheimer's dementia by 2050; and

WHEREAS, with early detection and diagnosis, individuals and their families can gain access to medications and management strategies that may temporarily improve symptoms; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to raise awareness about Alzheimer's disease and to honor all of the caregivers who support and care for loved ones with the disease.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Town Council of the Town of Merrimack, hereby proclaim June 22, 2023, as "THE LONGEST DAY" in Merrimack and stand in support of the 8th Annual NH Hot Dogz stand fundraising event taking place on June 22nd in the Our Lady of Mercy Church parking lot.

Dated this 25th day of May 2023.

MOTION made by Councilor Koenig and seconded by Councilor Healey to accept the proclamation designating June 22, 2023, as "The Longest Day" to promote efforts of raising funds and awareness for the care and support of those facing Alzheimer's disease.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

2. Permission for Use of Capped Landfill Perimeter at the Transfer Station for Honey Bee Apiary
Submitted by Rick Gagne

The Town Council to discuss and consider a request to use the perimeter of the capped landfill site at the Merrimack Transfer Station for use as a honey bee apiary.

Mr. Gagne was present to discuss his request to use an area at the transfer station for a honey bee apiary. He stated that he has grown to 16 hives over the past few years, and needs a place to safely grow and maintain an apiary. With this proposal, he would provide an electric fence that is solar powered to surround the perimeter, as well as everything needed to contain the bees in the hive stands. Mr. Gagne also shared that he is willing to mow the area that the town is required to mow twice a year around the hives to keep people away from the bees. Additionally, they will do weekly inspections to ensure the bees are healthy and they have enough room to grow, and this would take place during business hours. Mr. Gagne then discussed with the Council the structure of the area and how he would set it up. The Council and Mr. Gagne agreed to start this as a trial basis for the time being.

MOTION made by Councilor M. Murphy and seconded by Councilor N. Murphy to have the Town Manager meet with the Public Works Director, Solid Waste Foreman and Mr. Gagne to draft a contract to utilize the perimeter of the capped landfill site at the Merrimack Transfer Station for use as a honey bee apiary, and for the Conservation Commission to have possible future involvement; and authorize the Town Manager to sign any and all necessary documentation and to bring the proposed contract back to the Town Council for final approval.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

3. 3rd Quarter Financial Review

Submitted by Finance Director Thomas Boland

Finance Director Thomas Boland will review the key financial information of the quarter ending March 31, 2023.

Finance Director Tom Boland shared the following 3rd quarter financial review information via PowerPoint presentation:

- Electrical Kilowatt Comparison usage is down to just under 2.6 million kilowatts, with most usage at the wastewater treatment facility.
- Natural Gas usage is similar to electrical, with a majority of the usage at the wastewater facility. Usage is down across the board for other departments.
- Health insurance costs are down from prior years, with \$2.2 million of the \$3.4 million budget being spent so far, largely due to the amount of unfilled positions in the town.
- NHRS comparison has incurred \$2.5 million in retirement contributions vs the annual budget of \$3.3 million.
- Overtime comparison is significantly greater with police and fire, largely due to the unfilled positions. The budget for the year is a little over \$1.2 million; this has been exceeded slightly by \$25,000 (102%) in the past 9 months.
- Regular wages compared to annual budget has been underspent in nearly every department, due to the open positions. This puts projected annual savings at around \$1.4 million under budget.
- In most departments, 25% of the budget remains for the final quarter of the year.
- Revenues:
 - Auto registrations are at 77%, or \$5,625,000
 - Solid Waste is at 136%, or \$233,450
 - Building Permits is at 105%, or 265,000
 - Interest is at 189%, or \$439,000

4. Disposal of Tax Deeded Properties

Submitted by Town Council Chairman Finlay Rothhaus and Vice Chair Nancy Harrington

The Town Council to consider the disposal of tax deeded properties, pursuant to RSAs 80:42, 80:88, 80:89 and 80:90 and Chapter 66 of the Merrimack Town Code.

Town Manager Paul Micali shared that the town currently is holding three tax deeded properties, and the Council needs to decide what to do with them. If they want to be sold, they have to give notice per the RSA, and the individuals have 30 days to inform the town they want to buy back the property and 90 days complete the purchase.

MOTION made by Councilor Hunter and seconded by Councilor Healey to dispose of the tax deeded property at Tax Map 4C lot 286-j15 immediately and prior to the end of the three years by way of public auction per Town Code Chapter 66 Article 1, with proper notice given to the prior owners and all mortgage and lien holders, and further to proceed with ejectment action against anyone presently occupied in the property.

MOTION CARRIES 5-1-1 with Chairman Rothhaus in Opposition and Councilor Koenig abstaining

MOTION made by Councilor Hunter and seconded by Councilor M. Murphy to dispose of the tax deeded property at Tax Map 6D lot 282 immediately and prior to the end of the three years by way of public auction per Town Code Chapter 66 Article 1, with proper notice given to the prior owners and all mortgage and lien holders, and further to proceed with ejectment action against anyone presently occupied in the property.

MOTION CARRIES 5-1-1 with Chairman Rothhaus in Opposition and Councilor Koenig abstaining

MOTION made by Councilor Hunter and seconded by Councilor M. Murphy to dispose of the tax deeded property at Tax Map 6D-1 lot 117 immediately and prior to the end of the three years by way of public auction per Town Code Chapter 66 Article 1, with proper notice given to the prior owners and all mortgage and lien holders, and further to proceed with ejectment action against anyone presently occupied in the property.

MOTION CARRIES 5-1-1 with Chairman Rothhaus in Opposition and Councilor Koenig abstaining

Minutes

Approve the minutes from the following Town Council meeting:

♦ May 11, 2023

MOTION made by Vice Chair Harrington and seconded by Councilor Healey to approve the minutes from May 11, 2023 as amended.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

Amendments:

Page 2 towards the bottom, add in a section stating: “congratulations provided by Town Councilors to the Merrimack TV staff for the momentous achievement.”

Comments from the Press

None.

Comments from the Public

None.

Comments from the Council

Councilor Healey wanted to remind everyone that Monday is Memorial Day and the VFW is sponsoring a parade that will start at 10:30am from the Rite Aid parking lot and will end at Last Rest Cemetery, with a short Memorial ceremony outside by the wall at the VFW around 1pm.

Adjourn

MOTION made by Councilor Hunter and seconded by Councilor Koenig to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 9:09pm.