



Town Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 22, 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 Tuesday, July 4th in observance of Independence Day

Upcoming Town Council Meetings:

- Thursday, July 20, 2023, 7:00 PM Regular meeting
- Thursday, August 17, 2023, 7:00 PM Regular meeting
- Thursday, September 14, 2023, 7:00 PM Regular meeting
- Thursday, September 28, 2023, 7:00 PM Regular meeting

Come and join the Merrimack Parks & Recreation Department this summer for our free weekly Summer Concert Series at Abbie Griffin Park. Concerts are held on Wednesday Nights from 6:00 - 8:00 pm. Concerts will feature a variety of musical performances including Oldies, Swing, Rhythm & Blues & Classic Rock music and more to fill the air! Bring your family & friends, blankets & chairs, & dinner to enjoy this free night of entertainment each week. Concerts run from June 21st – August 16th. For the complete schedule, visit their website at www.merrimackparksandrec.org

Come and join the Town of Merrimack and help us to kick off the Independence Day Festivities with an evening of patriotic tunes, marches, and other popular selections performed by the Merrimack Concert Association. The Merrimack Concert Association will be selling Root Beer Floats during the concert as a fundraiser for the Merrimack Concert Association and so we hope that you will support them. The event will be held on Monday July 3rd from 6:30 – 8:00 PM at Abbie Griffin Park which is located behind Merrimack Town Hall at 6 Baboosic Lake Road. For questions please contact the Merrimack Parks & Recreation Department at (603) 882-1046.

The 26th annual Merrimack Sparkler 5K will be held on Tuesday, July 4th. The Sparkler 5K is held every 4th of July as a holiday tradition for many families. The course starts and ends on the track at the Merrimack High School in Merrimack. The race starts at 8 am, followed by light refreshments and awards. Preceding the race, there is a kid's race on the track. Registration for the event and additional information can be found at www.sparkler5k.com

The Rotary Club of Merrimack's Pancake Breakfast will be held on Tuesday, July 4th from 8:00 – 11:00 am at the Merrimack High School. Tickets this year are \$7.50 for adults. \$5.00 for Seniors. Vets and children under 12 are free. Tickets can be purchased at the door.

The Town of Merrimack's Annual 4th of July Parade will be held on Tuesday, July 4th at 1:00 PM. The Parade features a wide range of bands, militia units, clowns, local businesses, community organizations and more. The Parade begins at the Commons Shopping Plaza (Tractor Supply) which is located at 515 Daniel

Webster Highway. The parade concludes in front of Merrimack High School. The entire route is 1.5 miles long. There is no cost to participate in the parade but advanced registration is required by Friday, June 30th. For more information please visit Parks and Recreation's website at www.merrimackparksandrec.org

Grab your blanket and find a good spot at Merrimack High School (38 McElwain Street) in time for the show which starts at 9:00pm on Tuesday, July 4th. Fireworks are shot off from behind Merrimack High School. Those coming to watch the fireworks can watch from the parking lot in front of the high school or on the athletic fields next to JMUES. Fireworks will also be visible from Watson Park. For safety reasons; the bleachers behind Merrimack High School will not be available for viewing.

DJ Darren Roy will be playing music in the Merrimack High School Parking Lot from 7:00 - 9:00 pm. Come and get a good seat for the fireworks and enjoy some family friendly music. In the event of inclement weather on the 4th, information will be posted on the Town of Merrimack website, the Parks and Recreation website and the Police Department will send out a Nixle Alert. If we have to postpone, fireworks would be rescheduled to Wednesday, July 5th.

Comments from the Press and Public

Parks and Recreation Committee Chair Tracy McGraw announced that Movies in the Park at Wasserman Park will be starting at the end of July through September. Information on the movies playing can be found at www.merrimackparksandrec.org.

Recognitions, Resignations and Retirements

None.

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.

Heritage Commission Co-Chair John Frechette was present to share the Commission's annual update with the Council. He began by stating that they have been working on a project at the Thomas Moore College. A descendant of the Blanchard family approached the commission stating that there was a family unmarked grave somewhere on the college property, and they wanted to make sure the college's expansion project didn't interrupt the grave area. The commission was able to locate a gravesite on the grounds using a ground penetrating radar, and also found about 10 other gravesites. They are planning another visit out there this summer to determine next steps, but it appears that the expansion will not encroach on the area they are referring to. Another project Mr. Frechette mentioned was designing and erecting some signs for the 12 district schoolhouses, as well as the 5 fire stations and 5 railroad stations. They are currently creating some signs for this, but this may tap into their budget. A similar project is also in the works for the classic roads in the town. Mr. Frechette also talked about several champion trees in town, specifically a tree in the Reeds Ferry area, and the process of dedicating a champion tree.

2. Twin States Clean Energy Link Project Presentation

Submitted by Kaytlynn Monroe

Twin States is a 1,200 megawatt clean energy transmission project which will be buried along state roads in Vermont and New Hampshire and utilizes the existing National Grid-owned and operated transmission corridor from Monroe to Londonderry.

Ms. Monroe of Hilltop Public Solutions was present to discuss the clean energy transmission project, along with Danielle Aretz, stakeholder and community outreach manager for National Grid. They presented a PowerPoint highlighting the following information:

Where does our power come from now?

- Even with retirements, New England's power supply remains heavily reliant on fossil fuel generation, mostly natural gas, that emits a significant amount of greenhouse gases.

Where will New England's future power supply come from?

- The region's state policymakers have set aggressive goals to make our power supply greener
- Meeting these goals requires the connection of lots of wind and solar generation over the coming decade—and importing a significant amount of Canadian clean energy.
- This transition will create thousands of new good paying local jobs
- In fact, the Energy Transition, as it is called, will be the largest transformation of how we produce our power in a lifetime

What are the challenges in achieving the Energy Transition?

- Wind and solar power output moves up and down depending on weather conditions, cloud cover, time of day, and other factors.
- To keep our grid reliable, we need a controllable backup source of power when clean power output is low, but customer demand is high.
- Experts agree that if the region doesn't take action, fossil fuel generation will be the primary source of backup power. This harms our ability to get to a greener future.

Is there another path forward?

- Quebec has large amounts of clean hydro power that can serve as backup power in place of natural gas fired power when wind and solar output is low
- In fact, Quebec already sends large volumes of power to the region to serve the energy needs of New England homes and businesses
- The lines that Quebec currently uses to send power to New England experience very high use
- This means more lines are needed to Quebec to deliver the additional hydro power that New England needs as a clean alternative for power to back up wind and solar

DOE Transmission Facilitation Program

- In late April, Twin States was invited by the Department of Energy to participate in Phase 2 of the Transmission Facilitation Program's (TFP) RFP process for capacity contracts, a recognition that they believe Twin States is a viable, buildable project that is potentially eligible for federal assistance.
- Twin States' Phase 2 RFP Response will be submitted on July 5th, with DOE deliberations throughout the summer.

Twin States Clean Energy Link – A Ready Path to a Clean Energy Future

What is Twin States and how can it help?

- Twin States is a new transmission line from and to Quebec aimed at providing power to back up wind and solar in New England in place of fossil fuel generation
- Twin States would be constructed within existing rights of way through VT and NH, either underground (VT and NH) or as an upgrade to existing overhead lines (NH)

How is Twin States different than the other proposed lines to Quebec that were strongly opposed?

- Twin States enjoys strong support in New Hampshire, where projects have faced opposition in the past, because it requires almost no new rights of way and very little tree clearing
- Twin States will be built under state roads or as an upgrade to existing overhead lines, resulting in minimal visual impact for neighbors and visitors
- Twin States will be developed by National Grid, a company that makes communicating and partnering with host communities its top priority

Benefits for Host Communities & States

- **Host Community Benefits:** Twin States will provide host communities with hundreds of millions in property taxes revenue and other benefits packages towards community-identified needs. We would like for this to be the first of many conversations about how these programs can benefit Merrimack.
- **Regional Economic Development:** Twin States will pursue partnership with regional economic development agencies to help meet community needs and reinvestment opportunities
 - **Job Creation:** Twin States has partnered with IBEW and local unions here in New Hampshire to ensure thousands of good paying jobs during construction and operations
 - **Lower Energy Costs:** Twin States will lower energy costs for New Hampshire residents and businesses
 - **Local Renewables:** Twin States will explore ways to enable new renewable power in NH's North Country
 - **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Twin States will partner with entities to ensure economic benefits, understand local environment needs, and stakeholder alignment
 - Open discussions with local leaders and town managers to understand needs.
 - Ongoing communication with federal delegation and state elected officials.

Benefits for all of New England

- **Lower Energy Costs:** Twin States will deliver billions of dollars of savings for customers across New England over the first 12 years alone
- **Drive New England's Clean Energy Economy:** As a bi-directional line, Twin States will provide the opportunity for clean energy generators across New England to export their surplus energy when it's not needed here, providing critical new markets, particularly for offshore wind projects in the region.
- **Reinvestment in EJ Communities:** Twin States has partnered with Citizens Energy, a Boston-based nonprofit, that will reinvest its profits of over \$100 million back to low-income families across the region. We are exploring opportunities to support workforce development, weatherization, and other community priorities.

- **Cleaner Environment:** Twin States will reduce GHG emissions from New England power producers by up to 4 million metric tons per year

Twin States in Merrimack

- Estimated Annual Property Tax Increase After Construction: Estimated at \$25,000 per year based on current project design, timeline, and cost.
- 100% Within Existing Right-of-Way
- Total Mileage: 0.89 miles

Our Community Commitment

- Twin States Clean Energy Link is committed to working together with host communities, residents, businesses, landowners, elected officials, and community groups throughout the application, proposal, siting, and construction processes.
- We know from our past work that burying lines and using existing transmission corridors are important ways to minimize visual impacts.
- We also understand that communities deserve comprehensive conversations and two-way communication about our work. Through local presentations, town-based community meetings, one-on-one discussions, mailings, a comprehensive website, toll-free hotline number, and other methods we will provide timely, comprehensive information to individuals and groups interested in the project. Above all, the Twin States team is committed to ongoing, open conversations about the project every step of the way.

Because this project is in the early developmental stages, this was an information only presentation, and the team will reconnect with the Council once progress moves forward, with possibly a letter of support from the Council to proceed with this.

Public Hearing

None.

Legislative Updates from State Representatives

Legislative update from Representative Wendy Thomas (read from email):

To the Merrimack Town Council members,

I have not been attending meetings due to health issues. While I am recovering and doing well, some days seem to be a lot longer than others.

To give you an update on my legislative activities:

This term I serve on the Science, Technology and Energy committee. Some recent bills that we have worked on include:

SB 52 which created a study committee on how to fund EV charging infrastructure. Automakers are investing in EV production and to ensure tourists with EV cars continue to come to New Hampshire, EV charging stations are badly needed along our major highways and elsewhere around the state.

Approved: July 20, 2023

Posted: July 21, 2023

SB 167 - While I supported this bill, it did not pass the house. It would have set up a committee to look at the strategic and crucial component of using hydrogen as an energy source in New Hampshire in the coming years.

Our committee has also tried to get increased net metering in place among municipalities and non-profits. This is an energy measure that has been requested by New Hampshire's business community and would help to lower costs. That effort did not pass the house.

On June 8 we voted on NH 281 which is a Christmas tree energy bill combining many energy initiatives. One very bad thing it does, however, is to repeal the Least Cost Integrative Resource planning (LCIRP) statute. The LCIRP requires utilities to determine the "lowest reasonable cost, while providing for the reliability and diversity of energy sources. To maximize the use of cost effective energy efficiency and other demand side resources and to protect the safety and health of the citizens, the physical environment of the state, and the future supplies of resources."

By removing these requirements, the utilities would no longer be required to find the least cost solutions to New Hampshire's energy needs. And because utilities can charge the cost of energy projects back to the rate-payers, this would most likely result in increased electric and natural gas costs.

This is not something that is needed or wanted in New Hampshire right now.

Also, by repealing this statute, the utilities would not be obligated to look at measures to protect the health and safety of New Hampshire residents or to determine the impact of energy projects on our environment. Doing away with the LCIRP would essentially give the utilities free reign to start energy projects that may end up costing us higher rates, impact our health and which could potentially harm our environment.

Guardrails, like the LCIRP are put in place so that projects do not go off track and end up crashing in flames. LCIRP is a guardrail that New Hampshire needs to keep in place to both protect our health, our environment, and to keep our energy costs down.

For these reasons, I voted against this bill and will continue to work toward health and environmental protections while not imposing extra energy costs onto New Hampshire's ratepayers.

I also remain dedicated to fighting for the rights of our residents to not be contaminated and made sick with PFAS. And, as always, I am committed to protecting and enhancing our public education.

Respectfully,

Representative Wendy Thomas

Hills-12

Town of Merrimack

Councilor N. Murphy shared that the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee's 1st year of biennium is ending next Thursday, and also stated that they were very fortunate to have the \$500,000 appropriation for the kidney cancer feasibility study approved- this will hopefully lead to a full epidemiological study. She also shared that DES led a presentation at Merrimack High school on St. Gobain's request for an operating permit, which Representatives N. Murphy and Rosemarie Rung both opposed due to increased health risks. She further stated that public comments can be submitted up until June 28th.

Town Manager's Report

Congratulations to Boy Scout Ben Adams on receiving his Eagle Scout on July 8th.

Consent Agenda

None.

Old Business

None.

New Business

1. Committee Appointments

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

The Town Council to consider appointing the following individuals to Town committees, pursuant to Charter Article 4-8:

- **Karis Welsh** – Conservation Commission (*Full member*)
- **John Frechette** – Heritage Commission (*Full member*)
- **Anita Creager** – Heritage Commission (*Alternate member*)
- **David Shaw** – Parks and Recreation Committee (*Full member*)
- **Josh Toms** - Parks and Recreation Committee (*Full member*)
- **Matthew Brown** – Parks and Recreation Committee (*Student Representative*)
- **Lynn Christensen** – Planning Board (*Full member*)
- **Bill Wilkes** – Town Center Committee (*Full member*)
- **Richard Conescu** – Zoning Board of Adjustment (*Full member*)
- **Lynn Christensen** – Zoning Board of Adjustment (*Full member*)
- **Brian Dano** – Zoning Board of Adjustment (*Full member*)

MOTION made by Vice Chair Harrington and seconded by Councilor Healey to appoint Karis Welsh to the Conservation Commission as a full member.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

MOTION made by Vice Chair Harrington and seconded by Councilor Healey to appoint Michael Drouin to the Conservation Commission as a full member.

MOTION CARRIES 0-7-0

MOTION made by Vice Chair Harrington and seconded by Councilor M. Murphy to appoint John Frechette to the Heritage Commission as a full member.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

MOTION made by Vice Chair Harrington and seconded by Councilor M. Murphy to appoint Anita Creager to the Heritage Commission as an alternate member.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

MOTION made by Councilor Healey and seconded by Councilor N. Murphy to appoint David Shaw to the Parks and Recreation Commission as a full member.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

MOTION made by Councilor Healey and seconded by Councilor N. Murphy to appoint Josh Toms to the Parks and Recreation Commission as a full member.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

MOTION made by Councilor Healey and seconded by Councilor N. Murphy to appoint Matthew Brown to the Parks and Recreation Commission as a student representative.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

MOTION made by Councilor Koenig and seconded by Councilor N. Murphy to table the appointments of the Planning Board and Zoning Board members until the July 20th meeting.

MOTION CARRIES 6-0-1 with Councilor Healey abstaining

MOTION made by Councilor Healey and seconded by Councilor Koenig to appoint Bill Wilkes to the Town Center Committee as a full member.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

2. Proposal for Food Truck at Martel Field (Town-owned Land)

Submitted by Ramon Campana & Joshua LaBranche

The Town Council to consider a request for the Sauwce Food Truck to vend at Martel Field, located at 10 Atherton Road, on Mondays and Wednesday evenings during the local men's softball league games from around 6:00 -9:00 PM.

Town Manager Paul Micali stated that because this is a request for specific games at Martel Field, it has to be approved by the Council. The company is asking for permission since it's a town-owned facility; they would like to buy a year permit to vend on Monday and Wednesday evenings from 6pm-9pm.

MOTION made by Councilor Koenig and seconded by Councilor Healey to accept the request for the Sauwce Food Truck to vend at Martel Field, located at 10 Atherton Road, on Mondays and Wednesday evenings during the local men's softball league games from around 6:00 -9:00 PM, with a 10:00pm deadline.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

3. Appointment of Library Trustee(s)

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

The Town Council to appoint the recommended Library Trustees to fill the vacancies, pursuant to Charter Article 6-2 and RSA 202-A:10.

Chairman Rothhaus shared that the recommendations for the vacancies are Molly Mortimer as a full member, Karen Freed as an alternate member, and Ruthmarie Swisher as an alternate member. Library Board of Trustees Chair Debra Covell was present to talk with the Council and agrees with the recommendations, stating that she is really happy that everyone mentioned has been selected.

MOTION made by Councilor M. Murphy and seconded by Councilor Healey to appoint the recommended Library Trustees (Molly Mortimer as a full member, Karen Freed as an alternate member, and Ruthmarie Swisher as an alternate member) to fill the vacancies pursuant to Charter Article 6-2 and RSA 202-A:10.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

4. Proposed Mountain Bike Trail at Wasserman Park

Submitted by Parks and Recreation Director Matthew Casparius

The Town Council to consider a proposal to build a .38 mile long mountain bike trail thru the south side of the woods at Wasserman Park.

Fred Mackey was present to discuss the proposal to build a mountain bike trail through a portion of woods at Wasserman Park. He shared that they have discussed this with Mr. Casparius and the Parks and Rec committee and the project was approved, and now the Council has to approve this request. Chairman Rothhaus questioned if there was a legality standpoint to this since Mr. Mackey works for Park and Rec, in which Mr. Micali stated that it would be acceptable since Mr. Mackey would not be working personally on the project, this would be all volunteer work. Councilor M. Murphy stated that Mr. Mackey presented this idea at the most recent Parks and Rec committee meeting, and she highlighted that this project would only take two days to a week to complete. Chairman Rothhaus asked how they would mark the trail, in which Mr. Mackey stated they have flagged the area similar to irrigation flagging, but they can add in signage.

MOTION made by Councilor M. Murphy and seconded by Councilor Healey to accept the proposal to build a .38 mile long mountain bike trail thru the south side of the woods at Wasserman Park.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

5. Consideration of a Sponsorship Donation for Parks and Recreation Department

Submitted by Parks and Recreation Director Matthew Casparius

The Town Council to consider the acceptance and expenditure of a donation in the amount of \$600 from the Merrimack Lions Club to the Parks and Recreation Department to be used towards the Summer Movie Nights in the Park, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and Charter Article 8-15.

MOTION made by Councilor M. Murphy and seconded by Councilor Healey to approve the donation in the amount of \$600 from the Merrimack Lions Club to the Parks and Recreation Department to be used towards the Summer Movie Nights in the Park, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and Charter Article 8-15.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

6. Consideration of a Sponsorship Donation for Parks & Recreation Department

Submitted by Parks and Recreation Director Matthew Casparius

The Town Council to consider the acceptance and expenditure of a donation in the amount of \$300 from Xfinity to the Parks and Recreation Department to be used to pay the licensing fee to publicly show the movies for the Summer Movie Nights, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and Charter Article 8-15.

MOTION made by Vice Chair Harrington and seconded by Councilor Healey to approve the donation in the amount of \$300 from Xfinity to the Parks and Recreation Department to be used to pay the licensing fee to publicly show the movies for the Summer Movie Nights, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and Charter Article 8-15.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

Minutes

Approve the minutes from the following Town Council meeting:

♦ May 25, 2023

Approved: July 20, 2023

Posted: July 21, 2023

MOTION made by Councilor M. Murphy and seconded by Councilor Healey to approve the minutes from May 25, 2023 as amended.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

Amendments:

Page 4 Line 9: Change “treatment” in Wastewater Treatment Facility to “Transfer”

Page 4 Line 7: add “presentation” after PowerPoint

Line 19: change “exceeded” to “underspent”

Comments from the Press

None.

Comments from the Public

None.

Comments from the Council

Councilor N. Murphy wanted to thank everyone for participating in the Hot Dogz for Alz today.

Adjourn

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

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 8:56pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Steagald