



Town Council Meeting Minutes



Thursday, August 17, 2023, at 7:00 PM, in the Matthew Thornton Room

Call to Order

Chairman Rothhaus called the meeting to order at 7:02 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 Hall offices will be closed on Monday, September 4th for the observance of Labor Day.

Upcoming Town Council Meetings:

- Thursday, September 14, 2023, 7:00 PM Regular meeting
- Thursday, September 28, 2023, 7:00 PM Regular meeting
- Thursday, October 12, 2023, 7:00 PM Regular meeting

The Parks & Recreation Department invites you to join them next week for two events as we close out the summer. On Wednesday, August 23rd, we will have our final summer concert in the park with local band Crescendo's Gate who will be performing from 6 -8 pm at Abbie Griffin Park. Then on Saturday, August 26th, the second FREE movie night of the summer will be happening at Wasserman Park. They will be showing the movie Minions: The Rise of Gru which begins at 7:30 pm. Free popcorn will be available at the movie.

Effective as of August 9 Merrimack TV cable channel changes are as follows:

- Government Channel 20 is now 6
- Education Channel 21 is now 8
- HD Channel 1071 is now 1072
- Community Channel 22 is still 22
- Comcast XFINITY Customers were notified of the change by mail 60 and 30 days in advance and one week prior via e-mail

Merrimack TV is in need of a play-by-play volunteer for the upcoming 2023 Fall Varsity Football season. If there is anyone in Town interested in being a voice for the Tomahawks please reach out to the Media Division at (603) 423-8561 or email merrimacktv@merrimacknh.gov The three home games we still need coverage for are on September 29, October 6, and October 27.

Comments from the Press and Public

None.

Recognitions, Resignations and Retirements

1. Recognition of Resignation of Town Employee

Submitted by Human Resources Director Sharon Marunicz

The Town Council will recognize Tammie Lambert for more than 22 years of full-time service to the Town of Merrimack. Tammie first worked in the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's Office and transferred to the Finance Department in September of 2009. Tammie resigned from her position as Account Clerk II effective on July 14, 2023.

Appointments

1. Merrimack Conservation Commission Request - High School Representative Member Position

Submitted by the Merrimack Conservation Commission

The Town Council to discuss a request of an addition of a High School representative member position on the Merrimack Conservation Commission.

Ellen Kolb of the Conservation Commission was present to discuss adding a high school representative to the commission. She began by stating that they would love to have a student member on the commission, and to do this it would have to be voted on and approved by the Council. This position would be a one-year appointment, non-voting, and the position would have to comply with state law and town charter. She shared that this would be a wonderful opportunity for a student to get a broad look at conservation and have the opportunity to attend various conferences. The Council was in agreement with this, and also believe this would be an enriching position for a student to be a part of. If approved, Mr. Micali would get in touch with legal and begin the process.

Public Hearing

None.

Legislative Updates from State Representatives

None.

Town Manager's Report

- Beginning Monday, August 21st, the Library's catalogue will have a fresh new look and improved user experience using "Aspen Discovery." This upgrade is consortium-wide and has been paid for by consortium capital funds. Thanks to everyone who participated in our Summer Reading Program, "All Together Now!" We'll share our final participation statistics in the next few weeks.
- The Souhegan Sewer Pump station upgrade work has been completed.
- The pavement at the intersection of Daniel Webster Highway and Bedford Road will be milled down on Friday August 18th between 9 AM to 3 PM. The area will be repaved on Monday August 21st. Use caution going through the intersection or seek an alternate route.
- In the next month Daniel Webster Highway will have a pavement preservation treatment which will require a many step process. Dates are being determined at this time. There will be signs and information posted on the Town website when the dates have been determined.
- South Baboosic Lake Road was closed on Monday for the culvert replacement project. The project is going well and the road will be reopened next week ASAP. Continental Paving will then continue the drainage replacement in various locations back towards Baboosic Lake Road. You can expect alternate one-way traffic or detours around the work areas. If possible, please seek alternate routes. Once the drainage has been completed, South Baboosic Lake Road and Joppa Road will be paved.
- The Fernwood and Timber area Drainage project is beginning and will continue for the next several months.
- The next Household Hazardous Waste Collection is Saturday, August 26, from 8 am until 12 pm in Pelham located at 33 Newcomb Field Parkway, Pelham.

- Thursday, September 7th is the last Thursday night that Transfer Station/Recycling Center will be open until 7:00 PM.
- This past Tuesday, the fire department met with the ladder truck vendor to discuss getting put into the queue and begin a possible build. The contract states the product is scheduled to be within 22.5 and 23 months from signature. The truck is scheduled to be in Merrimack by June 2024. There have been some delays on this, such as different tires being needed for the truck, but this is not caused by the fire department or town of Merrimack, this is entirely due to vendor issues.
- The Town finally heard back from Verizon Wireless with regards to building a new tower for the 800 MHz system. This project is moving forward, with a response to Verizon's draft contract, set to be completed by next week. Once the contract is done, they will begin planning tower designs and will get this out to bid.

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:

- **Tom Martinson** – Conservation Commission (*Alternate member*)
- **Kevin Peters** – Planning Board (*Full member*)
- **Wolfram von Schoen** – Zoning Board of Adjustment (*Alternate member*)

MOTION made by Vice Chair Harrington and seconded by Councilor N. Murphy to appoint the following individuals to Town Committees:

Tom Martinson – Conservation Commission (*Alternate member*)

Kevin Peters – Planning Board (*Full member*)

Wolfram von Schoen – Zoning Board of Adjustment (*Alternate member*)

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

2. Finance Director Position Affirmation

Submitted by Town Manager Paul T. Micali

The Town Council shall consider the affirmation of the appointment of a new Finance Director, pursuant to Charter Article 7-8.

Mr. Micali shared that current Finance Director, Tom Boland, is retiring on September 12th. They have selected a new director, Adam Britten, who comes with a wide range of experience and is a certified public accountant.

MOTION made by Councilor Koenig and seconded by Councilor Healey to confirm the appointment of Adam Britten as Finance Director for the Town of Merrimack.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

3. Acceptance of Donation of Funds to the Welfare Department

Submitted by Welfare Administrator Patricia Murphy

The Town Council to consider the acceptance and expenditure of a donation in the amount of \$2,500 from Merrimack Friends and Families to the Welfare Department to be used to help offset the high cost of heating for the elderly in Town, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and Charter Article 8-15.

Welfare Administrator Patricia Murphy shared that this donation would go into an account for heating. This separate account has been around since 2004, when Merrimack Snow Buds wanted to start a donation for a heating assistance program. To qualify for this program, individuals have to be a Merrimack resident, elderly or disabled receiving social security, there has to be a financial hardship/ heating emergency, and they have to be eligible for other fuel assistance funds.

MOTION made by Councilor M. Murphy and seconded by Councilor Healey to accept the donation in the amount of \$2,500 from Merrimack Friends and Families to the Welfare Department to be used to help offset the high cost of heating for the elderly in Town, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and Charter Article 8-15.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

4. CIP Withdrawal Request – Vehicle Purchases for Highway & Wastewater Treatment Facility

Submitted by Public Works Director Dawn Tuomala

The Town Council to consider the request to withdraw from the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund for the purchase of replacement vehicles for Highway and Wastewater Treatment Facility.

Public Works Director Dawn Tuomala was present to share that this request to order vehicles is for a 2009 DPW3 Ford Escape, 2013 H3 three-quarter ton pickup, 2014 HB one ton dump truck, and 2013 H9 one ton dump truck, and 2013 one ton dump truck with a Switch and Go. There is also a request from Wastewater to replace their 2008 Ford Explorer. The total for the highway vehicles is \$300,000 and the total for the Wastewater vehicle is \$28,000. Ms. Tuomala shared that they need to get in line for these vehicles now as it will take about 14 months to get these vehicles.

MOTION made by Councilor Hunter and seconded by Councilor M. Murphy to approve the withdrawal from the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund for the purchase of replacement vehicles for Highway, not to exceed \$300,000, and from the Wastewater Infrastructure Capital Reserve, not to exceed \$28,000, and to authorize the Town Manager to sign any necessary documents.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

5. Buildings & Grounds Reclassification Request

Submitted by Public Works Director Dawn Tuomala

The Town Council to consider the Buildings and Grounds Reclassification Request to change the two (2) part-time night custodian positions to one (1) full-time night custodian position.

Public Works Director Dawn Tuomala shared that the current staffing is two full time custodians that work during the day at Town Hall/Police/Abby Griffin/Senior Center/MYA, one part-time custodian at night that covers Town Hall (this custodian recently gave their notice), one part-time custodian at the Police department in the afternoon/nighttime, and one part-time custodian at the Highway garage (which is currently vacant). There have been several issues that have come up regarding not enough staff to complete all the work, and some areas aren't being fully cleaned despite the custodian's best efforts. There is no overlap with duties, so when the day custodians leave, there is a gap in coverage before the nighttime

custodian comes in, and there are also issues with custodians being out for the day. There are also some tasks that require two or more people, and with issues in coverage, it is difficult to do their duties that require extra hands.

Ms. Tuomala is proposing taking the part-time Highway and part-time Town Hall custodians and putting them together to make one full-time custodian. This is the perfect time to do this since one position is currently vacant and the other position will be vacant once the current custodian leaves the position. Mr. Micali shared that combining these positions into one would add an additional \$30,000 into the expenses for this position, but there are savings this year to accommodate this, and it will be added into the budget next year so this is doable. He also shared that they have tried cleaning services in the past, but this didn't work out, and it's been very difficult to find employees for these part-time positions. Councilor Healey asked what the current hours are for the part-time positions, in which Mr. Micali stated that the one at Town Hall is about 25-26 hours a week and the one at Highway is around 10-15 hours total.

MOTION made by Councilor M. Murphy and seconded by Councilor Healey to approve the Buildings and Grounds Reclassification Request to change the two (2) part-time night custodian positions to one (1) full-time night custodian position.

MOTION CARRIES 6-0-1 with Councilor Koenig abstaining

6. Acceptance of Donation to Parks & Recreation Department Camp Scholarship Fund

Submitted by Parks and Recreation Director Matthew Casparius

The Town Council to consider the acceptance and expenditure of a donation in the amount of \$2,500 from Merrimack Friends and Families to the Parks and Recreation Department to be used towards the Camp Scholarship Fund to which allows low income Merrimack families the opportunity to go to Summer Camp, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and Charter Article 8-15.

Town Manager Paul Micali shared that this donation is for camp scholarships for next year for those who cannot afford summer camp.

MOTION made by Councilor Koenig and seconded by Councilor Healey to accept the donation in the amount of \$2,500 from Merrimack Friends and Families to the Parks and Recreation Department to be used towards the Camp Scholarship Fund to which allows low income Merrimack families the opportunity to go to Summer Camp, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and Charter Article 8-15.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

7. Acceptance of Donation of Funds to Wasserman Park

Submitted by Parks and Recreation Director Matthew Casparius

The Town Council to consider the acceptance and expenditure of a donation in the amount of \$654.87 from Boy Scout Andrew Johnson of Troop 401 to be used towards future improvements at Wasserman Park, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and Charter Article 8-15. These funds are surplus funds from his recently completed project at Wasserman Park.

MOTION made by Councilor Healey and seconded by Councilor N. Murphy to accept the donation in the amount of \$654.87 from Boy Scout Andrew Johnson of Troop 401 to be used towards future improvements at Wasserman Park, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and Charter Article 8-15. These funds are surplus funds from his recently completed project at Wasserman Park.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

8. Acceptance of Donation of Funds to Veterans Park

Submitted by Parks and Recreation Director Matthew Casparius

The Town Council to consider the acceptance and expenditure of a donation in the amount of \$103.05 from Eagle Scout Harrison Faust of Troop 424 to be used towards future improvements at Veterans Park, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and Charter Article 8-15. These funds are surplus funds from his completed his Eagle Scout Project at Veterans Park several years ago.

MOTION made by Councilor Healey and seconded by Vice Chair Harrington to accept the donation in the amount of \$103.05 from Eagle Scout Harrison Faust of Troop 424 to be used towards future improvements at Veterans Park, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and Charter Article 8-15. These funds are surplus funds from his completed his Eagle Scout Project at Veterans Park several years ago.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

Minutes

Approve the minutes from the following Town Council meeting:

♦ July 20, 2023

MOTION made by Vice Chair Harrington and seconded by Councilor M. Murphy to approve the minutes from July 20, 2023 as amended.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

Amendments:

Page 2 Line 8: Delete sentence about SB2 (this is the incorrect bill), instead it should say “HB614 was retained and absorbed into SB2, which was signed by the governor”

Page 9 Lines 11, 30, 43, 46 and Page 11 line 13 “to approve a of Grant” strike “of”

Comments from the Press

None.

Comments from the Public

None.

Comments from the Council

Vice Chair Harrington wished everyone a happy Labor Day.

Adjourn

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

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 8:27pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Steagald