



Town Council Meeting Minutes



Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 7:00 PM, in the Matthew Thornton Room

Call to Order

Vice Chair Harrington called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm. Present at the meeting were Vice Chair Harrington, Councilor Healey, Councilor Hunter, Councilor Koenig, Councilor M. Murphy, Councilor N. Murphy, and Town Manager Paul Micali. Chairman Rothhaus was excused.

Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Chair Harrington led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements

The Town Hall offices will be closed on Monday, January 15th for the observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Upcoming Town Council Meetings:

- Wednesday, January 17, 2024, 6:30 PM Budget meeting
- Thursday, January 18, 2024, 6:30 PM Budget meeting
- Thursday, January 27, 2024, 7:00 PM Regular meeting

Registration is now open for the Parks & Recreation Department 3 Summer Camp Programs. Complete details can be found on their website at www.merrimackparksandrec.org.

The new Transfer Station Stickers for 2024 are now out. They can be obtained at the Transfer Station Office or the DPW Administration Office in the lower level of Town Hall.

Important dates to remember: February 8th is a regularly scheduled Town Council meeting. February 13th is the last day to file petition warrant articles with the required number of signatures and ratify union contracts. February 15th is the public hearing for the budget. There is another regularly schedule Town Council meeting on February 22nd that Mr. Micali is proposing this meeting gets cancelled and the Town Council holds their meeting on February 15th during the public hearing meeting instead. Petition bonds are due by February 9th with the required number of signatures.

MOTION made by Councilor Koenig and seconded by Councilor M. Murphy to move the February 22nd Town Council meeting to February 15th.

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Comments from the Press and Public

None.

Recognitions, Resignations and Retirements

None.

Appointments

None.

Public Hearing

None.

Legislative Updates from State Representatives

Councilor N. Murphy shared that on the 9th, Rep Healey sponsored HB1191 relative to the establishment of an exemption to the meals and room tax for participants in the restaurant voucher program. Rep Rung, Rep Murphy, and Councilor Healey testified in support, and they are hopeful this gets support in the Senate so it can get over to the House. She also shared that SB511, sponsored by Senator Chandley, is relative to road salt and well contamination with MVD. It specifies salt application requirements and procedures for the DOT as salt contamination has caused substantial harm to the wells to the point where MVD has had to shut down Well #3 and replace it with Well #9 at a cost of about \$2 million. This bill is making specific requirements for how the roads in this area are treated to prevent this issue from worsening as it has caused an impact to the community and health of Merrimack residents. The next bill, SB466, again filed by Sen Senator Chandley, relates to citizen requests and concerns about the Everett Turnpike widening project and the DOTs refusal to install sound barriers around resident's homes. This bill proposes an option to making sound barriers available to impacted residents by allowing the DOT to erect them upon the request of municipalities. This bill would create two programs for the construction of noise barriers: one using federal highway money for 70% of the cost of the barrier, and the other using a state matching grant program using general fund money for 70% of the cost of the barrier. Any municipality requesting a sound barrier would be required to fund the 30%, and they would be eligible for the programs without meeting a cost per receptor threshold. Councilor N. Murphy then shared that there were two other bills: HB1649, a PFAS bill, heard on Tuesday afternoon, and is relative to prohibiting certain products with intentionally added PFAS, and HB1393, which was heard yesterday by health and human services, and is relative to the long-term impacts of pediatric cancer. Lastly, she shared that HB1068 was heard yesterday by health and human services as well, and is relative to blood testing for children, specifically lead and the long-term health implications.

Town Manager's Report

None.

Consent Agenda

None.

Old Business

None.

New Business

1. Presidential Primary Election Assignment Discussion

Submitted by Town Moderator Lynn Christensen

The Town Council to discuss the assignments for the upcoming Presidential Primary Election being held on Tuesday, January 23, 2024.

Town Manager Paul Micali shared that for this year, Councilor M. Murphy needs to be assigned to a polling location, and that Chairman Rothhaus agreed to be the floater for the day. St John will be Councilor Koenig and Vice Chair Harrington, the middle school will be Councilor Healey and Councilor Hunter, Councilor N. Murphy and M. Murphy will be at JMUES. As usual, there will have to be a delegate appointed by the Councilors if they are unable to be at their location for any given period, and this needs to be communicated.

2. Fire Equipment Capital Reserve Fund Withdrawal Request

Submitted by Fire Chief Mark DiFronzo

The Town Council to consider a request to withdrawal up to \$20,000 from the Fire Equipment Capital Reserve Fund to purchase iPad devices, mounting equipment and other related equipment.

Fire Chief DiFronzo was present to talk about the devices and equipment he wishes to purchase. He shared that part of the project to upgrade their information system to CSI is to upgrade their technology. This was agreed upon back in 2021, but the purchases were not made, so he is present to request the funds now to complete the purchases, which will be the iPad devices and removable mounting bracket systems.

MOTION made by Councilor Healey and seconded by Councilor M. Murphy to approve the request to withdrawal up to \$20,000 from the Fire Equipment Capital Reserve Fund to purchase iPad devices, mounting equipment and other related equipment, and for the Town Manager to have authority to sign any necessary paperwork.

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3. Computer Capital Reserve Fund Withdrawal Request

Submitted by Town Manager Paul T. Micali

Town Council to consider a request to withdrawal up to \$44,397 from the Computer Capital Reserve Fund for upgrading the current exchange server.

Mr. Micali shared that they need to upgrade their server and he is recommending they go with Premise Exchange with software assurance to give them time to reduce the number of mailboxes and landscape so in the future they could switch over to Microsoft365, and run exchange for a few more years until the end of its life.

MOTION made by Councilor N. Murphy and seconded by Councilor Healey to approve the request to withdrawal up to \$44,397 from the Computer Capital Reserve Fund for upgrading the current exchange server, and for the Town Manager to have authority to sign any necessary paperwork.

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4. Communications Capital Reserve Fund Withdrawal Request

Submitted by Information Technology Coordinator Jonathan Dias

Town Council to consider a request to withdrawal up to \$27,833 from the Communications Capital Reserve Fund replacement of the alarm monitoring system at the Police Dispatch Center.

Mr. Micali shared that their current alarm system is old and obsolete, and needs to be replaced. Jonathan Dias has been working with the school and town to ensure that the dialers will work with the new server for the system they plan on upgrading to.

MOTION made by Councilor N. Murphy and seconded by Councilor M. Murphy to approve the request to withdrawal up to \$27,833 from the Communications Capital Reserve Fund replacement of the alarm monitoring system at the Police Dispatch Center, and for the Town Manager to have authority to sign any necessary paperwork.

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5. Sponsorship Donation of Parks and Recreation Department Summer Concert Series

Submitted by Parks and Recreation Director Matthew Casparius

The Town Council to consider the acceptance and expenditure of a donation from Franklin Savings Bank in the amount of \$900 for the Parks and Recreation Department to be used towards the Summer Concert Series, pursuant to Charter Article 8-15 and RSA 31:95-b.

Mr. Micali wanted to thank Franklin Savings Bank for their generous donation, and he would like the Council to provide them an appreciation plaque if they have not received one yet.

MOTION made by Councilor Koenig and seconded by Councilor Healey to accept and expend a donation from Franklin Savings Bank in the amount of \$900 for the Parks and Recreation Department to be used towards the Summer Concert Series, pursuant to Charter Article 8-15 and RSA 31:95-b, and for the Town Manager to have authority to sign any necessary paperwork, as well as recommend sending an appreciation plaque to Franklin Savings bank if it has not already been done so.

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6. 2024-2030 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Discussion

Submitted by Town Manager Paul T. Micali

The Town Council to approve the 2024-2030 CIP with Planning Board recommendations.

Mr. Micali shared that the Planning Board had no major recommendations or changes, just a few desirables, so he is asking the Council to accept final approval of the plan.

MOTION made by Councilor N. Murphy and seconded by Councilor M. Murphy to approve the 2024-2030 CIP with Planning Board recommendations.

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7. Consideration of the Acceptance of Donated Land

Submitted by Town Manager Paul T. Micali

The Town Council to consider the acceptance of a donation of land known as Tax Map 6E/008 to the Town of Merrimack, pursuant to RSA 31:95-e and Charter Article 8-15.

Mr. Micali shared a map of the area with the Council, highlighting the donated land in question. The owners of the land, Mid Coast Ventures LLC, have offered this land to the town at no cost. The land to the north is owned by the railroad going down by the river, and the town owns the parcel adjacent to the land. The land is valued at about \$16,000, and would bring in about \$320 on the new property tax rate. Mr. Micali stated it will not be a financial burden on the town.

MOTION made by Councilor Koenig and seconded by Councilor Healey to accept a donation of land known as Tax Map 6E/008 to the Town of Merrimack, pursuant to RSA 31:95-e and Charter Article 8-15, and to authorize the Town Manager to sign any documents necessary.

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Minutes

Approve the minutes from the following Town Council meeting:

♦ December 21, 2023

MOTION made by Councilor M. Murphy and seconded by Councilor Healey to approve the minutes from December 21, 2023 as amended.

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Approved: January 25, 2024

Posted: January 26, 2024

Amendments:

Page 2 Line 49: Change the wording of HB614 to this: HB614, which will appropriate \$500,000 to fund a phase three kidney cancer feasibility study based upon a 42% kidney cancer exceedance in the Merrimack community. DHHS has entered into a contracted agreement with Dartmouth College to complete this study.

Comments from the Press

None.

Comments from the Public

None.

Comments from the Council

Councilor M. Murphy shared that Eagle Scout CJ Fricano is having his Court of Honor this weekend and he would love for the Town Council to be there in support. The ceremony is at Camp Carpenter in Manchester at 1pm on January 13th.

Adjourn

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

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The meeting adjourned at 8:01 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Steagald