



Town Council Meeting Minutes



Thursday, January 3, 2013, at 6:00 PM, in the Matthew Thornton Room

Chairman Mahon called the meeting to order 6:00 pm. Present at the meeting were Chairman Mahon, Vice Chair Rothhaus, Councilor Koenig, Councilor Boyd, Councilor Dwyer, Councilor Flood, Town Manager Eileen Cabanel and Finance Director Paul Micali. Councilor Harrington was excused from the meeting.

Chairman Mahon made the following announcements:

Upcoming meeting schedule; Monday January 7, 2013 at 6:00 pm Budget meeting, Thursday January 10, 2013 at 7:00pm Regular Council meeting, Monday January 14, 2013 at 6:00 pm Budget meeting, Thursday January 17, 2013 at 6:00 pm Budget meeting. Chairman Mahon congratulated the Harrington family on the recent birth of twins.

Public Comment

None

The Town Council held a public meeting to review the 2013/14 budget, to include the following departments:

- **Fire:** Town Manager Eileen Cabanel stated that she met recently with both the Fire and Police Chiefs to examine their budgets. She stated that each of the budgets is salary intensive and there is not a lot of discretionary spending in either Fire or Police budgets. Fire Chief Currier advised the Council that extensive work went into the preparation of the proposed Fire Department budget. He stated that it is a straightforward budget. Councilor Boyd questioned the number of responses to the Merrimack Premium Outlets (MPO) and the need for a possible policy change in the future to be proactive and have a presence at the MPO. Fire Chief Currier stated that currently the department is still dealing with and evaluating false alarm calls pertaining to sprinkler systems. Fire Chief Currier stated until they have a better idea he would not consider that. Councilor Koenig questioned the line item pertaining to longevity. He asked for clarification between a Master Firefighter and a Firefighter. Fire Chief Currier explained that some are eligible for the longevity bonus. Paul Micali explained the step raises and the longevity bonus schedule as negotiated in their contract. Councilor Koenig questioned overtime and holiday pay under line item 8105. Councilor Koenig asked why under line item 8242 Natural Gas Reeds Ferry and the Central Fire Station is listed twice. Fire Chief Currier explained that one line item to cover the generator. Councilor Koenig questioned the line items / user fees for the MVD. He asked if the MVD pays property taxes. Councilor Koenig questioned the different cell phone costs.

Councilor Dwyer questioned the increase in the gas line item. Paul Micali explained that is due to the conversion to natural gas. Paul Micali advised the Council that there is a required minimum deposit of \$12,000 into the ambulance capital reserve account.

- **Code Enforcement:** Fire Chief Currier advised the Council that there is very little change in the proposed Code Enforcement budget. Councilor Koenig questioned 8332 maintenance line item. He questioned the office equipment printer/monitor upgrades. Councilor Koenig asked for clarification of language IT upgrade. Fire Chief Currier explained that the department is experiencing difficulties with their printers.
- **Police:** Police Chief Doyle believes that the proposed budget is very responsible. He outlined the line item adjustments for the Council. He stated that the overtime line item was increased due to the elimination of the Special Officer's program. Police Chief Doyle explained that by removing \$52,000

from the Special Officer's program he was able to move \$30,000 to the overtime. He explained that the Police Department has experienced difficulties finding qualified individuals to fill the part time positions. Police Chief Doyle explained that there is wage increase under 8103 for Supervisory (prosecutor) 8104 wage bumps (Master Patrolman). Police Chief Doyle advised the Council that the current cyclical rotation of cruisers is working very well. Police Chief Doyle advised the Council that current staffing levels are satisfactory. He said the force is providing a safe and prosperous community for all the residents and businesses in Merrimack.

Chairman Mahon questioned the recent concerns raised about the Ford Taurus. Captain Albert advised the Council that an internal Police Department committee researched vehicles from the major manufacturers. It was the Interceptor that the committee liked the best. Councilor Flood asked for input on the calls for service at the MPO. Police Chief Doyle explained that they have not seen a significant increase. He stated that the Police Department has been proactive in planning for the worst case scenario. He advised the Council that officers are at the MPO on self directed patrols. He stated that there is a considerable effort to make their presence known to employees and shoppers. Vice Chair Rothhaus questioned the savings that was realized by the elimination of the part time officers. Police Chief Doyle explained that in the last 12 to 18 months the Police Department only had 3 part time officers and those officers had limited hours that they could work due to their full time jobs. Police Chief Doyle stated that the availability of the part time officers was not nearly what it had been in the past forcing the Police Department to augment that with overtime. Police Chief Doyle stated that he believes the proposed change will better suit the needs of the Police Department.

Councilor Boyd asked for an update on the satellite Police Department at the MPO. Police Chief Doyle advised the Council that the satellite station is serving the department very well. The partnership with the people at the MPO is outstanding. Councilor Boyd asked about any consideration given to utilizing an internship. Police Chief Doyle advised the Council the Police Department continues to utilize interns. Councilor Boyd questioned the success of the recent reorganization. Captain Dudash advised the Council that the Police Department is seeing great benefits as a result of the reorganization. He stated that the new prosecutor is highly dedicated and a tremendous asset to the Police Department. Councilor Boyd asked if there are any infrastructure concerns relating to upgrading communication towers. Captain Dudash advised the Council that the Police Department is currently working on a grant application that is due at the end of January to address that.

Councilor Koenig asked for clarification on line item 8504. Police Chief Doyle explained that the \$2,700 will be used to purchase three computers.

- Communications: Police Chief Doyle stated that the proposed budget has remained the same. He does not anticipate any major changes. Councilor Koenig questioned line item 8334 maintenance. Police Chief Doyle advised the Council that is for the maintenance plan for their server.
- Police Detail: Police Chief Doyle advised the Council that he has been able to reduce this account with the completion of the mall and DW Highway projects.

ADJOURN

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

MOTION CARRIES 6-0-0