



Town Council Meeting Minutes



Monday, January 7, 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, Councilor Koenig, Councilor Boyd, Councilor Dwyer, Councilor Harrington, Town Manager Eileen Cabanel and Finance Director Paul Micali. Councilor Flood was excused from the meeting. Vice Chair Rothhaus arrived at 6:40 pm.

Chairman Mahon made the following announcements:

Upcoming meeting schedule; Thursday January 10, 2013 at 7:00 pm Regular Council meeting, Monday January 14, 2013 at 6:00 pm Budget meeting, Thursday January 17, 2013 at 6:00 pm Budget meeting, Monday January 21, 2013 at 6:00 pm Budget meeting and Thursday January 24, 2013 at 7:00 pm Regular Council meeting.

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

- **Public Works Administration:** Town Manager Eileen Cabanel explained that each of the following budgets is salary and labor intensive and there is not a lot of discretionary spending in the following budgets. She stated that items such as fuel and electricity have been prepared by the Finance Department. Town Manager Eileen Cabanel advised the Council that a position has been eliminated through attrition. Public Works Director Rick Seymour advised the Council that all of the 6 divisions of Public Works have budget decreases before retirement and healthcare costs are factored in. Councilor Boyd questioned dues paid to State of NH Dam registration. Mr. Seymour stated that it is a required membership. Councilor Koenig questioned the changes to line item 8260 telephone. Public Works Deputy Director Kyle Fox advised the Council that a piece of GPS equipment has been eliminated. Councilor Koenig questioned Ersi under line item 8334 office equipment maintenance. Kyle Fox stated that Ersi is the GPS software.

- **Highway:** Mr. Seymour spoke about the reduction of one operator position that will be absorbed through attrition. He advised the Council that overtime has been reduced. He stated that a fairly substantial cut has been made to salt and sand. Councilor Boyd questioned the current numbers for overtime. Paul Micali stated that given the lack of snow storms, the numbers are currently on track. Councilor Boyd asked if the Department is comfortable with the cut to salt and sand. Mr. Seymour stated that it is always a guessing game but he believes that currently the numbers are sufficient. Councilor Boyd questioned the fuel increase. Highway Operations Manager Adam Jacobs advised the Council that there has been a recent change to the Department's fuel contract that increased fuel by a dollar per gallon and more than that for diesel. Councilor Koenig questioned 8260 cell phone line items. Councilor Koenig questioned the condition of buildings and the reduction to building maintenance line item. Adam Jacobs explained that last year that line item was overexpended. He outlined the expenditures from last year. Mr. Jacobs advised the Council that there is a CIP request for funding to address the condition of the building. He explained that architects have been selected but he does not anticipate spending a lot of money on maintenance until he has a better idea of what will be required. He assured the Council that maintenance as it relates to safety issues will continue. Councilor Koenig questioned the fluctuation to line items 8346 road materials, 8354 traffic control devices and 8362 traffic signals. Councilor Koenig questioned the purchase of two mowers. Councilor Boyd asked for clarification on the on call foreman schedule. Councilor Dwyer questioned the separation of two capital reserve funds; Highway equipment and DW Highway under line item 8510. Paul Micali clarified that each fund was voted on and approved and each fund is for a specific purpose.

- **Equipment Maintenance:** Mr. Seymour advised the Council that the budget has no changes.

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Councilor Koenig questioned need for a cell phone in Equipment Maintenance. Mr. Jacobs explained that during snow storms a mechanic will be called in.

- Solid Waste Disposal: Mr. Seymour advised the Council that there are three changes in the Solid Waste Disposal budget. He explained that supervisory overtime has been reduced, tonnage has been reduced, and \$75,000 has been put towards a future purchase of a front end loader. Councilor Dwyer stated that he would still like to see more signage promoting the recycling program. Councilor Harrington asked if the Department is working with the School District. Mr. Seymour explained that the NRRA has agreed to work with the School District to promote recycling in Merrimack. Councilor Koenig asked if Solid Waste is open on holidays. Mr. Seymour explained that if a holiday falls on Monday employees are paid for the holiday. Councilor Koenig questioned the regional solid waste dues under line item 8270.

- Buildings and Grounds: Mr. Seymour advised the Council that the Department would like to change from a contractual cleaning service to a part time position for Town Hall and the Police Department cleaning. Mr. Seymour believes that it can be done for \$17,000 as opposed to \$22,000. Mr. Seymour advised the Council that an additional \$8,000 was added for Building Maintenance at the Town Hall Complex and the Police Department for painting, repairs and wood repairs. Chairman Mahon asked who would do the work. Mr. Seymour stated that it would go out to bid. Councilor Dwyer asked if the cleaning would be done by another outside service or a new part time employee. Mr. Seymour advised the Council that it would be a new part time employee who would work 24 to 26 hours. Town Manager Eileen Cabanel stressed to the Council that this decision is not a reflection on the company but a reflection on the needs. She advised the Council that the company bid low and adhered to work as contracted. She stated that any additional requests that were not included in the bid were billed as extra. Councilor Koenig questioned the propane costs to run generators. Paul Micali advised the Council that propane usage is reviewed in an attempt to estimate future usage.

- Wastewater Treatment Fund: Mr. Seymour stated that there are two changes to the Wastewater Treatment budget. The Department is asking for a 6% increase in the rate based on the rate model. He explained that it is recommended by the EPA and DES to set aside money (\$2 million). The rate increase is needed for maintaining the facility and debt costs. Mr. Seymour stated that the Department needs new equipment pumps, pickup truck and tires. Chairman Mahon stated that this is an enterprise fund. Paul Micali stated that efficiencies are being realized from the last two bonds. Vice Chair Rothhaus asked how Merrimack would compare to other cities and towns relative to the rate increase. Wastewater Treatment Facility Assistant Director Jim Taylor advised the Council that Merrimack would still be one of lowest. Councilor Dwyer questioned other outside services. Paul Micali explained that the enterprise fund repays for the Town services it uses such as the Finance and Tax Collector's office. Councilor Koenig questioned the number of supervisors compared to the number of employees. Mr. Taylor explained that is driven by the EPA Permit and Federal requirements. Councilor Koenig questioned the line items titled Town Manager's adjustment. Paul Micali explained that it was attempts to level fund that line item. Councilor Koenig questioned the cost of the replacement pickup truck. Councilor Koenig questioned 8604 and the increase in the principle amount of a previous bond. Paul Micali explained that the 1996 bond was written in way that it would increase a small percentage in the last three years of the bond. Councilor Harrington asked for clarification on the current bond schedules.

Councilor Dwyer appreciates the Town Manager's approach in presenting her proposed budget.

ADJOURN

MOTION was made by Councilor Boyd and seconded by Councilor Harrington to adjourn the meeting at 7:18 pm. MOTION CARRIES 6-0-0

Submitted by Tracy Doherty