



Town Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 8, 2018, at 7:00 PM, in the Matthew Thornton Room

Chairman Harrington called the meeting of the Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m. Present at the meeting were Vice Chairman Rothhaus, Councilor Albert, Councilor Boyd, Councilor Flood, Councilor Koenig, Councilor Thornton, Town Manager Eileen Cabanel, and Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Paul Micali.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Harrington led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Review of Proposed FY19 Budget

Town Manager Cabanel stated there to be no increased staffing proposed. The Town's health insurance cost increased by 8.5%. Fire and Police Department health insurance costs have increased beyond that amount resulting from a change in the mix of employees, e.g., marriages, children, etc.

Included is an expenditure of \$298,000 for portable radio replacement, which is intended to be funded out of Line Item #01-03-8910-0-Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) Purchases. This expenditure has been discussed for many years. Existing equipment is no longer produced/serviced.

Fire

Michael Currier, Fire Chief, provided a PowerPoint presentation (can be viewed [here](#)).

Last year four (4) employees were added. That resulted in a large change in Workers' Compensation claims/cost, reduced mandatory overtime, and allowed for better service, e.g., able to maintain staffing without exhausting existing personnel.

Brian Borneman, Assistant Fire Chief, stated eight (8) personnel started October 2nd (4 new hires and 4 replacements). An additional retirement resulted in another replacement that started in November. There is a 6-12-month probationary period.

Addressing Workers' Compensation, Assistant Chief Borneman remarked when before the Council last year, the department spoke of the alarming increase in the number of claims. It is important to note 15 of the 20 claims in 2017 were in the first 6 months (prior to new staffing coming onboard). Typical injuries were associated with fatigue and lifting, etc. Town Manager Cabanel commented for the past few years claims have been very high with employees being out for significant periods of time.

Chief Currier noted the number of mutual aid calls, both given and received, were consistent up through 2014. A large increase was seen in 2015/2016. This past year, 75 mutual aid assists were received and 25 given. That is hard to control, and mostly contributed to back-to-back calls or multiple calls in the same hour, which current staffing simply cannot handle. Town Manager Cabanel commented the chart shown depicts calls in the calendar year, and noted new hires started in October of 2017.

1 The two types of EMS calls are Advanced Life Support (ALS) and Basic Life Support (BLS). BLS
2 calls require an ambulance and 2 personnel. An ALS call requires 5 personnel (2 on ambulance and 3
3 on an engine). Total number of calls has gone from 1,507 in 2010 to 2,155 in 2017. When asked who
4 determines the number of personnel for a BLS call vs. an ALS call, Chief Currier stated that nationally
5 established criteria comes from E911. When the dispatcher receives a call, several questions are asked.
6 The responses determine whether the call is BLS or ALS. The number of personnel required to
7 respond to BLS and ALS is dictated by the EMS Bureau out of the New Hampshire Fire Academy and
8 E911.

9
10 For BLS calls, there are two individuals on an ambulance. When they respond to a call the
11 determination is made if those two individuals can handle the patient in the condition he/she is in.
12 Typically, a BLS call can be handled in that manner. With one individual driving the ambulance the
13 other is in the back, and can start an IV, monitor vitals, assist with breathing, etc. If an ALS call, there
14 is the need for a driver, a Paramedic in the back of the ambulance who may need someone to do CPR,
15 monitoring, or they may believe that somewhere in route that patient could stop breathing, and they
16 would require additional assistance. The Paramedic will make the call as to whether to bring another
17 employee along. If in a trauma situation where someone has multiple injuries, there is a good deal
18 going on that requires assistance. The number of people is based on the decision of that advanced
19 EMT.

20
21 In 2017, the percentage of Fire calls was 29% and EMS calls 71%. The total number of calls went
22 from 2,386 in 2010 to 3,031 in 2017. Chief Currier spoke of the upward trend, and commented the
23 Town anticipates an additional thousand residences within the next few years, which will tax that
24 system. He spoke of the number of calls attributed to hotels.

25
26 The Council expressed an interest in understanding if the calls that were specifically identified for the
27 local hotels, were fire or EMS calls. When asked if any of the calls identified were related to simply
28 being a new building, Chief Currier stated that could be for some of the fire calls. With the new fire
29 alarm systems, they are all addressable, and the department can eliminate a lot of the false alarms on
30 the onset.

31
32 Councilor Flood stated her belief the Council would engage in a discussion of hotels with the police
33 department as well, and should be able to gain an understanding of the combined number of calls to
34 those locations.

35
36 Councilor Boyd questioned if there have been instances where the department has had to intercede
37 from a safe station perspective. Chief Currier stated they are not classified as a Safe Station. He noted
38 the department would not turn anyone away, and spoke of an occasion where an individual walked in
39 seeking help; they developed a procedure for that, and were able to contact Manchester and transport
40 the individual to the Manchester Fire Department where they were able to put the individual through
41 the process and into an assistance program within an hour and a half. Two other instances involved
42 individuals who were overdosing, and transported to the hospital.

43
44 A Safe Station is a place where, as an example, an addict who is convinced he/she wants to break that
45 habit and get help, can go to ask for help. Instead of going to a hospital where you would be run
46 through a system of tests, and if not injured, would be pushed back out onto the street, they would get
47 you into a rehab center. Everything is all set up, and they can get you directly into a rehab center.
48 The safe station pretense is the person must come in, and say I want help.

1
2 Regarding the Paramedic Program, in 2016, there were 7 Paramedics on staff. In 2017, an additional
3 Paramedic was put on staff. The Paramedic Program is a two-year program the Town began investing
4 in, in 2017. You can hire a Paramedic, but that doesn't mean the Paramedic would be a good
5 employee. The Town has good employees that want to be Paramedics. Investing in a good employee
6 is a good investment. There is currently 1 employee who has completed the process, and is awaiting
7 final certifications.

8
9 Town Manager Cabanel commented two years ago this program was established as a means of helping
10 to grow our own Paramedics because it was difficult to get Paramedics, and the training was so
11 expensive/extensive. The Council agreed to fund the courses. One staff member has completed the
12 course, and two others are currently enrolled and expected to complete the course around this time next
13 year.

14
15 Chief Currier stated the budget is designed to enroll 1 Paramedic per year. This year 2 enrolled. A
16 member of the department who is a member of the National Guard was able to utilize his G.I. Bill to
17 cover the cost. Assistant Chief Borneman noted in addition to the cost, is the required commitment of
18 hundreds of hours of time on the part of the individual.

19
20 Town Manager Cabanel noted when an individual signs up for the program, and the Town covers the
21 cost, he/she is required to sign an agreement stated if he/she were to leave the employ of the Town
22 within a certain period, a percentage of the cost must be paid back to the Town. The way the 16-month
23 program (every Thursday) is designed is that tuition is paid for. If the individual is scheduled to work
24 on the day of the program, his/her position, if needed, is backfilled, and there is no cost to the
25 employee. If on a day not scheduled to work or during clinicals, ride-alongs with other departments,
26 etc., it is on their own time.

27
28 Councilor Albert questioned the duties and hours associated with the proposed new Administrative
29 Officer for EMS and Training position. Town Manager Cabanel noted the position was proposed by
30 the department, but removed from the budget that she submitted.

31
32 Councilor Boyd questioned Line Item #01-03-8105-0-Overtime-Supervisory (\$197,197) and Line Item
33 #01-03-8111-0-Overtime-Other (\$358,306); specifically, the thoughts behind the requested increase in
34 the budget for Supervisory overtime, and the slight decrease in the department request for overtime for
35 "other". He noted the Town Manager's submitted budget proposes a slight reduction to the request for
36 supervisory overtime (still an overall increase), and a larger increase than what was requested by the
37 department under overtime "other".

38
39 Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali responded the department requested overtime for
40 special projects with the officers (600 hours). It was felt the department should be able to cover the
41 cost of those special projects within the proposed budgeted amount. The increase proposed by the
42 Town Manager is based on an adjustment to the rate. A 3% raise was received, which has an impact
43 on the cost of overtime from FY18 to FY19. In addition, in previous years, the budget included a line
44 item for the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Through union contracts, that is now included in the
45 hourly rate. There is no longer a one-time payment at year end.

1 Regarding the Town Manager's proposed increase to the requested budget for overtime-other, he stated
2 in FY18 the Town Manager had made an \$8,000 adjustment, which she did not make this year; the
3 same number of hours were left plus the 3% raise.

4
5 Councilor Boyd commented proposed are increases in overtime for both supervisory and rank and file,
6 9 people have been hired, and there were 20 Workers' Compensation (WC) claims for 2017. He
7 questioned how the department has been able to best manage the overtime budget with the number of
8 claims experienced in relation to the new hires. Town Manager Cabanel explained with a WC claim,
9 the individual's pay is reimbursed to the Town through WC. When looking at the individual line
10 items, you would see a surplus in wages and an over-expenditure in overtime. The amounts proposed
11 for the budget are based on number of hours requested for overtime, which have not changed from
12 FY18. The number of hours is determined by a formula that takes into consideration existing staff, and
13 the number of vacation, etc. hours that are available, which could result in the need for overtime to
14 cover the shifts.

15
16 Councilor Boyd stated a desire to understand the department is adequately staffed, and that the
17 overtime budget is being managed. While the proposed budget represents a slight increase over the
18 FY18 budget, it is reflective more of an inflationary increase.

19
20 Councilor Koenig commented on remarks made around the ability to stop mandatory overtime because
21 of the new hires. However; the budget reflects no change in overtime. Chief Currier responded
22 mandatory overtime happens when you do not have enough people to fill the slots. If there are 20 guys
23 in the department, and #1 is up for overtime, but does not want it, the request will go through all 20. If
24 they all deny the overtime, it becomes mandatory for #1.

25
26 Town Manager Cabanel commented new hires totaled 8 with 4 retirements. There was a period where
27 the department was down 4 people. Those positions were filled, and 4 new hires came on board.

28
29 Vice Chairman Rothhaus remarked he had believed by hiring the additional 4 positions, the department
30 would no longer be in a position of being at minimum staffing, which had resulted in the need to
31 backfill if down a single position at any given time. The new hires should have resulted in a reduction
32 in the overtime amount. The response provided was that last year when the 4 firefighters were brought
33 on board, it resulted in a reduction to Line Item #01-03-8111-0-Overtime-Other of \$44,000.

34
35 Councilor Albert questioned if the addition of the 4 firefighters would result in the cost of overtime
36 leveling out in the coming years. Chief Currier responded as the new firefighters get longevity they
37 also get more vacation time, their contract raises go up, etc. There may be an impact in other areas,
38 e.g., if multiple calls come in, callback would be initiated if the number of staff were not sufficient,
39 off-duty personnel would be called in to ready the ambulance or prepare for the next fire. With the
40 additional staffing, callbacks may be reduced. That won't be understood until more data is available.
41 Situations and the required number of personnel/shift could be impacted in the future based upon
42 growth in population/businesses.

43
44 When asked how fire protection has changed, Chief Currier spoke of the very proactive fire prevention
45 group, education, code enforcement, sprinkler requirement for all commercial buildings in Town,
46 improvements in alarm systems, etc. Without these protections in place, the types of combustibles
47 that are out there that burn hotter and faster, would increase the fire potential. Chairman Harrington
48 commented the frequency of fires has decreased, but the severity or complexity has increased.

1
2 All items listed under CRF line items in the budget are intended to be purchased with CRF funds.

3
4 When asked, Chief Currier stated the \$298,000 cost identified under Line Item #01-03-8910-0-Capital
5 Reserve Fund Purchases, for radios, equates to 48 radios at \$6,208/radio. The expected lifespan is 8-
6 14 years. Existing radios are 11 years old, and no longer serviceable. This purchase has been planned
7 and save for over the past 4 years.

8
9 Councilor Koenig questioned the Fire Command SUV listed as \$39,000. Chief Currier stated that to
10 be for the SUV and the fit-up of the SUV, e.g., multiple radios, command center in the back, light
11 package, etc. It is approx. an \$11,000 fit-up cost and \$28,000 vehicle cost. The current vehicle will be
12 passed down to the Fire Marshal. Town Manager Cabanel commented as these vehicles do not receive
13 the same level of use as a police cruiser, for example, they are not on a regular replacement cycle.
14 They are typically utilized until they no longer can be (could be a 15-year lifespan).

15
16 When asked if radios in the engines/vehicles remain serviceable, Chief Currier stated they are
17 purchased individually when engines are replaced, etc. Life expectancy is longer than the portables as
18 they are not subjected to the same conditions. The department has been testing portable radios to
19 determine which to purchase. It is important to ensure the radios are compatible with mutual aid
20 partners. Nashua/Manchester can do a lot of the programming, and augment our programming at no
21 cost.

22
23 Councilor Thornton questioned Line Item #01-03-8107-0-Wages-Part-Time. Actual expenditure in
24 FY17 was \$112,187, budgeted in FY18 was \$154,155, and the request made by the department and
25 approved by the Town Manager for FY19 is \$154,155. Chief Currier explained there are two groups
26 of personnel involved; one is EMS attendants (paid hourly wage). They augment the ambulance so
27 that firefighters do not have to be placed on an ambulance. The hourly wage is less than that of a
28 firefighter, and there is no cost associated with benefits. The second is volunteer/call EMS division,
29 which has been dwindling to nothing. A goal of the Assistant Chief is to revitalize that call division to
30 allow the department to offset the need that exists when dealing with multiple and back-to-back calls.
31 If unsuccessful in the attempts to revitalize this division in FY19, the Chief will recommend the lines
32 be removed from the budget. When asked, he stated the actual expenditure of the FY18 budget has
33 been minimal to date.

34
35 Councilor Albert suggested reducing the proposed FY19 budget amount to that of the actual
36 expenditures from FY17 (\$112,187). Chief Currier suggested, if reducing, it should be to an amount
37 equal to what the on-call is. They have not had the full amount of daytime attendant coverage (trying
38 to hire for position), which has resulted in a reduction in those hours. Turnover is frequent. Assistant
39 Town Manager/Finance Director Micali recommended against reducing the line to the FY17 amount,
40 and stated he could conduct a review of actuals for the past 3 years for the call division alone, and
41 provide that information. Although the \$112,187 for FY17 actuals is accurate, there was staffing
42 turnover at that time resulting in a position remaining unfilled for some period in FY17.

43
44 Town Manager Cabanel stated there are 3 categories: 1) EMT part-time ambulance coverage;
45 individuals who may work for a private ambulance company that come in to cover shifts, 2) Fire
46 Inspector, which is a position that should probably be in a category of its own; and 3) On-Call.

1 Councilor Thornton questioned Line Item #01-03-8135-0-Workers Compensation; specifically, the
2 rationale for the requested and proposed amounts for FY19 versus actuals for FY17. Town Manager
3 Cabanel stated WC is an insurance policy, which is based on prior years' experience. The insurance
4 company, Primex, determines rates based on their classifications of employees, e.g., a police officer
5 would be in a different category than an office worker, and the number of employees in each
6 classification. From there, the actuarial data of the Town is considered resulting in a modification rate.
7 The WC rate has increased due to statewide increases and the number of injuries the Town has
8 experienced in the past few years.

9 10 Fire Detail

11
12 The cost of details is paid by the Town, but is reimbursed through revenue received by the party
13 requesting the detail. There is an administration charge incurred by the requesting party as well to
14 cover costs associated with billing, processing payments, etc. This can be seen under the tab "Other
15 Special Revenue Funding".

16 17 Code Enforcement

18
19 Chairman Harrington questioned Line Item #01-06-8102-0-Wages-Clerical; department request was
20 \$77,740 and proposed by the Town Manager is \$39,988, and was informed a request was made to
21 move a part-time position to full-time. The Town Manager did not approve the request. The part-time
22 hours are proposed to be increased from 20 to 28 hours/week (Line Item #01-06-8107-0-Wages-Part-
23 Time).

24 25 Communications

26
27 Denise Roy, Chief of Police, highlighted increases identified under Line Item #01-05-8260-0-
28 Telephone; the department is looking to increase the number of tablets in cruisers, which enable
29 officers to run operator licenses and motor vehicle license plates, and complete reports. By increasing
30 the number of tablets, the licensing cost increases. A request is made for an increase to the cost
31 associated with cellular telephones. The data plans would be increased by 3. Chief Roy spoke of the
32 capabilities provided by the data plans, e.g., generating a NIXLE alert from the road.

33
34 Councilor Koenig commented on the cost associated with the telephone line item over the past few
35 years (\$28,000 - \$30,000). The FY18 budget was \$22,410, and the requested budget for FY19 is
36 \$26,640. He questioned the reason for the difference, and was informed some of the Lieutenants had
37 previously not been provided with data plans. Last year there was a change in plans, which resulted in
38 a decrease.

39
40 Councilor Thornton questioned Line Item #01-05-8104-0-Wages-Other Full-Time; specifically, the
41 rationale for the requested and proposed amounts for FY19 versus actuals for FY17. Assistant Town
42 Manager/Finance Director Micali stated the department has experienced several openings over the past
43 year. It is difficult to retain Dispatchers. In prior years, attempts were made to fill a position with two
44 part-time positions, which was not successful. There has not been a full complement of Dispatchers
45 for quite some time. As members of a union, Dispatchers received a 3% raise in FY18, and will again
46 in FY19.

1 Police

2

3 Town Manager Cabanel stated of the requests made by the Chief, she has supported reinstating the
4 position of Deputy Chief, removing an Administrative Lieutenant, and adding a Special Investigation
5 Sergeant. The department's request included the hiring of 1 new officer; however, that position was
6 not supported by the Town Manager.

7

8 The position of Deputy Chief was eliminated in 2011. At that point, the philosophy was to bring in a
9 Prosecutor. Since that time, it has been noticed the necessity for the position of Deputy Chief is great.
10 Chief Roy commented as the only non-union person making decisions, it can be extremely difficult at
11 times; not to have another to bounce things off, assist with investigations, if necessary, etc. In terms of
12 command structure, having a clearly defined second in command that can step into the role that would
13 need to make immediate decisions is important. Chief Roy remarked she has said from the start she
14 wants to have a clear succession plan.

15

16 Councilor Boyd questioned what would stop the Chief from consulting another peer in the State. Chief
17 Roy responded although she belongs to a group that consists of Police Chiefs in the State, it is
18 important to have someone familiar with the department's personnel, from the Town, etc.

19

20 The position would oversee both Captains, and have say in what occurs with the day-to-day operations.
21 Also proposed is the elimination of an Administrative Lieutenant position. The work of that position
22 would be shifted to both Captains and the Deputy Chief. A large portion of that work is grant related.
23 Training duties would also be shifted towards the Administrative Captain and Deputy Chief.

24

25 Councilor Albert stated support for the reinstatement of the position commenting on the need for a
26 clear chain of command.

27

28 Line Item #01-04-8105-0-Animal Control; the request is to increase the part-time position from 24 to
29 28 hours/week. When asked about the actual expenditure for FY17 in comparison to the requested
30 FY19 budget, it was noted the position had gone unfilled for most of the year, which resulted in the
31 reduced amount in FY17.

32

33 Chief Roy stated the position of Special Investigation Sergeant is requested as is an additional
34 Patrolman position that would help supplement the Special Investigation Unit. Over the past 6-12
35 months, the Town has seen a tremendous increase in drug activity. An increase is being seen in the
36 actual usage, sale, and crimes associated with drug use.

37

38 Earlier in the day a confidential informant notified the department that Merrimack is the meth heaven.
39 It is known the department does not have a unit that concentrates on drug activity. Throughout the
40 month, an increase in activity has been seen at local hotels. The hotels are working very closely with
41 the department on this issue. There are many reasons for the increase in this activity. Location is
42 probably the biggest; the hotels are located close to the highway. Merrimack is significantly close to
43 the two major hubs for drug activity; Manchester and Nashua.

44

45 The department has always been able to maintain a very safe community. However, is finding itself
46 now in a tremendous crisis. This is something the department has not experienced, and to address it,
47 help is needed from the Council and Town. The Special Investigation Unit would concentrate on drug

1 activity. Establishment of this unit cannot wait until the next budget cycle. The department is doing it
2 now, putting a band-aid on it, but it is not working.

3
4 Chief Roy provided examples of recent situations the department has been faced with including a
5 large-scale drug investigation where drugs were being sent to Merrimack from Arizona. The drugs
6 were being stored in Merrimack. The investigation lead officers to a hotel where drug transactions
7 were taking place. Working with the task force, they were able to infiltrate where the drugs were being
8 housed, but once they got to the hotel someone else was showing up to purchase the drugs. The
9 officers from the task force tried to intervene, and that person tried to run the officers over. They
10 ended up ramming a police car, and thankfully were taken into custody without injury. An increase in
11 prostitution has been seen at the hotels. Other instances did result in officers sustaining injuries. A
12 few weeks prior two individuals were arrested for distributing methamphetamines. They were
13 arraigned through Hillsborough County, the Judge let them out to attend rehab., and they are back in
14 Merrimack at a different hotel. They were distributing large amounts of meth here in Town, and not
15 just to people coming from outside of Town, but to people who live here in Town. This is a crisis for
16 the department that currently has a minimum staffing of officers.

17
18 The Town is divided into four sectors. There is a minimum staffing of three sectors and a supervisor.
19 Because of personnel issues there is not the ability to cover the 4th sector. That 4th sector handles equal
20 if not more calls than every other sector. All those calls must be distributed amongst the other three.

21
22 In 2015, the Residence at Daniel Webster had 63 calls for service. In 2017 there were 163 calls.
23 The WoodSpring Hotel has been opened since July of 2017. To date, there have been 58 calls for
24 service. Those calls are incorporated with the fire calls. The other two hotels have remained relatively
25 constant; in 2017 the Quality Inn had 21 calls and Holiday Inn 49.

26
27 Chief Roy commented she was not suggesting the only drug activity in Town is at the hotels because
28 that is not the case. It is everywhere. It knows no class, no age group, etc.

29
30 Councilor Albert questioned the number of overdoses, and was informed in 2017 there were 2
31 overdose deaths in Town. There were 14 overdose calls where the individuals either had Narcan
32 administered or were sent to the hospital. In 2017, Narcan was made available to family members of
33 individuals addicted to heroin, etc. The department has learned these family members are using
34 Narcan to revive their loved ones, but are not calling an ambulance or the police as they do not want
35 their loved ones to get in trouble or arrested. The actual number of overdoses is unknown.

36
37 Councilor Albert commented two years ago the number of overdoses was in the double digits. Vice
38 Chairman Rothhaus remarked three years ago the Council was informed there had been 15 overdose
39 fatalities.

40
41 Town Manager Cabanel reiterated the both difficult and dangerous position the Town is in regarding
42 the drug issue, and spoke of the opportunity to not allow the Town to be known as the place for drugs.

43
44 Chief Roy spoke of the desire to start by concentrating around the hotels and drug activity. For three
45 months a Sergeant and a Patrolman were taken out of patrol to focus on this issue. During that time,
46 there were 33 arrests just out of the hotels. That was in addition to identifying 17 other individuals that
47 were in our Town dealing drugs. Because of staffing issues, they had to be put back into patrol.
48 During that time, numbers increased significantly, even more than previously. The department has

1 again moved things around to focus these officers back on that issue, and over the course of 2 days
2 there have been 2 arrests.

3
4 Vice Chairman Rothhaus questioned if the State has its drug task force engaged, and, if so, can their
5 help be depended upon. He suggested, if as bad as it has been made to seem, the Town must be a
6 focus point that the State should be working. He stated his understanding other law enforcement
7 agencies send their personnel here to make drug deals. Chief Roy stated the department works closely
8 with a couple of task forces including the Hillsborough County Street Crimes Task Force, the DEA
9 Task Force, the NH Attorney General's Drug Task Force, and State Police. This situation is being
10 seen throughout the State. The Hillsborough County task force has been our closest ally because they
11 work so closely with the towns just in Hillsborough County. The Sergeant was tasked with contacting
12 them to see what they could do to help us. They have been bringing their resources to our Town. It is
13 intermittent. Everyone has been extremely helpful, but their resources are limited.

14
15 Vice Chairman Rothhaus stressed it is a statewide problem, which is why those resources are limited.
16 Chief Roy commented in her 27 years in the Town, she has never experienced something to the
17 magnitude that is being experienced today.

18
19 Councilor Flood questioned how towns of comparable size have addressed the issue. Chief Roy
20 responded, for the various towns the department has interacted with, the smaller ones have 1-person,
21 comparably sized towns have 3-4 people, and larger cities have 10-15 people concentrating on this
22 issue.

23
24 Councilor Flood questioned what is believed required to get a handle on the situation. Chief Roy
25 remarked ideally, she would like to see a Sergeant and two Patrolmen in this unit. However,
26 understanding the increase has an impact on the tax rate, they could make it work with a Sergeant and
27 1 Patrolman.

28
29 It was noted, during a recent meeting with a representative of the Quality Inn, mention was made that
30 the pressure from the Manchester and Nashua law enforcement agencies on the hotels in those areas
31 has resulted in the offenders leaving those hotels for the Merrimack hotels.

32
33 Councilor Albert commented during his 32 years with the department there were times when there was
34 1 officer doing narcotics work. It is not safe. Dealing with that type of situation there requires at least
35 two people in the unit. He spoke of the importance of high visibility when combatting crime. He
36 stated he would like a commitment that these two individuals would not be dragged away to cover
37 patrol shifts. Chief Roy stated her full agreement with the need for the individuals to be focused on
38 this task. She stated these two individuals would not be taken to supplement patrol.

39
40 Councilor Boyd spoke of a recent story in the Union Leader on a gang called the Squad. He
41 questioned if Merrimack is seeing any type of gang activity. Chief Roy stated the department has not
42 had any intelligence thus far relative to that type of organized activity. However, it is only a matter of
43 time before that follows the drugs and prostitution.

44
45 Councilor Boyd stated support for the hiring of additional officers dedicated to this if he could be
46 assured they would not only be tasked with attacking this problem, but willing to be a nuisance in these
47 people's lives, e.g., write them up for the small stuff to make their lives miserable. Chief Roy
48 responded the 33 arrests in the 3-month period shows the department, when having the ability to

1 concentrate on the issue, is being a nuisance. The effort must continue because when you do it and
2 then stop the problem just grows.

3
4 Councilor Boyd stated Merrimack remains one of the safest communities in the Country, and he wants
5 people to know that. He stated his support for a Sergeant and two Patrolmen.

6
7 As the question had come up, Chief Roy noted, on average, for the past 3 years, the calls for service at
8 the Outlet mall have been 1,400/year.

9 Chief Roy spoke of the new complexes and new hotels coming into Town, which will result in 2,500
10 additional residents that the department will be responsible for protecting. She commented it is
11 difficult for her to come before the Council as a new Chief and ask for this, and speak of a problem in
12 Town. The problem is here, and they do not want to put their heads in the sand and say it is not a
13 problem. The department needs the help of the Council and Town in the form of enough personnel to
14 be able to combat this issue.

15
16 When asked how to go about instituting something on an immediate basis, Town Manager Cabanel
17 stated a meeting will be scheduled to discuss overtime. The desire is for the individuals that have been
18 working on this issue to continue to do so. During the meeting a review of the department's budget
19 will take place to see if this cost could be addressed in the existing budget. If unable to, a request
20 would be made of the Council to transfer funds from another department's budget.

21
22 Chairman Harrington stated her desire for the two individuals to be dedicated to this unit, and not be
23 part of the contingent of officers assigned to other duties. Councilor Koenig stated he is pleased a
24 review is being done of how to address this immediately. He has a fear overtime is a band-aid and not
25 the solution. He commented on the discussion that occurred with the Fire Department relative to
26 mandatory overtime and the resulting fatigue, injuries, etc. He would not want to see the Police
27 Department put in that same position. He would like the department to consider the possibility of
28 whether there is room within the current budget to support the hiring of these individuals sooner.

29
30 Chief Roy commented when hiring new officers, the time between an officer being hired and being out
31 on the street on his/her own is 7-9 months. Hiring sooner than the start of the next fiscal year would
32 put the department in a better position.

33
34 Councilor Albert spoke of the quality of life that exists in the community, and how the efforts being
35 discussed were intended to preserve that quality of life.

36
37 *The consensus of the Council was to fill the positions immediately, the cost of which may have to be*
38 *addressed through overtime initially.*

39
40 Chairman Harrington questioned the will of the Council relative to the number of positions.

41
42 Vice Chairman Rothhaus questioned whether individuals who have retired having served in such roles
43 might be looked to, to fill the position. Chief Roy commented that may be a temporary solution. Vice
44 Chairman Rothhaus commented his hope is that if 2-3 additional officers are brought in for the sole
45 purpose of addressing this problem, it will be temporary in nature. Chief Roy commented there are a
46 lot of considerations particularly for retired individuals. Councilor Koenig commented with the
47 anticipated increase in residents, these two additional officers will be needed in the future regardless.

48

1 Chief Roy stated the Special Investigation Unit would be able to maintain status quo.
2
3 Councilor Thornton stated he would support the request of the Chief. Councilor Koenig stated, if
4 moving ahead immediately, he would be supportive of 1 Sergeant and 1 Patrolman. There remains the
5 opportunity to discuss the potential for a second Patrolman in the FY19 budget.
6
7 Town Manager Cabanel stated her recommendation for the immediate action to be for a Sergeant and 1
8 Patrolman.
9 Councilor Flood stated her preference would be to go ahead and immediately work towards hiring for
10 1 Sergeant and 2 Patrolmen given the amount of time required to get the officers out on the street.
11
12 Chairman Harrington suggested the Council be provided with cost estimates for a 2nd Patrolman.
13 Town Manager Cabanel commented you cannot compare the fatigue experienced by firefighters who
14 work 24-hour shifts, and then are expected to work 48 hours consecutively. That is vastly different
15 than the overtime scenario in the Police Department where there may be officers who wish to have the
16 overtime.
17
18 Town Manager Cabanel stated she is doubtful there is money in the current budget to cover those three
19 positions. The budget represents what was believed to be needed. There has been changeover in staff,
20 periods of time where positions went unfilled, etc., but having only completed half of the fiscal year it
21 remains unknown if there will be savings in areas such as salt and sand, which are areas that might be
22 able to be looked to for savings. She spoke of the need for a greater understanding of the overall cost
23 of adding positions.
24
25 Councilor Albert stated the desire to receive a plan from the department as to how this issue would be
26 attacked. Whether some or all the positions are approved, onboarding of positions takes time, and he
27 would like to understand how this issue would be addressed beginning immediately, and what the
28 partnerships will look like within the community, etc.
29
30 Town Manager Cabanel spoke of the need for the Council to consider the addition of staff at a regular
31 meeting of the Council where the matter could be placed on the agenda to ensure ample notice is
32 provided the community that the discussion and potential action would occur. The information needed
33 to reach a formal decision could be available for the Council's January 25th meeting.
34
35 A request was made that the information provided include the cost involved in hiring up to the three
36 positions, the amount of time required to onboard new positions, overtime cost involved in filling the
37 positions immediately, and the department's plan for this unit.
38
39 Chairman Harrington stated the intent to be for the current 2 positions to remain in place, and their
40 positions backfilled. Vice Chairman Rothhaus remarked the Chief mentioned it may not always be
41 necessary to backfill a shift. Chief Roy stated the department would not unnecessarily fill a shift.
42 Chairman Harrington stated her opinion the positions should always be backfilled to ensure the
43 department is adequately staffed. Chief Roy stated minimum staffing would continue to be
44 maintained.
45
46 Councilor Flood spoke of the crisis being faced, and her concern with the human cost. Vice Chairman
47 Rothhaus added he can appreciate that, but understands there are Resource Officers in the middle and
48 high school who are very active in dealing with what we are talking about. The School District has the

1 K-9 come in occasionally to keep them out in the first place. Councilor Boyd spoke of the numerous
2 fronts this battle must be fought on.

3
4 Vice Chairman Rothhaus requested additional information on what was listed under Line Item #01-04-
5 8503-0; Vehicles as IRV from MFD. Town Manager Cabanel explained the item was moved to Line
6 Item #01-04-8332-0; Maintenance-Vehicles. IRV stands for Incidence Response Vehicle. The item
7 appears under maintenance because the \$25,000 cost is related to the fit-up of an ambulance to become
8 the IRV. The \$25,000 cost for the OHRV listed under Line Item #01-04-8503-0 was associated with
9 the lease for a motorcycle. It was removed as the Chief had indicated the motorcycle could last
10 another year, and the priority is that of the fit-up for the IRV.

11
12 When asked about the requested increase in the ammunition line, Chief Roy explained new officers are
13 required a certain amount for training as well as taking 1,200 rounds of ammunition to the academy
14 with them. This is in addition to the other ammunition the department requires for its yearly training.
15 The cost itself continues to rise.

16
17 Councilor Albert questioned if the current IRV could continue to be used. Chief Roy stated the current
18 IRV is no longer serviceable, and will not run. Councilor Albert disagrees with recycling an old
19 ambulance for this purpose as it is not appropriate for the type of vehicle the department needs. He
20 stated he would not support that action, and would like to see the department consider another type of
21 vehicle that would be more suited to the intended use.

22
23 Chief Roy stated the Police and Fire Departments agreed the Police Department would repurpose two
24 of their SUVs coming offline for one of the ambulances. The ambulance is a 2010 model with 125,000
25 miles. The \$25,000 would be for paint, some equipment, and to change some lighting. A new vehicle
26 was looked at, which would come at a cost upwards of \$200,000 (not including fit-up). Some research
27 was done on used vehicles that would be of an appropriate size. The cost of the vehicle and fit-up
28 would be \$145,000 - \$150,000 for a used vehicle.

29
30 Councilor Albert commented the Town of Bedford took a nice-sized box truck, and for a reasonable
31 amount of money, outfitted it. He reiterated the desire for other alternatives to be considered.

32
33 Councilor Thornton questioned Line Item #01-04-8250-0; Vehicle Fuel; specifically, the increase
34 between the actual expenditures in FY17 and the requested amount for FY19. Assistant Town
35 Manager/Finance Director Micali spoke of the favorable pricing the Town received for gasoline in
36 FY17 and the start of FY18 (\$1.92 gallon versus the budgeted amount of \$2.50/gallon). The cost of
37 gasoline is going up. The 24,900 gallons is a three-year average.

38
39 Vice Chairman Rothhaus commented the expectation of an increase in cost of \$14,400 does not
40 indicate any real savings in fuel costs associated with moving to Explorers that get 18 miles/gallon
41 from the previous vehicles that got 8 miles/gallon. Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali
42 stated in FY14 when the department had all Crown Victorians, the cost was \$83,000, in FY15 \$72,000
43 was expended, and in FY16 the cost was \$51,000, which is when the gas prices started coming back
44 down, and the Town started to flip the fleet of vehicles around. In FY17, actual expenditure was
45 \$49,000, and all the vehicles had been changed out. Councilor Thornton noted back then the cost of
46 gas was over \$3.00/gallon. It was noted the Town was paying \$2.50/gallon at that time.

47

1 Councilor Thornton commented under Line Item #01-04-8334-0; Maintenance-Office Equipment,
2 computers are listed at a cost of \$14,579, and under Line Item #01-04-8504-0; Office Equipment,
3 includes \$7,000 for computer equipment. The response provided was that computers listed at a cost of
4 \$7,000 are workstations/desktops where the others are the tablets being requested for the cruisers. It
5 was suggested a more defining description be added.
6

7 Councilor Thornton noted the total department request of \$6,330,879, and the total proposed by the
8 Town Manager of \$6,234,181, and questioned the difference beyond the position that was discussed
9 earlier. Town Manager Cabanel stated the overall difference to be \$96,698. From that the cost of the
10 officer is subtracted at \$85,398. The \$11,300 difference is made up of the increase in the cost of
11 laptops for \$13,600, a reduction of \$25,000 for the motorcycle cost.
12

13 Police Detail

14
15 Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali stated the 5,700 hours is an estimate. The difference
16 between FY18 and proposed reduction for FY19 (approx. \$2,500) is primarily resulting from a mix in
17 the rates.
18

19 Town Manager Cabanel suggested an option for the department would be to utilize the officers that
20 would otherwise be doing details, for the overtime needed in the department, and that the detail work
21 could be outsourced to departments from surrounding communities.
22

23 Comments from the Press - None

24
25 Comments from the Public - None

26
27 Comments from the Council

28
29 Adjourn

30
31 MOTION made by Councilor Boyd and seconded by Councilor Albert to adjourn the meeting.
32 MOTION CARRIED 7-0-0

33
34 *The January 8, 2018 meeting of the Town Council was adjourned at 10:50 p.m.*
35
36
37

38 Submitted by Dawn MacMillan