



## Town Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 29, 2020 at 6:30 PM, in the Matthew Thornton Room

Chairman Koenig called the meeting of the Town Council to order at 6:30 p.m. Present at the meeting were Vice Chairman Boyd, Councilor Albert, Councilor Harrington, Councilor Healey, Councilor Rothhaus, Councilor Woods, Town Manager, Eileen Cabanel, and Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Paul Micali.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Koenig led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Public Comment**

Alexander Pereira, 2 Heidi Lane

Stated her support of the allocation of funds for sidewalks.

Jeffrey Burke, 8 Meadowview Lane

Stated his support of the allocation for sidewalks.

Chairman Koenig questioned if he was correct in his understanding the two public speakers are working on a school project to look into and study sidewalks, and was told the project is for a Civics class.

Asked to share information gained that resulted in their support, Ms. Pereira responded the requirement was to choose a project that is within the community, and look to find a practical solution. They learned many feel Merrimack is not a very walkable community because of the absence of sidewalks. They began looking into areas where there is a good deal of foot traffic without the benefit of sidewalks. They reached out to the community (via social media) to identify whether there is support for sidewalks, and received a great deal of positive feedback.

Asked about the areas where focus was placed, Ms. Andre Pereira stated they were considering the area between the middle school and down Baboosic Road and from the New Homestead apartment complexes to the Library.

### **Review of Proposed FY21 Budget**

- The Town Council will deliberate on the 2020/21 Budget

Town Manager Cabanel spoke of the discussion at the last meeting regarding an additional allocation towards overtime for firefighters. She and the Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director have identified a list of cuts that could be made to allow the budget to remain neutral.

The proposal for non-union employees is a 2% pay increase, which mirrors what the union employees have received. Compensation for the non-union wage group has ranges of wages, but there is no

1 mechanism for movement. She requested an additional allocation be made to adjust wages as is  
2 believed appropriate to ensure they remain competitive and reward performance.

3  
4 The list of possible cuts would cover all but approx. \$20,000 of the proposed increased allocation  
5 under non-union salaries.

6 Town Manager Cabanel again spoke of the adjustments (increases) that would be needed to Line Item  
7 #01-01-8111-0 Overtime - Other in the Fire Department's budget (\$134,518). In addition, there are  
8 benefits of \$48,552.

9  
10 Areas where changes have been proposed include call EMS (\$16,000); position only covered 70% of  
11 the time; 30% of allocation moved to the fire department overtime budget where the coverage will  
12 come from. Ambulance revenue was increased by \$25,000.

13  
14 Town Manager Cabanel identified areas where increases had been identified in her original proposed  
15 budget. Adjustments were made because of the increase in the Fire Department budget. The  
16 reductions represent level funding each of the line items: Computer Capital Reserve Fund (CRF)  
17 (\$15,000), Ambulance CRF (\$25,000), Communication CRF (\$25,000), D.W. Highway CRF  
18 (\$25,000), Athletic Fields CRF (\$10,000), and GIS CRF (\$5,000).

19  
20 Other areas of change include the cost associated with a 2% increase for non-union employees  
21 (\$98,371) and compensated absences.

22  
23 The purchase of a command vehicle was removed from the proposed department budget. The  
24 allocation for the Fire Department roof has been removed as it is believed the cost can be addressed  
25 through the current year's budget. Funding for basic repairs to the Bise Field concession stand is  
26 available in the current year's budget. The PWD has removed the allocation for the purchase of a  
27 cement mixer. Professional pressure washing of the PWD facility will be done every other year. The  
28 Library achieved a savings (\$7,900) through movement within positions. Anticipated revenue from  
29 auto registrations was increased (\$25,000).

30  
31 Asked about Line Item #01-04-8503-0 Vehicles; proposed purchase of a motorcycle for the Police  
32 Department, Town Manager Cabanel stated she had not wanted to take that liberty.

33  
34 Councilor Albert requested a reduction be made in light of hiring two new officers, the list of  
35 priorities, and the tax rate increasing \$0.31. He does not see it as a priority need for the department,  
36 and believes the department can get by without it in the coming year.

37  
38 Town Manager Cabanel noted, if including the \$20,000 cost of the motorcycle, the tax rate increase  
39 would be the \$0.31.

40  
41 General Government

42  
43 **MOTION made by Vice Chairman Boyd and seconded by Councilor Healey to remove from the**  
44 **budget the salary and benefits associated with the proposed position of Assistant Technology**  
45 **Coordinator**

46  
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1 ON THE QUESTION

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3 Vice Chairman Boyd spoke of the Council having been informed of the pending retirement of the  
4 Technology Coordinator. He believes a broader look needs to be taken of how the Town will manage  
5 its I.T. department moving forward.  
6

7 Councilor Harrington stated her belief the rationale is on point and there will be a dramatic change in  
8 I.T. down the road. Whoever is placed in the position would have to have the knowledge and future  
9 vision to be able to guide the department. She would prefer to get someone onboard for the transition  
10 period.  
11

12 Councilor Healey suggested the position be funded for half the year. What is written in the description  
13 for qualifications/requirements is a basic position. Even if the desire is to look at the future of whether  
14 or not to outsource, you need to have some kind of ticket monitoring system in place that will provided  
15 data on volume and type of problems experienced, and allows you to identify opportunities to be able  
16 to educate your users more.  
17

18 Chairman Koenig remarked it is important to note that the position currently exists as an assistant for  
19 the Technology Coordinator. By removing the line you also remove the position/2<sup>nd</sup> individual and the  
20 ability the department has to be able to support the I.T. program in Town. Whether the position  
21 evolves into a higher level is debatable. He spoke of the need for the position and to have the security,  
22 backup, and knowledgebase inhouse at this point in time.  
23

24 Town Manager Cabanel stated that position has remained unfilled for some time. As a result, the one  
25 individual is taking on the additional workload. Removal of the position would dictate that continue,  
26 at a minimum, the total of a year. There exists a log of trouble tickets. Staff education is provided.  
27 The Town is open 24 hours/day, 365 days/year, has 10 different locations, 9 of which have staff, 175  
28 PCs, 21 servers, 20 tablets, 14 copiers, 150 phones, and at least 20 different complicated proprietary  
29 software packages. There is also the need to address elections; 3 polling places, laptops, printers,  
30 routers, switches, etc. Having the position go unfilled for the time it already has, has been very  
31 difficult.  
32

33 Councilor Albert stated agreement with the Chairman. He can appreciate the idea of outsourcing and  
34 the potential for cost savings in the future. He stated his support for the position remaining in the  
35 budget.

36 **MOTION FAILED**

37 **1-6-0**

38 *Councilors Koenig, Albert, Harrington, Healey, Rothhaus, and Woods voted in opposition.*  
39

40 **MOTION made by Vice Chairman Boyd and seconded by Councilor Harrington to include the**  
41 **non-union raise amount of \$98,371, to reduce compensated absences by \$30,185, and increase the**  
42 **Nashua Transit line by \$6,321. MOTION CARRIED 7-0-0**  
43

44 Assessing

45  
46 *No changes were proposed.*  
47  
48

1 Fire Department

2

3 Councilor Harrington asked for clarification an engine truck is planned for the CIP. Town Manager  
4 Cabanel stated that to be correct. Asked for the amount needed and the current balance, Town  
5 Manager Cabanel stated the cost to be \$599,000 and the balance in the CIP approx. \$600,000.

6

7 Councilor Harrington suggested a motion to remove the \$599,000 allocation for the pumper truck  
8 under Line Item #01-03-8910-0 Capital Reserve Fund Purchases, which would also remove the  
9 corresponding amount from the revenue line resulting in no change to the tax base.

10

11 She spoke of her intent to fund the pumper truck through the current year's budget. She questioned the  
12 amount of time needed to receive a truck after ordering, and was told it is 6-9 months.

13

14 Town Manager Cabanel stated concern with removing the item and the possibility there would not be  
15 enough support to pass such action at a future date. Noted was that the action of removing the  
16 allocation could occur after a motion to expend in the current year.

17

18 **MOTION made by Vice Chairman Boyd and seconded by Councilor Rothhaus to increase Line**  
19 **Item #01-03-8111-0 Overtime - Other, by \$134,518, increase associated benefits in the amount of**  
20 **\$48,552 and ambulance revenue expectation by \$25,000, reduce Line Item #01-03-8502-0**  
21 **Buildings by \$48,589 and remove from expenditures and revenue the cost of the command**  
22 **vehicle (\$40,000)**

23

24 ON THE QUESTION

25

26 Town Manager Cabanel reiterated the belief is that the cost of the roof can be paid through the current  
27 year's budget.

28

29 Noted was that the Police Department will transfer vehicles over to the Fire Department. Asked about  
30 an upfit cost, Town Manager Cabanel stated it to be approx. \$6,000. That cost can also be addressed  
31 through the existing budget.

32 **MOTION CARRIED 7-0-0**

33

34 Police Department

35

36 **MOTION made by Councilor Albert and seconded by Vice Chairman Boyd to reduce Line Item**  
37 **#01-04-8503-0 Vehicles by \$20,000**

38

39 ON THE QUESTION

40

41 Councilor Albert commented he does not like to remove anything, but this year with the addition of  
42 two police officers, he believes this to be a sacrifice that can be made.

43

44 Chairman Koenig commented it is a nice thing to be able to have, but there are a lot of increases in the  
45 budget, and the motorcycle is something that, if not necessarily needed in order to serve the people of  
46 the Town directly, delaying it a year is likely a good idea.

47 **MOTION CARRIED 7-0-0**

48

1 Town Manager Cabanel informed the viewing audience both the police and dispatchers and secretaries  
2 unions have agreed to multi-year contracts.

3  
4 Communications

5  
6 *No changes were proposed.*

7  
8 Code Enforcement

9  
10 *No changes were proposed.*

11  
12 Public Works Department (Admin.)

13  
14 *No changes were proposed.*

15  
16 Highway

17  
18 **MOTION made by Councilor Harrington and seconded by Vice Chairman Boyd to reduce Line**  
19 **Item #01-08-8508-0 Operating Equipment by \$4,000 and Line Item #01-08-8371-0 Maintenance -**  
20 **Grounds (MYA) by \$10,000**

21  
22 ON THE QUESTION

23  
24 Chairman Koenig questioned how the Bise Field concession stand repairs would be addressed, and was  
25 informed funding is available in the current budget to address major repairs. The additional funding  
26 was intended as a contingency. Councilor Albert questioned if the cost should be addressed by the  
27 MYA. Noted was that the building is owned by the Town.

28  
29 Asked about the condition of the structure, Lori Barrett, Operations Manager, noted the needed repairs  
30 to be major roof repair, repair of animal damage (wood), paint, stairwell, and venting.

31 **MOTION CARRIED 7-0-0**

32  
33 Vice Chairman Boyd questioned Line Item #01-08-8341-0 Sand & Salt, e.g., run rate. Ms. Barrett  
34 stated it to be approx. 65% of the budget. The proposed budget represents an increase to cover the cost  
35 of liquid calcium. A new tank is being purchased (old one (1985) cracked when moved), and will need  
36 to be filled.

37  
38 Solid Waste

39  
40 **MOTION made by Councilor Harrington and seconded by Councilor Healey to reduce Line**  
41 **Item #01-09-8359-0 Other Outside Services by \$3,000. MOTION CARRIED 7-0-0**

42  
43 Equipment Maintenance

44  
45 *No changes were proposed.*

1 Buildings & Grounds

2  
3 Councilor Albert questioned Line Item #01-17-8502-0 Buildings; if the LED upgrade has to be  
4 completed in a single year. Town Manager Cabanel noted the cost would be addressed through fund  
5 balance. Were the expenditure to be removed, the corresponding revenue would have to be as well.  
6

7 Councilor Healey questioned if the allocation under Line Item #01-17-8322-0 Maintenance-Grounds,  
8 includes the work the Council discussed being done at the John O’Leary Adult Learning Center, and  
9 was informed it does.

10  
11 Parks and Recreation

12  
13 *No changes were proposed.*

14  
15 Library

16  
17 **MOTION made by Councilor Harrington and seconded by Councilor Rothhaus to reduce the**  
18 **salary line by \$7,960. MOTION CARRIED 7-0-0**

19  
20 Community Development

21  
22 *No changes were proposed.*

23  
24 Town Clerk/Tax Collector

25  
26 **MOTION made by Councilor Healey and seconded by Vice Chairman Boyd to increase the auto**  
27 **registration revenue line by \$25,000. MOTION CARRIED 7-0-0**

28  
29 Welfare

30  
31 *No changes were proposed.*

32  
33 Debt Service

34  
35 Chairman Koenig asked for a summary of long-term debt service, and was informed there are two  
36 bonds outstanding in the General Fund. For FY21, Highway garage principal is \$155,000 and interest  
37 is \$112,860 and drainage improvements principle \$140,000 and interest \$7,175.

38  
39 Chairman Koenig noted the total in debt service to be \$415,036.

40  
41 Asked for a summary, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali stated the tax rate would be  
42 \$0.31 higher than last year at \$5.02. The General fund has increased \$107,349 (appropriations).  
43 Revenues were increased by a net of \$10,000.

1 Waste Water

2  
3 Chairman Koenig noted the 2% wage increase recommendation. The corresponding amount is also  
4 shown in revenues as it is paid for through the Enterprise Fund.  
5

6 **MOTION made by Vice Chairman Boyd and seconded by Councilor Healey to increase both**  
7 **appropriations and revenues by \$4,136. MOTION CARRIED 7-0-0**  
8

9 Media

10  
11 **MOTION made by Councilor Harrington and seconded by Vice Chairman Boyd to increase the**  
12 **appropriation and revenues by \$3,209. MOTION CARRIED 7-0-0**  
13

14 Fire Protection

15  
16 *No changes were proposed.*  
17

18 Police Outside Detail

19  
20 Self-supporting; appropriations paid through revenues received.  
21

22 Councilor Albert commented on the Presidential Primary, and the need to provide security. He  
23 questioned if the costs come out of the police overtime budget. Assistant Town Manager/Finance  
24 Director Micali commented it is likely it would come from the police department overtime budget.  
25

26 *No changes were proposed.*  
27

28 Fire Outside Detail

29  
30 *No changes were proposed.*  
31

32 Library – Trustee Funds

33  
34 *No changes were proposed.*  
35

36 Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali stated the budget Warrant Article would be  
37 \$35,948,104; includes withdrawals from CRFs.  
38

39 Capital Reserve Fund Deposits

40  
41 The total revised amount is \$1,815,000. Town Manager Cabanel noted some of the individual amounts  
42 have increased while others are level funded.  
43

44 **MOTION made by Councilor Harrington and seconded by Vice Chairman Boyd to reduce 01-**  
45 **8510-Computer by \$15,000, 03-8510-Ambulance by \$25,000, 05-8510-Communications by**  
46 **\$25,000, 08-8510-D.W. Highway by \$25,000, 13-8510-Athletic Fields by \$10,000, and 21-8510 GIS**  
47 **by \$5,000 for a total decrease of \$105,000**  
48

1 ON THE QUESTION

2  
3 Chairman Koenig commented on the requirement for a minimum amount in the ambulance CRF  
4 (approx. \$12,000); however that amount has been exceeded. **MOTION CARRIED 7-0-0**  
5 The revised General Fund Capital Reserve Fund Deposit total is \$1.815 million.

6  
7 The deposit for the Wastewater Treatment Fund is set at \$500,000.

8  
9 The amount in the Wastewater Treatment Fund bond for the remaining portion of the project is set at  
10 \$9,520,000. That will be put forward as a bond article.

11  
12 The total appropriation (all funds) is \$47,783,104.

13  
14 Noted was that union contracts would be a separate Warrant Article.

15  
16 **MOTION** made by Vice Chairman Boyd and seconded by Councilor Healey to move \$35,948,104  
17 for the operating budget warrant. **MOTION CARRIED 7-0-0**

18  
19 **MOTION** made by Vice Chairman Boyd and seconded by Councilor Harrington to move  
20 \$1,815,000 for general fund capital reserve fund deposits to the warrant. **MOTION CARRIED**  
21 **7-0-0**

22  
23 **MOTION** made by Vice Chairman Boyd and seconded by Councilor Woods to move \$500,000 to  
24 deposits into the Wastewater Treatment Capital Treatment Fund. **MOTION CARRIED 7-0-0**

25  
26 **MOTION** made by Vice Chairman Boyd and seconded by Councilor Healey to move \$9,520,000  
27 for a Wastewater Treatment Bond Phase IV, Phase V for the upgrades to the plant. **MOTION**  
28 **CARRIED 7-0-0**

29  
30 **Adjourn**

31  
32 **MOTION** made by Vice Chairman Boyd and seconded by Councilor Healey to adjourn the  
33 meeting. **MOTION CARRIED 7-0-0**

34  
35 *The January 29, 2020 meeting of the Town Council was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.*

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37  
38  
39 Submitted by Dawn MacMillan