

Approved: December 19, 2019

Posted: December 23, 2019



Town Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday December 5, 2019 at 7:00 PM, in the Matthew Thornton Room



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

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Koenig led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements

Regular meetings of the Town Council will be conducted on Thursday, December 19th and January 9th and 23rd at 7:00 p.m. Budget meetings are tentatively scheduled for January 8th, 15th, and 16th beginning at 6:30 p.m. All meetings will be held in the Matthew Thornton Room.

Paul Adams, Recruiting Assistant and Hillsborough/Manchester contact for the US Census, will be at the Library Wednesdays from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. He's available to answer questions about the Census, and to talk to people who might want to help.

The Merrimack Parks & Recreation Department invites you to join them December 8th for the 26th Annual Holiday Happenings event. The day consists of three events:

- First, working in partnership with Macaroni Kid; a Candy Cane Scavenger Hunt at Twin Bridge Park from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Thousands of candy canes are hidden on the Baseball Field (for the little children) and on the playground (for the older children) as well as some special golden candy canes for other prizes.
- The 2nd event is the Annual Holiday Parade kicking off at 3:00 p.m. from the Commons Shopping Plaza and traveling down D.W. Highway to Baboosic Lake Rd. and then turning onto McElwain Street before ending in the Town Hall Parking lot. The theme of this year's parade is "Superheroes".
- The 3rd event is the Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony at Abbie Griffin Park. Beginning at approx. 3:45 p.m. with the arrival of Santa & Mrs. Claus to the Park. The event will include performances by the Merrimack High School Marching Band, Broadway Bound, and a musical performance by Miss Merrimack's Outstanding Teen Molly Morin. In addition, Girl Scout Troop 10375 will be giving out hot chocolate & cookies. For more information contact the Parks & Recreation Department at 603-882-1046.

Comments from the Press and Public - None

Recognitions, Resignations and Retirements

1. Resignation and Recognition of Town Committee Member

Submitted by Town Council Chairman Tom Koenig and Vice Chair Bill Boyd

The Town Council to present a certificate to the following individual for her volunteer service to the Town of Merrimack:

- Hillary Baird – Parks and Recreation Committee

MOTION made by Vice Chairman Boyd and seconded by Councilor Healey to accept, with sincere regret, the resignation of Hillary Baird from the Parks and Recreation Committee.

MOTION CARRIED 6-0-0

Chairman Koenig presented Ms. Baird with a certificate in recognition of her service to the community as a member of the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Appointments

1. 2020 Census Briefing

Submitted by U.S. Census Bureau Partnership Specialist Jim Spotts

The Town Council to receive a brief on the 2020 Census.

Jim Spotts, U.S. Census Bureau Partnership Specialist, provided a presentation (can be viewed [here](#)).

The U.S. Census Bureau is the largest statistical agency in the United States Government. As part of the 2010 census approx. 1 out of 6 households received the long form. That is now the American Community Survey, which is administered every year ending in 2 and 7. Mr. Spotts spoke of the U.S. Census data being the baseline to a lot of the analysis of the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC).

The Census is mandated by Article 1, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution. The requirement is for every individual residing in the United States to be counted, regardless of citizenship. The Census administers 130 different surveys and programs year-round. Census workers are always out there conducting some type of survey.

For the 2020 Census, they are looking to count about 330 million people and 140 million households. This is a real challenge particularly in New Hampshire where mailings will start in March, which is right after the Presidential Primary. He spoke of the volume of mailings received by the average household, and the desire to partner with trusted voices in the community to get the word out that the Census is coming and to self-respond.

Mr. Spotts spoke of the importance of the Census noting not only does it determine the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives, it determines the annual allocation of federal dollars. Based on the 2010 census data \$675 billion dollars is reallocated to state and municipal governments and federally administered programs (over a ten-year period; truly \$6.75 trillion).

There are two aspects of why taking the census is safe; the first are protections under Title 13 of U.S. Code. As a census employee he takes an oath that protects census data. Violators are subject to

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penalties including federal prison sentence of up to 5 years, a fine of up to \$250,000 or both. The census data does produce quite a bit of statistical data on the populations. That is open source information to everyone in the United States. The second part is the cyber security aspect of the U.S. census. As a Federal agency, they receive a lot of help from the intelligence community and other security apparatus of the Federal Government. The U.S. Census has hired private cyber security firms to enhance that security.

The census can now be administered online. As soon as the information leaves an individual's device it is as safe as it can be.

Taking the Census is easy; can be taken online, by phone (13 different languages), or by paper. If not doing any of the three, an enumerator will come to your home to administer the census.

There are 60 different languages the census can be administered in. The first 13, including English, can be done online, by phone, or by mail. The other 47 have a sheet that can be downloaded providing a translation. There will also be a YouTube video instructing people on how to fill out the census.

Each household will receive 2 mailings in March; one right after the other. In those, will be a 12-digit code for the household. From that individuals can go to a webpage, enter the code, and fill out the census for that residence.

Sought is the Council's assistant in the administration of the 2020 Census. A request was made that the Town begin to share the message about the 2020 Census, and promoting 2020 census jobs. They have not yet started advertising, and would like to work with the Town on an advertising campaign through the Town's media resources in conjunction with their larger marketing effort.

There are currently 6 complete count committees in the State. Mr. Spotts spoke of the amount of construction that has occurred since the 2010 Census. With Federal dollars at stake, it is worthwhile to obtain an accurate count. Having an enumerator go to a home is the most expensive way to count a residence. Self-reporting is the least expensive way for the Federal taxpayer.

Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali stated there to be a lot of snowbirds, and questioned if they would receive their census in both states. Mr. Spotts responded it would depend on where they are on April 1st, and the amount of time they spend in each location.

Mr. Spotts stated there to be a great deal of census content that can be provided to the Town. There are 2 Public Service Announcements (PSAs) currently being run on the cable channel. The content will be updated continuously. They would like to have the collective endorsement of the Council so that it could be expressed to the community.

To provide an idea of how Merrimack stacks up against the rest of the State, he provided a copy of the response outreach area mapper, which identifies the expected self-response rate. Although not on par with Manchester, Merrimack is lower than the rest of the State. The data is based on a combination of expected self-response rates in 2010 plus the American Community survey and some interpolated data between the two.

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As an organization, they are trying to teach communities and industry to access the census data. He provided the example of someone starting a business and wanting to know the demographics around the business. The census data will provide information on age, language capabilities, education, etc. within a reasonable commuting distance of the facility. That information is in the census and is readily available to everyone. Asked how far back information goes on the website, he indicated census data is released after 72 years. If over 72 years of age, you will see your first census.

Asked if enumerators would present some form of identification, Mr. Spotts stated they would carry a card and have in their possession a digital reader. He spoke of concern with scammers and identity theft. Suspected fraud can be reported to 1-800-923-8282 or by visiting <https://2020census.gov/en/avoiding-fraud.html>.

Vice Chairman Boyd questioned the number of people that did not participate in the 2010 census resulting in the use of enumerators. Mr. Spotts stated he could seek the information and provide it. He has an idea based on the number of census tracts and expected response rates based on the 2010 data, but the density of the populations changes between census tract.

Public Hearing - None

Legislative Updates from State Representatives

Jeanine Notter, Deputy Republican Floor Leader, spoke of being on the Science, Technology, and Energy Committee, and attending energy summits and the Energy Symposium. She was reminded that we pay the highest energy costs in the country and all over highest transmission costs. We come dangerously close to having rolling blackouts during the coldest part of the winter.

She will be attending the Heartland Institute's conference in New Orleans where she will learn more about education choice and energy. In addition, food labeling laws come up every term. She receives calls from Merrimack residents looking for foods to be labeled if containing GMO. That is really not needed as food that does not contain it is labeled. There will also be a presentation about the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. She spoke of having sponsored legislation to get rid of that tax as has Representative Richard Barry.

She displayed an app on her phone; ISO to go. From there users can view the price being paid per megawatt and compare it to other states.

Town Manager's Report

The Welfare Department gets many offers of help this time of year. We want to thank the Merrimack Professional Fire Fighters Union Local 2904 for the delivery of Thanksgiving Food Boxes to families in Merrimack who needed some help this year. We also want to thank the Merrimack Rotary Club members who donated Christmas tree vouchers.

The Merrimack Lioness Club is also underway collecting gifts through their Operation Santa Program. The Welfare Department provides them the list of children and families in Merrimack that are in need. The trees, located in various places in Merrimack, are decorated with these lists, and residents shop and bring new gifts back to the trees. The Lioness Club then organizes and returns the gifts to the

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Welfare office for distribution to families before Christmas. We also want to thank, in advance, our Merrimack Police Union, which is part of New England Benevolent Association Local #12. for their kindness. They will be delivering Holiday food boxes in the next couple of weeks.

Town Manager Cabanel spoke of the positive feedback received regarding the storm response. She stated her appreciation of the employees of the Public Works Department (PWD) for the many hours they put in. She thanked Lori Barrett, Operations Manager, and Kyle Fox, Director, who were out in plow trucks. The amount of snow experienced in this one storm is a very rare event; nearly 2' over 43 hours. The Town does not staff for this kind of storm all the time as the cost would be too great.

All Highway equipment and maintenance crews were dispatched at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday and worked through the storm until heading home on Tuesday at 3:00 p.m. Crews will continue to clear subdivision roads in the coming days and work to remove snowbanks at intersections, improve site distance for motorists and clear sidewalks around Town.

Town Manager Cabanel expressed sincere gratitude for the dedicated work and the many hours our employees put in to keep the roads open and safe for our residents.

Consent Agenda - None

Old Business - None

New Business

1. 2020-2026 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Presentation

Submitted by Town Manager Eileen Cabanel and Finance Director Paul T. Micali
Town Council to be presented with the details of the 2020-2026 CIP.

Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali stated, based on Charter Article 8-9, the Planning Board was directed, in 1984, to have a six-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Through the Charter and RSA 674:7, the CIP is before the Council for capital expenditures. There are two categories of capital expenditures: major projects; those costing more than \$100,000 and that go before the Planning Board and minor projects; anything over \$10,000 (mostly equipment).

For FY21, the capital reserve deposits are being increased by approx. \$270,000 to continue the effort of the fund being a mechanism for saving for future expenses (rather than an in and out each year).

In the 2009 timeframe, the road infrastructure Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) began, and combined sidewalks, bike paths, drainage, roads, and bridges into one CRF. New this year is a breakdown of the projected deposit into the road infrastructure CRF; drainage \$200,000, sidewalks \$200,000 (identified as \$275,000 when the presentation was created), and roads \$70,000. The breakdown shows the commitment to sidewalks, drainage (part of MS4), and to roads and bridges. The cost of repairs to bridges has been saved for over a number of years. One is currently in construction and another coming into construction.

The CIP will be presented to the Planning Board on December 17th.

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An allocation has been identified for an athletic field understanding that to be a discussion that needs to take place. There is a potential opportunity for a field location through a developer.

There are increases for ambulance and fire equipment. The D.W. Highway is again at the point where paving is needed at either end.

A copy of the complete [CIP](#) was included with the agenda packet.

Focusing on planned expenses for FY21 and FY22, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali started by addressing the major projects. The Town is in the process of looking at the possibility of a safety complex for fire and police. The rough estimate is \$11,025,000 (FY22). Through sale of buildings, private donations, retention of fund balance, and monies set aside in the CIP, the expectation is an approx. \$7-8 million bond.

The South Fire Station needs renovations (FY22). Planned is a rehab; potential addition of bays (depending on size), renovating living quarters, etc. to be able to house a fire truck, ambulance, an additional vehicle and everything needed for decontamination. Estimates are based on the sq. ft. cost used for the Highway garage.

Stormwater drainage improvements are estimated at \$250,000 (FY21/FY22). Projects planned for FY21 were noted and detailed in the backup material. Funding for drainage improvements on Gail Road is listed at \$350,000 (FY21).

Paving is funded at \$125,000 (FY21/FY22). Currently there is approx. \$1.3 million in the upcoming budget to address paving. The list of roads to be paved is published in the January/February timeframe. Paving of some parking lots will be included in the paving projects.

The Merrimack River boat ramp access improvement project shows an allocation of \$200,000 (FY22). The hope is to acquire State funding (50/50 match). Discussion on the location for the ramp will continue with the Council.

The Seaverns Bridge canoe launch ramp slope stabilization is identified at \$50,000 (FY21). The Conservation Commission owns a parcel on the other side of Amherst Street. Consideration is being given to a new canoe launch in that location (few years out). However, slope stabilization needs to occur given concern for road washout.

The sidewalk improvement plan includes 5 projects that are believed feasible. The 1st is in the area of the Woodbury Street connection to the High School to D.W. Highway. If the budget passes, that would be the first constructed. Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grants will be sought (\$195,000 CIP (FY21) and the potential for \$780,000 Federal funding. The sum of \$200,000 has been set aside for the next 5 years to cover the cost of sidewalk projects. The first few projects will be funded through the fund balance proposal presented to the Council in September. From there, the CIP will be operational and funded.

The Depot Street boat ramp has severe washout (\$150,000 FY21). Design work is occurring in the current FY with repairs in FY21.

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Major projects planned for the outyears include the US 3 bridge replacement (D.W. Highway) (\$3,606,260) and the Chamberlain Bridge (over Souhegan) (FY27; \$215,000). The smaller cost is related to it being in conjunction with the Riverwalk project.

Stormwater drainage improvements in the Woodland Drive area - Phase II would be conducted over a period of 4-5 years utilizing the CIP. Paving of gravel roads is being reviewed.

Placeholders are identified for sewer line extensions, e.g., McQuestion Road is in the area with the school sewer line and the repairs needed there. If that is constructed, this cost could come down as the connection would be made easier. Sewer and drainage masterplans are being reviewed and incorporated into planned projects.

The library bond placeholder is listed (FY26; \$6,000,000). The library had a space needs study conducted and are going out with a Request for Quotation with 3-4 architect engineers to gain information on whether the result would be a rehab of the existing or new construction.

The Master Plan is coming due in FY25 (\$200,000). Also included as a placeholder is an allocation for athletic fields (FY24 and FY26).

The Wastewater Treatment Plant Phase IV bond presentation will be provided the Council. As was indicated during the presentation provided last year, it is a two-phase project. The Town met to discuss value engineering, and the project is back to the people designing the upgrade.

In regard to minor projects, Revaluation will begin in FY21 (\$75,000). Identified for reconstructing parking lots is \$55,000 (FY22). The aprons need to be repaired at some of the fire stations. There are other parking lot issues with some of the back ends of the parking lots. That work is contingent on the safety complex (if comes to fruition, this paving would not occur).

LED lighting upgrade will be done at Town Hall (\$52,146; FY21). Energy savings will result.

The Town Hall Space Needs Study was removed from the budget. Consulting services will be paid for through the current budget. There are areas that need to be reviewed in regard to staff related to the MS4. The Town Clerk/Tax Collector will address the new rules relative to what needs to be kept under lock and key and what can be kept at a storage facility.

Reconstruction of parking lots at the police station and Adult Community Center has been removed from the budget. The John O'Leary Center will be addressed within the paving budget.

A backup console for fire and police communications (\$50,000; FY21) is a dispatch console. Should something occur at the police department dispatch center, there would be the ability to dispatch out of the fire station. Should the safety complex come to fruition, the equipment could be relocated there.

CAD/RMS server replacement/dispatch upgrade is identified in the current budget (\$250,000). There is talk that the current vendor has been sold. They will not do any upgrades. The State is looking at upgrading their CrimeTracker software next year. The Town will look to piggyback on their efforts.

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GIS update & maintenance program is listed (\$10,000 FY21). An ambulance will be needed (\$250,000 FY22). A pumper truck is being looked at for next year (\$599,000 FY21); ten year run cycle. Fire apparatus computer replacement will be at a cost of \$15,000 (FY21).

Town Manager Cabanel stated she has requested an in-depth review be conducted of the historical use and transfer of police vehicles to the various departments. A presentation will be provided.

Emergency Breathing Air (SCBA) (\$61,000 FY21). The department fills its own tanks, and the old system has run its useful life. Toxic Gas Monitoring equipment (\$24,000 FY21). Opticom repair/replace (\$5,000 FY21); maintenance of the system - flashing lights on top of the streetlights.

The Highway Department is in need of equipment; 2 one ton dump trucks (\$60,000 FY21), wood chipper (\$50,000 FY22), six wheel dump truck (\$180,000 FY21), trailer landscape (\$15,000 FY21 and FY22), two 3/4 ton pickups (\$40,000 FY21 and \$35,000 FY22), Backhoe/loader (\$140,000 FY22), 10-wheel dump truck (\$195,000 FY22), calcium tank (\$12,000 FY21 budget), and a cement mixer (\$4,000 FY21 budget).

The Wasserman Park cabin demolition was removed from the budget. The Watson Park lights were listed in the CIP; however, the vendor has indicated the work can be done for this season. Patrol vehicles (3) (\$140,000) (current budget/\$120,000 FY21 budget, \$123,600 FY22 budget). A motorcycle is planned out of the FY21 budget (\$15,000).

In Solid Waste Disposal, 100 CY trailer, live floor T1 (\$70,000 FY21) and 100 CY Trailer, Live floor T4 (\$70,000 FY22). A fork lift (\$25,000 FY21), Transfer Station loader L4 (\$25,000 FY21) and transfer station loader L4 (\$250,000 current FY). A skid steer loader (\$25,000 FY21) and licenses/equipment upgrade (\$50,000 FY21).

The tennis courts at Wasserman Park are listed in the FY22 budget (\$37,000). There are 7 tennis courts in Town. About 10 years ago a repair was done to address cracking, etc. The intent is to restore the courts before they reach the point of having to be reconstructed.

Addressing some of the larger items funded through user fees and franchise fees, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali highlighted the sewer vacuum truck (\$440,000 FY21) and Town Hall conference room equipment (\$20,000 FY21).

Councilor Healey spoke of the School District's budget having been presented the prior evening, and discussion in the community regarding what is necessary versus nice to have in regard to proposed projects.

Town Manager Cabanel stated the desire to ensure there is understanding the Town has tried to offset the expenses of the school district, but there are needs within the Town that have to be addressed. She noted the tax rate in the current year went down \$0.31 while the school's went up \$0.32.

Noted was that item descriptions within the CIP are color coded; items funded through the budget are highlighted in yellow (impact the tax rate), those funded through a CIP deposit in blue (monies were saved through CIP and monies being expended through CIP - neutral impact on the tax rate), and

proposed to be funded through a bond in green, and would require approval by the voters (2/3 majority).

Town Manager Cabanel spoke of the new element of funding through the end-of-year fund balance.

2. Presentation of Proposed 2020/2021 Town Manager Budget

Submitted by Town Manager Eileen Cabanel and Finance Director Paul T. Micali

Town Manager will present her recommended 2020/2021 budget to the Town Council.

Town Manager Cabanel stated the FY21 budget includes items that have been discussed for years.

She explained, there are various aspects of the budget. The cost of planned expenditures is subtracted by revenue received from other sources to arrive at an amount to be raised through taxes.

The budget presentation focuses on the changes from the current fiscal year to the next. Projected is an increase in ambulance revenue (\$25,000). As calls become more sophisticated and advanced life support is being needed more often than basic life support, there is an increase in revenue. Revenue from auto registrations is being increased (\$175,000). Decreases include the Town's portion of the School Resource Officer (SRO) grant (\$28,400) and administrative fees (\$28,056).

With regard to appropriations, the Guaranteed Maximum Rate (GMR) for health insurance (1.9%) is lower than anticipated and with changes to plans, e.g., single-person plan versus family plan, the result is an increase in health insurance of approx. \$17,500. The increase to Workers Compensation is \$35,000, anti-ransomware purchased (\$23,100); \$1,800/month for the Town's data to be stored on the Cloud. It was a decision made because of the potentially devastating impact of such an event. CRF deposits are increased by \$175,000. Additional CRF deposits were broken up and are basically inflationary costs, e.g., the cost for roads is more, the cost for dump trucks is greater. They are ongoing costs that are saved for through allocations to the CRF. Sprinkler repairs at Town Hall represent a \$15,000 increase. Asphalt pile crushing is done every 3-5 years at a cost of \$25,000.

The landfill has to be monitored for PFAS and there are 2-3 residences where the Town has to pay for the ongoing filtration replacement (\$24,500). Asked if it would be a device the Town would purchase or a consulting fee, Town Manager Cabanel stated there is testing that is already done, and a component has to be added to that testing. The breakdown is approx. \$14,000 for the additional testing and another \$10,000 for replacement of filters for the homes that were identified as being attributed to the Town's landfill PFAS. Councilor Woods questioned if the PFAS monitoring is being expanded beyond PFAS as has been done with the group of compounds, and was informed they are doing it as it is being required.

There has been some discussion of trash disposal. The Town is in the middle of a contract. Trash disposal costs will be going up \$1/ton (approx. \$8,500). Recycling is a mess. We had a very lucrative 3 year contract that ends half way through next year. The Town has been engaged in discussion with other contractors regarding costs moving forward. There will be costs for the equipment, transportation, disposal, etc. Firm prices are no longer being provided because of what is occurring in China. The cost that has been provided is \$85-90/ton (disposal only), but that could not be guaranteed as it is 1.5 years away and pricing can change. It could go as high as \$110/ton. The estimated cost increase is \$47,300 (part of the year). Asked what the Town pays to dispose of trash, Town Manager Cabanel stated it to be \$71/ton (disposal only).

Councilor Healey commented she believes that to be the reason other communities have stepped away from recycling.

Town Manager Cabanel noted additional increases in dental/short-term disability/unemployment (\$11,000), electric/water/sewer (\$11,000), vehicle fuel (\$8,000), education and training (\$9,000) library materials (\$9,000), miscellaneous (\$35,171; lump numerous small amounts), operating supplies (\$10,000), natural gas (\$13,600), NHMA dues (\$8,000), compensated absences (\$177,000); related to the cost expectation for employees having the ability to retire (audit adjustment that has to be done), and union wages (\$89,000).

The following increases are proposed in staffing; Environmental Engineer (MS-4) (\$100,000), Highway Foreman (½ year (MS-4) (\$45,000), Police Officers (1 full and one ½ yr.) (\$154,000); the Town has 4 geographic sectors, and currently there are 3 officers in each of the 3 shifts. Proposed is that during 2 shifts there be an additional officer, Health Officer P/T (\$54,000); this is a position going from part time to full time, and overtime for the Fire Department (\$40,000). The Fire Chief will be coming before the Council to discuss the potential of a grant for 4 new firefighters. The 4 positions have not been included in the budget; however a request is being made to increase overtime.

Currently the department has 9 firefighters/shift; 6 at the Central station and 3 at South. Being proposed is that the Town either get the grant and this increase represents a portion of the year's allocation of the grant or we, as a practice, decide to cover man-for-man up to 9. Currently we have 9 people on, and if someone calls in sick or is on vacation we staff to 8. If doing man-for-man, that additional cost would be through overtime.

The total increase for additional costs is \$1,144,671.

At the start of FY21, the Unreserved Fund Balance (UFB) is projected to be \$9,068,820. From that, being proposed are the following expenses; monies allocated to reduce the tax rate (\$300,000); this is the amount the Council has historically allocated - in FY20 the Council allocated an additional \$200,000 to roads - proposed for FY21 is an additional \$850,000 to offset capital projects, again in FY20 an additional \$400,000 of UFB was used because of a sizable amount that went into UFB. That is being proposed again for FY21. The total amount of UFB requested is \$1,550,000, which would leave an ending balance of \$7,518,820. That represents 7.89% of the budget.

The capital projects for FY21 were identified as sidewalks (\$200,000), tennis courts (\$37,000), Station 1 roof (\$48,000), lighting upgrade for Town Hall (\$50,000), CRF deposits (\$95,000); increase into road infrastructure CRF, paving (\$190,000), and old salt shed roof (\$30,000).

Total General Fund increase is \$1,794,671.

In addition to expenses, there are savings resulting from monies expended in the current FY that will not be expenses in the coming FY. In FY20, monies were expended for Naticook Lake dredging (\$95,000) and the MYA field maintenance (\$30,000).

The result is a total General Fund increase of \$1,669,671.

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Town Manager Cabanel provided information on the proposed budget for the General Fund specifically highlighting areas that are unusual from one year to another. The total of expense for the General Fund is \$31,671,451. Reducing from that CRF deposits (\$1,920,000) other capital (\$376,000), monies allocated to road infrastructure (\$1,390,000), and CRF expenditures (\$2,454,000) results in a total operating budget request of \$25,531,451.

Self-supporting funds total \$16,095,090. That cost is also reduced by CRF deposits, other capital, and CRF expenditures resulting in a total cost of \$15,483,170.

Comparing operating expenses of the various departments from FY20 to FY21; General Government increase of \$220,418 (primarily for compensated absences), Assessing increase of \$5,525, Fire increase of \$137,184, Police increase of \$160,459, Communications increase of \$40,269, Code Enforcement increase of \$58,278, PWD Admin. increase of \$104,988, Highway increase of \$100,697, Solid Waste Disposal increase of \$94,390, Parks & Recreation increase of \$8,464, Library decrease of \$884, Equipment Maintenance increase of \$9,876, Buildings & Grounds increase of \$8,411, Community Development decrease of \$793, Town Clerk/Tax Collector increase of \$6,971, Welfare Debt increase of \$2,148, and Debt Service decrease of \$1,230. Increase over FY20 is \$955,171 or 3.89%.

Capital Reserve Fund deposits have been increased by \$270,000; \$95,000 for roads/remaining dollars are inflationary increases. Other capital is an increase of \$54,500 and road infrastructure of \$390,000 resulting in a General Fund, before CRF expenditures, of \$1,669,671. Total of General Fund and CRF expenditures result in an increase to the General Fund total of \$2,771,671. The total proposed budget is \$31,671,451.

A chart was displayed outlining the total deposits and expenditures for each of the CRFs. Also displayed was detail around each of the expenditures from the various CRFs; computer equipment (\$50,000), revaluation (\$75,000), Communication (\$300,000), GIS (\$10,000), Fire (\$739,000), road infrastructure (\$800,000), Highway equipment (\$360,000), and Solid Waste equipment (\$120,000). Total General Fund CRF purchases are \$2,454,000.

Sewer Infrastructure CRF shows an expense of \$478,920. Total CRF purchases is \$2,932,920.

Looking at self-supporting funds, the amounts identified represent revenue that comes into the fund and the exact same amount being expended out (\$16,096,090).

The grand total for expenses for ALL funds is \$47,766,541, which represents an overall decrease of \$359,856 or 0.75%.

A summary sheet was displayed outlining the various increases/decreases to the appropriations; General Fund increase of \$955,171, CRF deposit increase of \$270,000, other capital increase of \$54,500, road resurfacing/sidewalks increase of \$390,000, CRF expenditure increase of \$1,102,000, Wastewater Treatment Facility Phase III Bond is a decrease of \$3,580,000 from the prior year, self-supporting funds increase of \$448,473 for a subtotal of a decrease of \$359,846.

In revenues, shown is a decrease in the general fund non-tax revenues of \$153,544, a decrease in the use of fund balance of \$483,412, a decrease in CRF withdrawals of \$1,102,000, an increase in the

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WWTF Phase III Bond of \$3,580,000, and a decrease in self-supporting funds revenue of \$448,473, for a subtotal of \$1,392,571.

Overlay for abatements is an increase of \$49,264 and the Veterans credit increase of \$98,000. The total increase in the amount to be raised by taxes is \$1,179,979 or 7.27% increase. When that is divided by the increase in Town value of \$11,691,000, the resulting tax rate increase is \$0.31. The proposed draft budget identifies a Town tax rate of \$5.02/\$1,000.

Budget items that remain pending are the State budget, State revenues; Rooms and Meals and Highway Block Grant, non-union wages, and two union contracts.

A breakout of the 2018 tax bill was displayed, which identified a typical bill for a home assessed at \$260,000 to be \$6,274. The breakout of that is \$312 (4.97%) for the County, \$1,225 (19.52%) for the municipality, and \$4,737 (75.51%) for the school.

Noted was that the municipal percentage of the overall tax rate continues to decrease.

Councilor Harrington commented for many years the Council has been very frugal. That is something that needs to continue; however there is the need to be realistic. The Town has grown and the supports for the Fire and Police Departments have to reflect that.

Councilor Rothhaus stated agreement commenting one of the benefits of this end of the budget is the Council pays attention to values in the community. Some of the growth that has happened, while it is causing an impact on the services, it is offset, to a certain degree, by increased values.

Councilor Woods stated appreciation for the fact there are forces for and against everything, and the observation about the higher percentage of the school tax rate as opposed to the Town. He commented one of the pains of being frugal is that it eventually comes time to pay the piper. The mission of the Town, in his opinion, should not take a back seat to the mission of others.

Councilor Healey commented on the importance of understanding, although the average home may have an assessment of \$260,000, there are those having a greater assessed value. When your tax bill begins to be in the area of \$8,500 before adding in the Wastewater Treatment Plant or what is occurring at the MVD, it begins to get a little concerning for people. People need to know one of the things that will be looked at is identifying what are the nice to haves versus the absolute necessities.

Councilor Harrington stated agreement emphasizing the Council needs to construct a budget based upon the needs of the Town, not in response to other costs from other entities. She is concerned the Town would be responding to and trying to make up for the other amounts that make up the tax rate.

Chairman Koenig stated agreement the Council has its responsibility to prepare a budget. The Council has been and will continue to be frugal, and to monitor things. He stated appreciation for the effort put into the draft budget that has been brought forward.

Approved: December 19, 2019

Posted: December 23, 2019

Town Manager Cabanel stated the budget that has been presented is not a wish list budget. That is something she has never presented. The proposed budget is millions of dollars less than the departmental requests.

Vice Chairman Boyd commented on costs associated with the MS-4, which are outside of the Council's control. Community members are aware of that. The other salient point is the Health Officer position being moved to full-time. He finds it unreasonable to ask a part-time person to inspect and ensure the health, welfare, and that sanitary conditions of the 130[±] establishments in Town are up to code.

He spoke of the growth in the community, and the need to address the impact of that. He commented when he started on the Council in 2011 the tax rate was at \$4.75. It has gotten as high as \$5.25. Over the last 9 years the Council has been able to hold the tax rate within that \$0.50 parameter, which is indicative of the frugality.

Chairman Koenig noted the schedule has the first budget hearing as January 8th. He will be out of Town. Councilor Healey spoke of difficulty with the January 15th and 16th dates. The suggestion was made to switch the dates of the regular Town Council meeting (January 9th) and the Public Hearing (January 8th). Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Micali suggested the department hearings scheduled for January 8th could be moved to the 22nd, and continue on the 15th and 16th.

Town Manager Cabanel stated a review would be done of the schedule, and an updated schedule provided to the Council.

Minutes - None

Comments from the Press - None

Comments from the Public

Ben Niles, 11 Fernwood Drive

Commented on the weather causing the Planning Board to cancel their recent meeting during which it was intended there would be a public hearing on the proposed transportation plan for sidewalks and bike path. He is in favor of sidewalks; however commented this is not Main Street in Nashua or Main Street in Keene where you have 5-10 blocks of continuous occupied storefronts. Merrimack is separated and broken apart, which makes it more challenging.

When putting in great lengths of sidewalks and considering the possibility of sidewalks from Nashua to Bedford, you must consider the cost of maintenance or injuries caused if maintenance is not conducted.

He believes the proposal the Planning Board will consider is fraught with a lot of danger to the Town. There is not enough room for a bike lane, etc. They want to shrink the vehicle travel lanes to 10'. A bike path would be constructed on the outside of bridges to accommodate a few bicyclists.

Approved: December 19, 2019

Posted: December 23, 2019

The proposal that was put forth by the NRPC recommends following best practices. That is not a 10' travel lane. He believes it would be a liability for the Town to approve and implement a less than ideal plan.

The proposal has a bike lane on one side (bidirectional). The recommendation is not to build a bidirectional bike lane as it complicates the crisscrossing and turning, and the cars that want to execute right and left hand turns. He suggested, if there are bicycle paths, there is the need for lighting. With additional sidewalks there is greater demand for crosswalks. Consideration has to be given to how that impacts traffic flow. He believes the public hearing is now scheduled for the 17th, and urged Councilors to attend.

Town Manager Cabanel questioned if the proposal for the bike paths and sidewalks encompasses D.W. Highway or is Town-wide. Mr. Niles responded it is along D.W. Highway, but he believes the intent is to extend to all the schools and major arteries.

Town Manager Cabanel stated the Town Council would have to approve sidewalks going from Bedford to Nashua, which it has not. What it is proposing is small sections of sidewalks in the general vicinity of the center. The idea of a sidewalk from the Bedford town line to Nashua is not on anyone's radar.

Comments from the Council

Councilor Rothhaus spoke of the recent passing of Dick Tinglof, a gentleman he has known since he moved to Town. He was what he considered one of the early pillars of the community when he moved here. He extended his condolences to his family.

Councilors expressed gratitude to the PWD for the wonderful job they did during the recent storm.

Adjourn

MOTION made by Vice Chairman Boyd and seconded by Councilor Woods to adjourn the meeting. MOTION CARRIED 6-0-0

The December 5, 2019 meeting of the Town Council was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Submitted by Dawn MacMillan