



Town Council Meeting Minutes



Thursday, April 25, 2024, at 7:00 PM, in the Matthew Thornton Room

Call to Order

Chairman Rothhaus called the meeting to order at 7:03pm. Present at the meeting were Chairman Rothhaus, Vice Chair Harrington, Councilor Healey, Councilor Hunter, Councilor Koenig, and Town Manager Paul Micali. Councilor M. Murphy arrived at 8:18pm. Councilor N. Murphy was excused.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Boy Scouts from Troop 424 led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements

Upcoming Town Council Meetings:

- Thursday, May 9, 2024, 7:00 PM Regular meeting
- Thursday, May 23, 2024, 7:00 PM Regular meeting
- Thursday, June 13, 2024, 7:00 PM Regular meeting

Beginning today, April 25th, the Transfer Station will be open on Thursday nights until 7:00 PM during the summer months.

A reminder that all dogs must be licensed by April 30th. The Town Clerk's office does need proof of rabies updates and spay/neuter procedures in order to update records and process dog renewals.

The Street Sweeping has begun. You can check out where they are working on the Town website. Please make sure that any vehicles or basketball hoops are not on the street so that they don't have to sweep around them. Thank you.

The next Household Hazardous Waste Collection will be on Saturday, May 4th from 8 am until 12 pm in Milford at the Public Works garage located at 289 South Street in Milford.

Comments from the Press and Public

None.

Recognitions, Resignations and Retirements

None.

Reorganization of the Town Council

- **Pursuant to Charter Article IV, 4-2, Organizational Meeting**

Councilor Koenig nominated Finlay Rothhaus as Chair for the Council. The Council voted 4-0-1 (with Chairman Rothhaus abstaining) to reelect Chairman Rothhaus as Chair of the Council.

Chairman Rothhaus nominated Nancy Harrington as Vice Chair for the Council. The Council voted 4-0-1 (with Vice Chair Harrington abstaining) to reelect Vice Chair Harrington as Vice Chair of the Council.

Appointments

1. Annual Review with the Parks and Recreation Committee

Submitted by Parks and Recreation Committee Chair Tracy McGraw

Per Town of Merrimack Charter Section 6-6, at least annually, there should be an annual review with the Parks and Recreation Committee. This agenda item is to highlight the committee's significant actions, current projects, anticipated actions, and to raise any concerns the Council should know or could act on.

The Parks and Recreation Annual Review was postponed to the May 9th Town Council meeting.

Public Hearing

1. Public Hearing - Chapter 180, Temporary Sales Locations and Vendors, of the Merrimack Town Code

Submitted by Town Council Chair Finlay Rothhaus and Vice Chair Nancy Harrington

The Town Council will hold a public hearing to consider the recommended changes to Chapter 180, Temporary Sales Locations and Vendors, of the Town Code, pursuant to Charter Article V.

The public hearing was opened at 7:08pm.

Town Manager Paul Micali shared that he has asked to move this to the May 9th Town Council meeting as there has been discussion regarding craft fairs and what is not-for-profit vs profit/profitable craft fairs. He would like to have more time to get answers for the outstanding questions regarding this issue.

MOTION made by Councilor Koenig and seconded by Councilor Healey to table this agenda item to the May 9th Town Council meeting.

MOTION CARRIES 5-0-0

The public hearing was closed at 7:12pm.

2. Public Hearing - Chapter 136, Food Service Establishments, of the Merrimack Town Code

Submitted by Town Council Chair Finlay Rothhaus and Vice Chair Nancy Harrington

The Town Council will hold a public hearing to consider the recommended changes to Chapter 136, Food Service Establishments, of the Town Code, pursuant to Charter Article V.

Mr. Micali briefly reviewed with the Council the changes that were made to Chapter 136.

The public hearing was opened at 7:19pm and closed at 7:20pm.

MOTION made by Councilor Koenig and seconded by Vice Chair Harrington to move the recommended changes to Chapter 136, Food Service Establishments, of the Town Code, pursuant to Charter Article V to the Consent Agenda.

MOTION CARRIES 5-0-0

Legislative Updates from State Representatives

None.

Town Manager's Report

If anyone is interested in working for the Town of Merrimack, there are several job openings here in the Town. There are currently two Foreman positions at the Highway Garage, a Mechanic position in both Highway Equipment Maintenance and Wastewater, 5 Police Officer positions, Custodial staff openings, and a Chief Operator position at Wastewater. If you are interested, please visit the Town website and submit an application.

On May 7th, I will be meeting with Bart Fromuth and Stuart Ormsby to discuss the CCAC Warrant Article that passed, specifically timelines and next steps.

Recap of House Bill 2024: Mr. Micali shared that on Vice Chair Harrington, Councilor N. Murphy, Rep. Boyd, Rep. Notter, Rep. McGough, Rep. Mooney and Rep. Rung all went on April 16th to testify in front of the Senate Transportation Committee regarding Continental Boulevard. He summarized that right now, things are about 50/50, and they are working on getting an amendment in to get Continental Blvd. out of the 10-year plan.

Consent Agenda

None.

Old Business

None.

New Business

1. Proposal for New Storage Shed / Concession Stand at Gibson Field

Submitted by

The Town Council to consider the proposal of a new storage shed/concession stand built by MYA volunteers to be placed at Gibson Field.

MYA President John Calabro was present to discuss with the Council the MYA's idea to build a storage shed/concession stand, sharing that the football program would use this shed to store their equipment there. This would be built between the existing baseball shed and the bleachers, by moving the bleachers about 5ft to the left, and funded by the Cardinals Football and built by MYA volunteers with building experience. It would be 12x24, compared to the existing shed that is 8x12. They would request that the DPW supply electric located just behind the baseball shed, and also supply water and drywall, similar to what is at Vets Field. There was some discussion amongst the Council and Mr. Micali about the water supply and also food being made or sold in the concession stand; specifically how the water supply not being built right away would impact the food being sold there (i.e., hot dogs or cooked/prepared food vs packaged food such as chips or candy bars). For now, the Council agreed to have the fundamental shed built with electricity supplied to it while they figure out the water supply portion.

MOTION made by Vice Chair Harrington and seconded by Councilor Healey to approve the proposal of a new storage shed/concession stand built by MYA volunteers to be placed at Gibson Field with electricity only- not to exceed \$5,000, with more determination to be done before water can be brought to the shed.

MOTION CARRIES 6-0-0

2. Nashua Transit System (NTS) and Town of Merrimack Agreement Discussion

Submitted by NTS Transit Administrator Camille Correa

The Town Council to review and discuss the proposed agreement for transportation services between the Nashua Transit System and the Town of Merrimack.

Welfare Director Patricia Murphy introduced the Nashua Transit System group before they began their presentation. Matt Sullivan, Community Development Division Director for the City of Nashua, then spoke to the Council, stating that he was appreciative for the Council giving them the opportunity to speak to them tonight. He shared that they have had a partnership with Merrimack for over 40 years, providing transportation to some of Merrimack's most vulnerable residents. NTS Transit Administrator Camille Correa then spoke, sharing some background on the services provided. She stated that NTS provides both fixed service as well as van service, which is a compliment to the fixed service for people who are unable to access the bus due to a physical or mental impairment. Additionally, there is van service for those who are 65 or older.

They have also contracted services with Hudson and SVTC to provide van service in the greater Nashua area. For the town of Merrimack, they provide only van service and no fixed route service. They offer a call ahead route system, where the person interested in using the van service has to call two business days in advance. Ms. Correa shared that they will get calls for transport to Manchester or Boston, in which they will provide the van service to a drop off location, like an interconnectivity service, to the Manchester bus station or Boston shuttle service. Currently, the transportation is about 70% workforce, 20% medical appointments, and 10% other transportation needs. Ms. Correa also talked about language in the contract regarding prioritization and ride sharing to maximize funding. Councilor Healey asked what the qualifications were for the NTS services, in which Ms. Correa stated that they have to have a Merrimack address, and the trip request needs to be prioritized (disabled, elderly, etc.). They also fill out an application either online or are given the application.

3. Default Budget Discussion

Submitted by Paul T. Micali

The Town Council to provide the Town Manager with direction on the Default Budget.

Mr. Micali shared that he is about \$25,000 off from where he needs to be right now for the Default budget. He shared that they need to come up with \$1,294,000 and change, and they are trying to come up with a budget that both departments and the town can live with without cutting into services such as paving or maintenance. He asked the Council if they would like a new budget book printed to show what was approved and what the budget looked like, or if they would like a summary of line items or detailed line items of each department to help visualize the cuts that he has been working on with the departments. He shared that some anticipated discussions he will have with the Council will be Fire overtime, NTS, and the raise for non-union employees. Mr. Micali also discussed the vacant positions in some of the departments, such as the Police department, and how it takes about 6 weeks to fill an open position and the likelihood of a position being filled by July 1st. The Council decided on a department-by-department breakdown along with Mr. Micali's recommendation on the savings. Regarding the section on vehicles for departments other than Police, Councilor Healey asked for justification for cost benefit to keeping the cars vs paying mileage and using private cars, unless there is a liability issue with Primex for using private vehicles. She would also like to see justification regarding open positions to see that they are truly needed and that the staffing levels are right sized. Mr. Micali shared that he is actually eliminating some positions in his recommendations.

4. Town Council Retreat / Goal Session Discussion

Submitted by Town Council Chair Finlay Rothhaus and Vice Chair Nancy Harrington

Town Council to discuss when and where their Retreat / Goal Session will be held.

Mr. Micali shared that they can continue to use Buckley's Great Steaks carriage house, but they can't hold it on a Monday unless they want to be charged an extra fee. The Council decided on either June 5th or June 19th, or June 4th or June 18th, depending on the availability of Primex.

5. Town Council Committee Assignments

Submitted by Town Council Chair Finlay Rothhaus and Vice Chair Nancy Harrington

The Town Council will determine committee assignments for the current year.

The Council decided on the following Committee assignments:

- Adult Community Center: Councilor M. Murphy
- Cemetery Trustee: Town Manager Paul Micali
- Chamber of Commerce: Town Manager Paul Micali
- Commission on Environmental and Public Health Impacts on Perfluorinated Chemicals (737 Commission): Councilor N. Murphy
- Conservation Commission: Councilor Hunter
- Heritage Commission: Chairman Rothhaus
- Highway Safety: Chairman Rothhaus
- MYA: Vice Chair Harrington
- Nashua Regional Planning Commission: Councilor Koenig
- Rail Transit: Councilor Hunter
- Parks and Recreation: Councilor M. Murphy
- Planning Board Voting Member & Alternate: Councilor Healey
- Town Center Committee: Chairman Rothhaus

Minutes

Approve the minutes from the following Town Council meeting:

♦ April 11, 2024

MOTION made by Vice Chair Harrington and seconded by Councilor Healey to approve the minutes from April 11, 2024 as presented.

MOTION CARRIES 6-0-0

Comments from the Press

None.

Comments from the Public

None.

Comments from the Council

Chairman Rothhaus shared that Councilor Lon Woods passed away last Tuesday. He shared that he was a wonderful guy who contributed to the Town for many decades, having worked in education, MVD, as a Town Councilor, on the Adult Community Center Board, Parks and Rec, the Heritage Commission, and the Budget Committee for the Town. His wake will be on the 29th with his funeral on the 30th at Rivet Funeral Home. The Council extended their condolences to his family.

Approved: May 9, 2024

Posted: May 14, 2024

Councilor Healey shared that the Rotary is having their electronics recycle day on June 1st from 8am-12pm out in the Town Hall parking lot to dispose of any old cellphones, laptops, TVs, etc. and they will have a system set up to wipe hard drives for you. The flyer, including the cost, is posted on the Rotary's Facebook page.

Councilor M. Murphy shared that she attended the Rotary's Excellence in the Workplace Awards event this evening and wanted to congratulate the nominees as well as recognize those that go above and beyond in the community to serve others.

Councilor Koenig shared that he went to the NRPC meeting last week that discussed the 10-year Plan and talked about the support he received from the surrounding communities.

Adjourn

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

MOTION CARRIES 6-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 9:24pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Steagald