

TOWN OF DERRY

Town Council
Derry Municipal Center

May 5, 2015
Tuesday - 7:30 PM

6:30 PM Non-Public RSA 91A:3 I (a) & Non-Public RSA 91A:3 I (d)

7:30 PM Call to order

Pledge of Allegiance, warning of fire exits, handicap access, & turn off all cell phones

Roll Call: Councilors Tripp, Fischer, Osborne, Bourdon, Dimmock, Katsakiores and Chairman Cardon

Consent Agenda -

15-48 Approve Non-Public Minutes – April 21, 2015

15-49 Approve Minutes – April 21, 2015

15-50 Schedule Public Hearing – June 2, 2015 – Apply for New Hampshire Highway Safety Agency Grants for DWI Patrols, Pedestrian Enforcement Patrols, Red Light Enforcement Patrols & Speed Enforcement Patrols

15-48 & 15-49 Accepted as written

15-50 Schedule Public Hearing - June 2, 2015 - all agreed

Chairman's Report – Tom Cardon

None

Town Administrator's Report – Galen Stearns

The Miss New Hampshire Pageant was held last Saturday evening and congratulations to Ms. Holly Blanchard of Derry.

Gas prices are rising. The State bid is locked in with a high rate of \$2.52. The police department has locked in a rate with a local gas station that will not charge the state tax. This could save the Town \$30,000 over the year.

***** TA representative to the Planning Board appointment

Mr. Stearns recommends Randall Chase as his Planning Board designee.

Move to appoint Randall Chase as Planning Board designee.

Motion by Councilor Katsakiores, seconded by Councilor Tripp

Vote: 5-2-0 (Councilors Fischer & Dimmock)

Old Business –

15-36 FY2016 Budget

** Questions by Town Council for Public Works, Human Services and Planning

Public Works: Director Mike Fowler

Councilor Katsakiores – Is the proposed budget that the Town Administrator has in place workable for your department. The Transfer Station is down four people. Will they be replaced? Councilor Katsakiores further asked about the new transfer station and questioned the income projected.

Mike Fowler – Believes this is a responsible budget and he is satisfied with it. He further explained the present situation of personnel at the Transfer Station and the projected revenue and how it will be obtained. The positions will be filled in this budget.

Councilor Dimmock – Asked if there will be a need for more positions when the new Transfer Station is opened.

Mike Fowler – indicated no that it would be the same amount of employees.

Councilor Bourdon - asked how long Mr. Fowler had been the Director of Public Works.

He also asked about LED lighting and if the Town was to fast track all lighting to LED in Town how it would affect the taxpayers? Also if he had reached out to the school department to become more efficient in a combined effort to save costs. Mr. Bourdon then asked Mike to compare us to neighboring towns in regards to the road conditions.

Mike Fowler – has been Director for 11 years. He has found efficiency's and gave a list of changes made and savings incurred during his tenure. He explained the present changes in LED lighting they have made so far and estimated the cost of changing of the entire Town would be \$220,000. The savings going forward he estimates would be \$65,000 per year. Mr. Fowler doesn't feel there would be a major effect to the taxpayers as it could be funded from capital reserves.

He has worked collectively with the school department for cost savings in a joint effort.

Mr. Fowler explained Derry's road management plan and how it has worked over the years. Derry has fewer potholes than other towns due to this management plan. You don't want the roads to degrade to an unfair position. If funding were to be jeopardized for this management plan, it could cause a catchup and bonding issue and would have a dramatic impact further down the line

Councilor Cardon – Asked Mike to speak about the Transfer Station and how it would pay for itself with additional recycling in 3-5yrs.

Mike Fowler - In 2012 he brought to Council a way to receive additional income by looking at how more commodities such as aluminum, plastics, and tins being separated could increase revenues. The bond for the new stations is \$3M and the interest payment is \$200,000 - \$210,000 per year. The minimum he believes in revenue is approx. \$150,000 per year. The FY2016 budget only represents half year of revenue.

Councilor Katsakiores – Questioned road maintenance on Hilda Avenue.

Mike Fowler – responded by stating this has been brought forward on an intermittent basis. The road is maintained as needed after winter storms. There is a 4 year plan to pave this subdivision. This is in the Rainbow Lake area. In Fy2016 there are a number of roads already slated for upkeep and Hilda Ave is slated for FY2017 or FY2018 to be paved depending on funding. We look at traffic volume for the road management plan. However it is at the Councils purview to pave earlier.

Councilor Dimmock – wanted the public to know there was a dangerous situation coming onto main road from Hilda Ave. He informed Mike and it was taken care of. Plans can change according to funding.

Councilor Tripp – what is the best way for citizens to contact your department regarding pot holes?

Mike Fowler – there are links in emailing us on the website or call the department regarding pot holes.

Human Services: Jill Jamro

Councilor Katsakiores - stated under the Town Administrator's budget these funds have been protected and taken care. Councilor Katsakiores asked roughly what is the number of how many Derry residents are served by these organizations?

Jill Jamro – gave a detailed listing by organization of residents served and what they provide to the residents.

Councilor Bourdon- asked how long Ms. Jamro had been in Human Services and what were we spending on Human Services prior to your arrival. And how much are we spending now? There seems to be an opportunity for savings. How is this possible?

Jill Jamro – She has been the Human Service Administrator for 8½ yrs. We were spending \$500,000, which was our total budget, and she was not sure how much was given to other organizations. The Town is spending \$90,000 now. She explained the process in place and how it works now. The office now receives reimbursements from people they assist. Also CHS has withdrawn their request for \$50,000 down to \$35,000 so this could be removed from the budget. Medicare has been paying for medications. Down time is spent doing collections for ambulance services.

Councilor Tripp – It is apparent that funding these organizations is actually saving money and they are better providing the services. It's a great payback

Councilor Fischer thanked Jill for being informative.

Councilor Dimmock thanked Jill for her work.

Planning: George Sioras

Councilor Tripp – Asked Mr. Sioras if he thought whether an Economic Development person was a good idea and what the payback for that would be.

George Sioras – economic development takes years you don't see immediate payback. He has mixed feelings about it. He has seen pros & cons. His department helps new businesses and gives them information and work through the process. Mr. Sioras stated that he has been reappointed to the Rockingham Economic Redevelopment Corporation. The Town needs someone who can market the Town or a sales firm.

Councilor Tripp would like to see a plan for Economic Development.

Councilor Fischer asked in developing your FY16 budget is there any cost effective ideas?

Mr. Sioras stated No, he had no discussion on his budget with anyone; however, it is a level funded budget.

Councilor Katsakiores thanked Mr. Sioras for his years of service.

Councilor Dimmock – It was mention to hire a person for the job. He always had the idea that this was Mr. Sioras' position and it was up to Mr. Sioras to bring these people to Town. Mr. Dimmock referenced a business that wanted to start up in Londonderry but was denied by Londonderry as it was too large. Mr. Dimmock informed Mr. Sioras about it and asked what happened.

George Sioras – he did contact the company and this company was not interested in Derry they wanted Londonderry. He is not a marketer or cheerleader.

Council Bourdon – Asked Mr. Sioras how long he'd been in his position. Where can you improve in your department? How many new businesses are in Town? How much land is left for business in Derry? What mechanism is in place to prevent multi-family in these areas?

Mr. Sioras replied he has been working for the Town for 31 years. He listed how many businesses had obtained loans through Rockingham Economic Development. He feels they could improve by working more to make a coordinated effort to contact businesses. Mr. Sioras listed a number of new businesses coming into Town and stated that his office is the busiest now since 2008. There is approximately 200 – 300 acres left for business. There's Webster's Corner and Ashleigh Drive. The mechanism is in place to prevent multi-families in these areas. Council has recently been passed an ordinance for rezoning these areas.

Councilor Cardon – asked Mr. Sioras what his real title is.

George Sioras replied there have been many over the years but he was never given a specific description for his position.

Public Hearing –

15-36 FY2016 Budget

Mr. Stearns gave the highlights of the proposed FY2016 Budget and read each proposed departments total budget. He then read the major changes for this budget. In Assessing they are looking at efficiency before hiring a new assessor. This budget equates to a \$.84 reduction in the tax rate.

Open Public Hearing Councilors Cardon and Bourdon 7-0-0

Michael Gill, Gill Rd – read reports he obtained on statics of the Police Department calls and from the Boston Police Department (see attachments). Boston claims crime is going down. In regards to the heroin epidemic, Mr. Gill stated that it's just the same as pot was in its time. Business taxes in NH are the same as they are for resident. He listed departments in Town that should not be cut. He stated the Council was elected to reduce taxes. He questioned if there can there be cuts, he doesn't know, but it is the Councils job to find out and he hopes they can make the right choices.

Mike Fairbanks, Rose Ave – endorses a tax cut. He has concerns about using unassigned fund balance and the Council should consider the ramification. Mr. Fairbanks said that pulling hydrant fees and

reassigning the costs plays a shell game. An area that could be used by fund balance is lighting as there is a payback.

Steve Trefethen, North Shore Rd – Council has decreased taxes in the past and must continue to do so. He listed some reasons people and businesses can't stay in Derry and that is due the tax rate. His suggestions to increase revenues is to increase permit fees and instead of the EMT service collecting revenue on the cost of doing business, it should be charged by the amount of people served. He is also in favor of closing a fire station.

Donald Burgess – He is against hiring an Economic Development Director and using unassigned fund balance. The Town Administrator should not get a raise until union contracts are settled with Town. He stated no one has said they want these cuts. He feels the Council may not be listening to the people of Derry. Since he is member of the Zoning Board and Highway Safety Committee he feels he can no longer hold these positions and will be resigning.

Chairman Cardon stated he really doesn't need to resign.

Claudette Macom, Shurman Dr – Thanked the Council for allowing department heads to speak; it was informative. Not sure if people know why East Derry Fire station was built. It was because the fire truck couldn't make it up East Derry Hill in the winter. To her, the \$250 savings is not worth not having the Hampstead Road Fire Station taken away or a loss of life or the Soup Kitchen. Do the right thing. Don't destroy this wonderful community we have now.

Chairman Cardon wanted the public to know that the funds for Human Services and the fire hydrants have been put back into the budget. However the Council still has to vote on it.

Marc Flattes, Linlew Dr – urges the Council to send a stern message that the budget needs to be cut by \$1M. He is against hiring an Economic Development Director. A sub-committee should be created through the Planning Department. We can hire a salesman next year.

Keith Bates, Community Service Director Rockingham Community Action - they serve all agencies. He understands the budget challenges. There were 3,700 transactions with Derry residents with fuel and electric assistance; the range of services which were supplied by Jill. He complimented Jill Jamro for the job she provides and is known throughout the State.

Helen Evans, Edgewood St – Attended the Derry Library Authorfest. The library has created a foundation for authors. The department heads have shown professionalism and dedication to the health of Derry and its citizens. She urged the Council to support the needs voiced by the department leaders.

Michael Hughes, Gervaise Dr – Wanted to provide some numbers relative to the calls the police respond to. From April 1-25 there were 1,577, calls 67% of time there were two or more simultaneous calls. He's asked for a level funded budget and suggested there be collaboration with department heads to come up with more savings for the FY2017 budget.

Karen Blandford-Anderson, Village Brook Lane – spoke in favor for a level funded budget. She is for an Economic Development Director. She found her tax bill from 2002 for \$28.88; it is now \$29. There's no doubling of the taxes rate, however the value of her home has increased. The Town should actively pursue opportunities out there for Derry to expand.

Mark Connors, Cabot Dr – He applauds the Council for looking at a \$2.50 tax cut and wanting to run the Town more like a business. He believes it is the process that is in question. He would have liked to see Mr. Stearns present a \$2.50, \$2.00, \$1.50, \$1.00 and a \$.50 cut with options. No one wants these cuts at the expense of giving up what they are getting. He questioned if the Council was hearing from as many residents who want the tax cut as are here against it. He gave kudos to the IT, Planning, Public Works and Fire for their resourcefulness and the services they provide. He suggested giving Planning an intern to work with them on marketing but suggested a long term plan for Economic Development in the future. Please level fund at a minimum.

Neil Wetherbee, Worthley Rd – is disappointed that he could not comment on changes to the proposed budget as there haven't been any. He commended Mr. Stearns for trying to reach a compromise with the proposed budget that would make things a little better. He is dismayed the money for the hydrants hasn't been removed by the Council from the proposed budget and is concerned with the \$1.7M use of fund balance. He feels the Town needs to establish revenue sources first. Don't fund the Economic Development position without extra funds to go with it.

Gordon Graham, Drake Lane – is concerned with the process. It is May 5th and the Council has not taken a vote and is not commenting on the Town Administrator's budget. He would have liked an opportunity to comment on what the Council is going to do but the public hearing is taking place before the Council has taken any action. What actual actions are there going to be? Regarding the economic development process there is questions and it needs to be looked at carefully. An Economic Developer is a marketer and it doesn't mix with a Planner. There are two sides to the municipal budget revenues and fund balance. You should never use fund balance to pay for the Town's expenses. 11% of the budget comes from savings account.

Jack Webb, Drew Wood Dr – His taxes have gone up \$102 in the last 10 years. He asks the people who say they can no longer live in this community, where will they move to. Home values and property taxes are higher elsewhere. You know what you are getting when you come to this Town in taxes. Maybe we need to cheer this Town a little bit more.

Theodore Dizon III, Lee Circle – He knew full well what taxes were in Derry when he bought his home here as a new resident. There was going to be services and education. He's against closing the Hampstead Fire Station. When he hears services are going to be taken away with the amount of taxes that he pays he feels this is unacceptable.

Janet Fairbanks, Rose Ave – asked how the services are being affected now without these positions in the Fire Department not filled. No one has complained about the current services. To answer the question as to where you could move to that is less expensive than Derry, all of our surrounding towns have a lower tax rate. We would spend more than \$115,000 on Economic Development. We have spent millions on infrastructure. Public input to budgets normally comes after the budget hearings. There will be hearings after the budget discussions. It will come. She was shocked to hear businesses being named for loan funds, thought that information was confidential. How has this paid out for us? She would like to know if any Councilors have been contacted by department heads or unions to speak to them.

Jay Madnick, Windham Depot Rd – asked if the Fire Department loses the four empty positions who will drive the tanker?

Brian Chirichiello, Rollins St – questioned the increases in revenue lines. He asked what the Code Enforcement reduction of \$42,327 was for. *Mr. Stearns did not have that information readily available and Chairman Cardon stated this was not a Q&A session.*

Chris Howe, Rockingham Rd. - has asked what's so special about Derry; then answered himself as Special is people will come out in droves that want to pay their taxes. He asked that Council level fund the budget.

Brenda Willis, Maxwell Dr – questioned the procedure the Council was planning to use before the final vote on the budget May 19th. It is unfair to ask us to comment on something before you know what is going to happen. She gave scenarios regarding distressed residents who lose a loved one or are in need of safety due to cuts in Fire & Police. She asked if the Council wanted to be the one to have to call that relative and state 'we couldn't get there in time'.

Jenna Paradise, Hubbard Hill Rd – There has been no feedback and we do not know where Council stands. We don't know if you are hearing what the people are saying. She would like to see a roundtable discussion. Council is about to make a lot of big decisions with our money and we have no idea what will happen. She asked what budget would be used in two weeks - the Town Administrator's or something else.

Chairman Cardon replied we will be using the proposed budget and cutting it up or down that night before the vote on May 19th.

Motion to extend for 10 minutes was made by Councilor Dimmock, seconded by Councilor Bourdon

VOTE 7-0-0

Close Public Hearing Councilors Katsakiores & Dimmock 7-0-0

Public Forum –

Open Public Forum 6-0-1 (Councilor Dimmock)

Brian Chirichiello, Rollins St – Questioned a rumor that Councilor Dimmock was soliciting private ambulance services.

Councilor Dimmock replied he is not trying to solicit an ambulance service. He made comment about subbing out our ambulance services and asked how it could be done, that's all. He was not acting on his own without Council.

Councilor Osborne – stated he heard the same rumor but he heard that he (Mr. Osborne) had ordered Mr. Dimmock to go about doing this thing. He appreciated Mr. Chirichiello giving him time to address it. Mr. Chirichiello stated he had not heard that fact.

Mark Flattes, Linlew Dr. – Thanked Mr. Dimmock for trying to educate himself to get some ideas and feedback.

Mark Connors, Cabot Dr. – Asked if the Town Administrators Budget was the budget to be acted upon in two weeks and then Council would take a vote.

Chairman Cardon replied they may make changes to this proposed budget.

Mark Connors asked will there be any feedback from the public after Council's discussion.

Chairman Cardon responded that there will be a public forum before the budget discussion.

Steve Trefethan – In regards to the LED lighting he is recommending it be put in the budget.

Gordon Graham, Drake Lane – There is nothing in the Charter that prohibits the Council from having a public hearing on your budget. He encourages the Council to listen to the voters.

Brian Chirichiello, Rollins St. – 2004 the tax rate Mr. Trefethan keeps mentioning was when we had two fire departments and two tax rates.

Close Public Forum 7-0-0

Council Requests / Open Discussion

Motion to Extend 10 minutes was made by Councilor Dimmock, seconded by Councilor Bourdon

VOTE 7-0-0

Councilor Katsakiores – has listened to the citizens for past three weeks and will take the public comments under considerations.

Councilor Dimmock – understand he does not have power to change rules and regulations all by himself. Never at any time I've said had I wanted this. He had a constituent asked about this and just wanted to know what was involved.

Councilor Bourdon made a motion to have a special meeting open to the public next Tuesday, May 12th, to hold a non-binding preliminary vote on the proposed budget and a public forum to follow, seconded by Councilor Katsakiores.

Chairman Cardon intervened and denied this motion stating it could not be done as it was not agendized for public notice.

Councilor Bourdon asked if he were to rephrase the date.

Chairman Cardon replied they cannot hold anything because it is not on the agenda.

Councilor Tripp thanked people for coming out.

Councilor Fischer thanked everyone for their input and feedback he knows the Council has listened.

Councilor Osborne had no comment.

Councilor Cardon thanked everyone who has come out. We appreciate it.

Councilor Katsakiores asked if there was something in the Charter that says we can call a meeting as long as it has 48hrs notice so we are giving the notice. Why are you saying we can't have a meeting? Chairman Cardon stated he's making a motion here and it is not on the agenda.

Motion to Adjourn: 10:20 p.m.

Denise E Neale
Town Clerk

5/20/15
Date

Recorded and Transcribed by: Denise E Neale, Town Clerk

