

**CITY COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP
JUNE 21, 2011**

Call to Order

Mayor Merrifield called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Franklin City Hall. Councilor Bowers led in the Salute to the Flag

In Attendance

Councilor Andreozzi, Councilor Sharon, Councilor Bowers, Councilor Audet, Councilor Feener, Councilor Trudel, Councilor Starkweather, Councilor Clarenbach, Manager Dragon, and Mayor Merrifield.

Absent

Councilor Boyd

Public Hearing

Cable Franchise Renewal between the City of Franklin and Metrocast

Motion made by Councilor Feener that the Franklin City Council begins the public ascertainment process for the renewal of the Cable Television Franchise with Metrocast. Motion seconded by Councilor Bowers. All in favor, motion passes.

Mayor Merrifield stated the following: This opens the first hearing to ascertain the future cable related needs and interests of the community, as we begin the process of renewing the cable television franchise with Metrocast. This begins the public ascertainment process to gather information for the negotiations that we will soon engage in with Metrocast for a renewal of the cable franchise in our community. At this time, I would like to open the floor for initial comments from the Council, our City Manager or members of the public.

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Manager Dragon stated as the Council knows the City has joined with the Lake Region Cable Television Consortium to seek the services of an Attorney to assist with the process. We have joined with the City of Laconia, Towns of Alton, Belmont, Gilford, Gilmanton, Meredith and Northfield. As part of the process, we comments will be taken from the public and evaluate how the cable franchise agreement has been over the last 9+ years and look at identifying technological issues to be considered during the renewal proceedings. The current agreement will appear on the City's website. She stated this is just the beginning of the process and comments and suggestions will be taken from the public, the businesses and the school and there will be one more public hearing held prior to the end of the process.

Councilor Andreozzi asked if Metrocast covers the entire City of Franklin. Manager Dragon stated that is correct. Councilor Andreozzi asked can anyone that wants the cable, can they get it, has Metrocast made it available to everyone. Mayor Merrifield advised that he was the Chair of the Cable Committee and insisted that cable be made available to every roadway in Franklin.

Ms. Campbell with Metrocast advised there is 83 miles of cable serving 4,500 homes and there are 2,600 to 2,700 customers. Councilor Bowers asked if there are any other cable companies interested in Franklin. Manager Dragon advised that is something they will look into. Mayor Merrifield commented that he believes the agreement is non-exclusive; however, another company would have to build their own lines. It was also stated that rates are not part of the franchise negotiations.

Mayor Merrifield stated: We will be conducting at least one more hearing on the future cable-related needs and interests of the community, its administration, public libraries, public schools, PEG access needs, and the Police and Fire Departments as well as the future cable-related needs and interests of the business community, other elements of the community and residents. We expect to hold this second public ascertainment hearing later this year or early next year.

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In the meantime, we will be reviewing our records on the performance of Metrocast under the existing franchise agreement, and asking Metrocast to do the same by responding to a series of audit questions which we will send the company. We will hold the record for this hearing open until the next hearing, and welcome any written comments or input from the public on this topic. Thank you. This concludes the public hearing.

Public Safety-Fire Department, Section 5, Page 16

Chief Smith advised there is a slight increase in the telephone fees as two laptops were added. Councilor Andreozzi questioned the increase in wages. Chief Smith stated one employee has been moved up on the longevity scale. He will check further as no increases are expected so it could be that a number has not been adjusted back. Everything else on Page 16 is level funded.

Fire Station – Page 17

Heating and Gas for the building have been reduced 20% attributed to the installation of the new boiler last year. Other contracted services some security work is still being looked, having the building modified so security needs can be addressed, therefore; some extra funds are in that line for that purpose. Supplies show a slight increase due to increase in cleaning supplies.

Fire Suppression, Page 18 & Page 19

There is a slight increase for the Call Fire Fighter wages. There is also an increase on the Staff Development line, the \$6,000 that was in that line represented \$500 per full-time employee. Chief Smith advised they are attempting to keep the \$500 in there for the full-time employees and the additional \$2,000 would be divided between the Call Fire Fighters. Councilor Clarenbach inquired if the 9% is the increase for a new position. Chief Smith stated that does include the new position. That position would be reimbursed by the hospital should they agree to the conditions of the contract. That one position as proposed is a 4-day a week

daytime position which would be a paramedic position to help staff during peak periods. Councilor Clarenbach inquired what will happen if the agreement with the hospital does not materialize. Chief Smith stated the hospital has given him every indication to believe they want to make this happen, however; he stated he has no control on the time frame. Chief Smith stated he does not see this agreement happening by July 1st. Councilor Trudel inquired if this agreement comes about, does it increase the budget. Chief Smith advised the City would recognize a decrease in what the cost to the City is to administer EMS which would approximately \$135,000 savings to the General Fund, the additional position is billed directly back to the hospital. Councilor Andreozzi inquired if this agreement with the hospital does not go through by the time approval of the budget has arrived, what happens. Manager Dragon explained it is \$135,000 that would have to be found elsewhere in the budget. She did advise that if the retirement piece goes through as it is currently stipulated that would be \$126,000 savings from the bottom line so it would give the City the ability to move those lines out of the budget and hold off concerning the agreement. And, once the agreement was approved, a public hearing could be scheduled to add additional appropriations to bring those lines back into the budget.

Chief Smith advised the increase in operating supplies this time has a lot to do with the type of fires they are faced with and having to use a great deal of Class A and AFFF Foam and have depleted other supplies more often. The line for Radios has also increased due to the fact the warranty on the radios has expired. Fuel has increased to the continued rise in cost. Protecting clothing has increased. The department attempts to replace 4 sets of protective clothing each year at a cost of \$2,800/set. Vehicle maintenance increased due to the age of the fleet. The increase in capital equipment is for the replacement of a 1998 vehicle that the part-time inspector and the Deputy Chief share.

Code Enforcement/Health/Fire Prevention, Page 20

Chief Smith advised very little change in this category.

Fire Alarms Dispatch, Page 21

Chief Smith commented the increase in vehicle maintenance is for the 1986 Bucket Truck that is shared with Municipal Services for tree work. There is also an increase in Lakes Region Dispatch, 6.0% increase and he stated he anticipates another increase by Lakes Region next year. Councilor Starkweather inquired if a breakdown of Lakes Region's budget has been acquired. Chief Smith they have so far offered limited information. They have provided a breakdown of some of the amounts in the accounts but not where they were expended and how they were spent. Councilor Starkweather commented the right to know law enters into this and he requested that Chief Smith make a request on his behalf for a complete breakdown of all accounts.

Ambulance/EMS, Page 22

Chief Smith stated that lines like Medical Supplies would be billed back to the hospital if the agreement being considered with Lakes Region goes through.

Emergency Management, Page 23

Chief Smith commented he hopes to acquire grants to address the update of the emergency operations plan. Councilor Bowers asked how the closing of the Bessie Rowell School influences the emergency operations plan. Chief Smith responded that it does not have any affect and that he would like to see the plan include the school as a potential sheltering facility or cooling center as those issues have not been completely addressed in the plan.

Planning & Zoning, Page 8

Mr. Dick Lewis, Planning & Zoning Administrator stated the increase in Other Contractual Services is a contract with Cartographic for GIS mapping. Mr. Lewis stated he and Brian Sullivan met with Mr. Fountain, Vice President of Cartographic Associates concerning the RFP that had been sent out and the

preparation of the contract followed that meeting. The tax mapping project and getting them up to the GIS standards which is the current state of the arch technology links in with a lot of the work Director Sullivan does for sewer, water, and drainage. More and more of the State and Federal permit procedures that the City will experience are now requiring GIS mapping standards. The development of the tax maps will be of great benefit to MSD. The contract is broken down into three phases, one phase per year. Phase I is parcel inventory and research, Phase II would be the parcel compilation and Phase III would be the development of the digital database. Contract cost is \$119,298 and the cost is being shared between Planning & Zoning, Assessing and the Water Department. The billing will be approximately \$40,000 per year with 10% up front. Mr. Lewis commented that this is a very important project as the City will be relying on the tax maps for a number of years and will create the first layer of creating reliable GIS mapping that can be used to build on.

Councilor Audet asked if this is a project the Council is to vote on. Manager Dragon advised that monies were carried forward from last year that were put in the budget for this project and went out for RFPs and are now ready to move forward with the project if the project funding is supported by the Council. Councilor Audet expressed that in these difficult times the \$40,000 per year could be used elsewhere.

Police, Page 11 Administration

Chief Goldstein stated calls for assistance continue to go up each year in every aspect. He advised the Detective Division continues to work on the drug issues and now is working on illegal weapons. Administration is mostly level funded.

Page 12, Police Building

Chief Goldstein advised no change on these lines.

Page 13, Police Investigation/Prosecution

Chief Goldstein stated the Professional Services line has increased as they moved the work study interns from the payroll line to Professional Services.

Page 14, Patrol

Chief Goldstein advised most everything has been level funded; however, overtime in all departments is always an issue.

Page 15, Patrol cont. and Dispatch

Chief Goldstein advised concerning equipment, they try to replace 4 vests a year, tasers are consistently upgraded and equipment is needed associates with the tasers. The portable radios and have reached their logical end point. When the State furnished the radios they made it clear that they would not resupply the radios.

Director Milner announced that between the Manager's proposed budget and now they have been notified that the Police Department is to receive an additional \$30,000 in Domestic Violence Grant funds.

Councilor Starkweather asked when the Cops Grant end and Chief Goldstein commented there is almost two years left on the grant.

Other Business

Councilor Andreozzi stated that the school has announced they will be closing Bessie Rowell School and since the building comes to the City, she would like a request be given that at the next school board meeting a date is given as to when they will be out of Bessie Rowell so we will know what we have to take over which will affect the budget and the \$12,000 they have listed to close the school should possibly be moved into the City side of the budget. She stated the City

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needs a specific date from the school so that it doesn't become winter and nothing is happening. Councilor Audet commented they are working very hard and are moving things out but it is totally unfair to expect an exact date. Mayor Merrifield commented that the Statue states that when the building is no longer used as a school the ownership reverts to the City. Councilor Bowers asked what determines that. Councilor Feener commented it could be June 30th, when the budget year ends. They have listed \$10,000 to \$15,000 in the next budget for closing up the building. Councilor Feener stated it is not unreasonable to ask them for an approximate date. Councilor Audet commented that the Council needs to decide what they want to do with the building. Manager Dragon advised she has had contact with CAP, the TRIP Center and the Rec Department as possibly interested in relocating to Bessie Rowell School. Councilor Bowers commented that is a good point, are we going to sell it, lease it or leave it empty and hope the school goes back in the building some day.

Councilor Trudel asked City Manager Dragon what her thoughts are on Bessie Rowell School. Manager Dragon commented that the decision by the School Board was controversial but now the City needs to think about what we want to do, how long would the City want to hold onto the building and she stated it is a good time to begin evaluating options, get a sense from the school as to when it will be turned over to the City, get a sense of what their plans were to maintain the building or to close it down, get Building and Grounds Supervisor Brian Barry involved in the conversation, and get a feeling as to when the building will belong to the City. She stated she does not have the answers but it is time to begin the conversations. Councilor Trudel inquired if it would be possible to get a ballpark figure as to what the annual maintenance costs would be by the next City Council meeting. Councilor Feener suggested getting input from FBIDC and Capital Region as to what the building could be used for. Councilor Feener stated he really doesn't want to see the building vacant. Councilor Clarenbach commented one problem is it is a residential neighborhood, so uses will be limited. Councilor Audet suggested contacting the company that was involved in the sale of the building in the Industrial Park stating they are a large company, dealing with commercial/business and would give the City wide coverage if the decision is to

sell the building. Councilor Sharon asked where in the City budget is there money to maintain this building. Mayor Merrifield stated he does not think it is out of line to request from the school what their plans are for the building. Manager Dragon stated we will contact the school and request an approximate time the building will be vacated and their plans for maintaining and mothballing the building.

Councilor Starkweather inquired that he understands we have a contact with CRDC (Capital Regional) and have not done anything with them yet and he asked if there is anything we can use them for. Manager Dragon responded we could change direction, she stated she had been considering doing a strategic plan with them but have put them on hold; currently we have used \$2,000 of the \$12,000 because it is going to require a great deal more of definition for that project. She stated there are a number of people she can begin gathering some ideas from.

Manager Dragon advised that the date has not officially been set yet for the budget hearing but are shooting for the July 11th date but she stated she is starting to get questions concerning when the hearing will take place. She stated we do need 10 days prior to the hearing to advertise in the paper. Councilor Andreozzi commented you can't count the day you put it in the paper and you can't count the day of the hearing. She stated the Council meets again next week on the 27th to set the public hearing but that does not give us a lot of extra time. Councilor Clarenbach commented the problem is the health insurance and the retirement, if they both came in negative, would there be enough time to make the needed changes. Mayor Merrifield commented you could set the public hearing and go ahead and hold it and depending upon outside influences (retirement/health insurance) you could hold off passing the budget until the end of July. The consensus was to set the public hearing on the budget at the meeting the following week.

Councilor Audet made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Starkweather. All in favor, meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue E. May

