

**CITY COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING  
MAY 13, 2014**

**Call to Order**

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

**In Attendance**

Councilor Starkweather, Councilor Feener, Councilor Desrochers, Council Boyd, Councilor Cournoyer, Councilor Giunta, Councilor Dzujna, City Manager Dragon, Finance Director Milner and Mayor Merrifield.

**Absent**

Councilor Clarenbach and Councilor Barton.

Mayor Merrifield recognized Councilor Feener who is also the Chair of the Finance Committee. Councilor Feener advised that on Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup> a Joint Finance Committee Meeting was held with the School Finance Committee wherein the tax cap was discussed and the apportionment of the taxes that can be raised this year; as well as an update on the school's budget and the audit. The school has already cut their budget substantially and it was learned in the meeting from Finance Director O'Neill that the school has a gap of \$114,000. Councilor Feener stated if you go to Section 3, Page 2 in the proposed budget where it shows \$374,499 of funds available to the School and City of which 66% of those funds goes to the City and 34% to the school. The Finance Committee is proposing instead of a 66% 34% split this year, we do a 50% 50% split of the \$374,499 which would mean each unit would get \$187,000 which means the City could get a reduction of \$60,000 and the School would get an increase of \$60,000. Councilor Feener further stated at the Finance Meeting the school was advised that if they have any money left over at the end of the budget year they need to come and discuss it with the City Council as to what should be done with that money. Councilor Feener stated all that is needed is a consensus from the Council.

Councilor Desrochers commented at the Finance Committee meeting last night agreed to do this whole heartedly but he feels there should be one

condition and that is a binding resolution that clearly states if they have any money left over at the end of the year, we get together, talk it over and decide what to do with the money. Councilor Desrochers further stated he is in favor of the split of funds that Councilor Feener just described but if there is no binding resolution he would not be in favor of the extra funds for the school.

Councilor Feener commented that it was made very clear to the school at the Finance Meeting that if money is left over at the end of the year they are to come back to the Council and discuss what the funds might be used for.

Councilor Cournoyer expressed his support but also commented he like the idea of a binding resolution that Councilor Desrochers suggested.

Councilor Dzujna expressed his support of the split in funds; Councilor Starkweather voiced his support also. Mayor Merrifield commented that he has a slightly different position. He stated that he thinks \$60,000 is about half of what the school should get in an adjustment. He stated he bases that on a belief that the statewide property tax is nothing more than a label on locally collected, locally raised taxes that should be considered in combination with the local property tax effort. Mayor Merrifield further stated in a perfect world he would apply the tax caps CPIU to both the statewide property tax portion and the local property tax portion combined so that the total dollars going to the school would increase by the rate of inflation.

The consensus was the Council was in support of the \$60,000 additional fund to the school.

### **Outside Agencies**

#### **Franklin Historical Society – Section 5, Page 37**

Mr. Leigh Webb, President advised that they are asking for level funding (\$250) and he stated in his request letter he indicated the funds would go towards the creation of permanent markers along the Northern Rail Trail

but since writing that letter a company has been located that will do signs for considerably less so we will get a lot more for our dollar. He also brought a sample of the signs.

### **Conservation Commission – Section 5, Page 42**

Mr. Roy Gilbreth, Chair is requesting level funding (\$400) which is used for annual dues for the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commission (\$300) and the other \$100 is used for members who would like to attend the annual meeting of that organization.

### **Franklin Business and Industrial Development Corporation FBIDC – Section 5, Page 37**

Mrs. Denise Sharlow advised FBIDC is seeking level funding (\$45,000) to continue with the economy development for the City of Franklin. She stated they have been able to reduce their expenses as they have moved into the Proulx Center and the City has added a line for FBIDC which has reduced telephone expenses and we have internet through the City. She advised they are doing a little expansion in the Industrial Park and are getting inquiries on a regular basis.

### **Franklin Animal Shelter – Section 5, Page 32**

Mr. Ron Magoon, President of the Animal Shelter advised they are requesting level funding (20,000) for the Shelter. He stated on behalf of the Board, he wished to express thanks for the approval of a ten year lease. As part of the planning for the Shelter, they hope to expand the Shelter, they are working on getting plans drawn, developing phases for the improvements and trying to find funding and grants to support the phases. He stated it is important to offer quality care for the animals, to be able to increase the size of the facility. Right now they have a temporary trailer for the office staff. They hope to be able to provide quarantine space for animals because sometimes there are reasons to quarantine an animal and the size of the Shelter does not allow them to do a very effective job. Mr. Magoon stated they plan to expand their Board. He stated they are grateful for the funds the City provides and they hope to improve their financing. They have to raise approximately \$30,000 themselves to keep the shelter running. Some of those funds come from the fees that are charged for surrenders and adoptions but a large portion of the funds comes from fund

raisers. He stated the Shelter took in and rehomed 110 animals this year and currently there are 10 cats and a couple of dogs.

### **VNA & Hospice – Section 5, Page 32**

Ms. Jane White, Executive Director stated they are requesting level funding again this year (27,985). She thanked the City for their continued support. She stated they do home care services and they have a hospice program. She commented that everyone is probably aware of all the changes in healthcare and she commented all those changes have an impact on the VNA as a smaller organization. Medicare has approved a 3 ½% reduction each year for the next four years off the top to home care agencies which totals a 14% reduction over the next four years. She stated the prediction is at the end of 2014, 1/3 of the home care agencies will be in the red and at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> year, 2/3 of the home care agencies will be in the red. She stated that is one concern for them and they are predicting they will have a loss this year. She advised the number of Medicaid patients has increased and they do accept any of those patients that are referred to them. Ms. White advised their healthcare insurance is going up 17.6%. She also advised there is a lot of competition in the area for home care.

Manager Dragon asked who are the competitors for the VNA homecare and what does the VNA do that is different from them. Ms. White responded that the Concord VNA has expanded into this area and Central New Hampshire that has expanded into the area and they both expanded into this area about 18 months ago. There are also some private home care agencies that are in the area but they are looking primarily for hospice patients. She stated there really aren't a lot of differences in the services; all provide pretty much the same kind of service. Manager Dragon stated then why wouldn't we let private home care provide the services rather than the City paying for them. Ms. White responded that the City has to decide if they want to support a local organization or support the private national organizations. Ms. White did state that they have a very dedicated staff that work and live in the area.

### **Community Action Program – Section 5, Page 32**

Ms. Gail Lyman, Area Director, Franklin Area Center advised they are requesting \$30,000. She thanked the City for the funding of \$5,000 last year. She stated what they ask from the 8 towns that they serve out of

their center is to help with their operating costs so the Center can be kept open. The programs that they offer such as the fuel assistance program are federally funded. She advised they are looking at new spaces to move to. Manager Dragon where are they looking and Ms. Lyman responded Tilton, Franklin, and Northfield as they still want to be centrally located.

**Community Action Program /The TRIP Center – Section 5, 32**

Ms. Pam Jolivette, Director of Elder Services stated she is speaking on behalf The TRIP Center as they manage the senior centers. They are requesting level funding (\$13,394). She stated the TRIP Center is a very active center and she thanked the City for their support. The center offers a wide range of services and programs for seniors. One of the services that they offer is the Meals on Wheels Program which not only brings food to frail elders Monday through Friday but it offers a safety check. The TRIP Center offers dining where the seniors can come and eat. They also offer a rural transportation program.

**Upper Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee – Section 5, Page 37**

Ms. Michele L. Tremblay, Chair advised they are requesting level funding again this year (\$250). She advised they do a lot of testing on the Merrimack River and hold their annual “Bug Night” event.

**CFA/Career Firefighters Association – Section 5, Page 37**

CFA President Firefighter Stetson was unable to attend as he was on duty. \$1,000 is in the budget for the CFA which uses these funds to decorates the City at Christmas time, put up and takes down the Christmas lights as well as at times make donations to other firefighters around the country and their families in need.

**Child and Family Services – Section 5, Page 32**

Ms. Ruth B. Zax, Development Director stated they are requesting \$4,500. Ms. Zax stated they have an office here in Franklin and have been in the community for many years and last year serviced 216 Franklin residents last year. They provide mental health and family support service and have been offering these services for over 163 years. She stated that they do qualify for reimbursement from insurance; however, a large portion of those families they serve do not have insurance coverage. Also, some of the programs they offer insurance does not cover. They also offer Camp Spaulding to kids every year.

**Big Brothers Big Sisters – Section 5, Page 32**

Ms. Katie Orlando, Executive Director advised they are requesting \$500. She advised historically their services have been focused in the Greater Manchester area but this year they made a decision to service all towns and cities no matter how far away from Manchester. She advised that currently they serve 6 youths and are about to match a 7<sup>th</sup>. She stated some of their Franklin matches have been together for over 5 years. The cost per match is \$1,000 per years.

There was discussion on duplication of services and Manager Dragon is going to look into that.

**Revenues/Charges for Services/Wages/Benefits**

Manager Dragon reviewed the revenues, fees for services as well as wages and benefits.

Councilor Giunta suggested concerning revenues that Franklin has the best water in the State and perhaps we might be able to find potential customers to purchase the water and also he commented there could be value in the ash fill as there are companies that extract the metal from the ash. Director Milner commented that Director Sullivan is looking into that.

**Other Business**

**Repurchase of Tax Deeded Properties**

**176 Sanborn Street, Map 133, Lot 014-00 (Land and Building)**

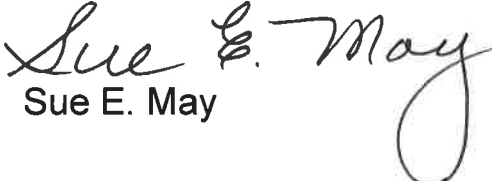
***Motion made by Councilor Feener that the Franklin City Council deed back 176 Sanborn Street, Map 133, Lot 014-00 upon receipt of all back taxes and interest (without 15% penalty). Motion seconded by Councilor Boyd. All in favor; motion passes.***

**604 Salisbury Road, Map 045, Lot 005-00 (Land and Building)**

***Motion made by Councilor Feener that the Franklin City Council deed back 604 Salisbury Road, Map 045, Lot 005-00 upon receipt of all back taxes and interest (without 15% penalty). Motion seconded by Councilor Starkweather. All in favor; motion passes.***

***Motion to adjourn made by Councilor Feener, seconded by Councilor Cournoyer. All in favor; meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.***

Respectfully submitted,

  
Sue E. May