

**City Council Budget Workshop Meeting
June 19, 2012**

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 Dzujna, Councilor Sharon, Councilor Cournoyer, Councilor Desrochers, Councilor Trudel, Councilor Starkweather, Councilor Clarenbach, Mayor Merrifield and City Manager Dragon.

Absent

Councilor Boyd

Mayor Merrifield advised with the Outside Agency presentations that he would take them in the order they are in the packet. He also advised that at an earlier budget meeting the City Council had discussed how the Animal Shelter would be addressed issue. He stated typically there are not public comments during our budget hearings; however, the Council directed that they would like to allow public comments concerning the Animal Shelter. He stated the presentations from the different groups will be heard and then public comments will be opened.

American Red Cross – no one was in attendance to speak for the Red Cross.

Community Action Program – Ms. Gail Lyman, Director of CAP in Franklin and she stated we serve 8 towns and Franklin is just one of the 8. She thanked the Council members who came to meet with her. She stated basically what they ask of their cities and towns are to help with operating costs to keep the center open. She stated their largest program is the Fuel Assistance Program which is a Federal funded program, wherein the funds get allocated down to the State level, and then the State allocates the funds to the Community Action Programs throughout the State. They also offer an Electric Program. She stated they would appreciate whatever amount such as \$10,000 that the City could contribute toward helping

CAP as she understands funds are very tight right now. She stated she did want the Council to know with reference to the Fuel Assistance Program the amount of monies that come into the Franklin; 615 applications were handled for Franklin and out of those 615 over \$457,000 went to the fuel vendors in Franklin to help keep their businesses running. She stated 80% of the people that apply for fuel assistance are on fixed income and almost 40% of those were the working core. Only 4% of the 615 household that were served were on cash assistance from the State. The majority of the people that CAP helps are the working core and the fixed income. She also stated that the other 7 communities that they serve do fund CAP.

Councilor Clarenbach inquired about the rent of \$14,400 shown in the budget. Ms. Lyman stated that is not really rent, that is how much it would cost for other space in the building and the utilities combined. Councilor Clarenbach commented CAP does not pay rent for the building. He asked is that figure an in-kind or hard dollars and Ms. Lyman stated she believes it is an estimate. Councilor Cournoyer inquired if when considering what the other communities give to CAP, has it been calculated what it is for free rent of the building that the City of Franklin gives to CAP? She responded that they do pay for the maintenance and upkeep of the building. Councilor Starkweather asked if they are still subletting part of the building to other agencies. She advised Wick is there which is part of CAP. She further stated they pay for utilities to help and Councilor Starkweather asked about square footage area and she stated yes they are.

Caring Community Network of the Twin River – No one was present to speak on behalf of CCNTR.

Career Firefighters Association – No one was present to speak.

Franklin Historical Society – Mr. Leigh Webb stated as done in the past they are requesting \$250 from the City. The funds will go toward an educational opportunity for the citizens of Franklin as well as visitors who might be using the

Rail Trail. He stated they hope to install a plaque on the Trail with educational information.

Conservation Commission – No one was present to speak.

Visiting Nurse and Hospice – Ms. Jane White, Executive Director stated she is here to request funds and she stated she knows Carol Plumb has been before the Council a number of times for the VNA & Hospice. She stated they offer many different services such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, home help programs and they have a Social Worker. Typically about 80% of their clients are on a day to day basis, reimbursement is received under Medicare benefit so most of the clients are elderly or disabled. She stated the primary goal is to try and keep them independent in their homes and to keep them safe in their homes. The home keeper program that they offer enable them not only to go into the home and do light housing keeping for the disabled but also do grocery shopping, picking up prescriptions or banking for them. People who are restricted to their homes this service can make a big difference for them. They have a Tele-Monitoring Program and this is where a simple monitor can be placed in the home and can daily test their heart rate, their blood pressure, pulse and weight and no reimbursement is received for this program and currently they have approximately 15 clients using the monitor. Councilor Dzujna asked what the monitoring program cost per person and Ms. White stated she does not have that figure, however, she stated they own part of the equipment and rent other parts and the total cost is \$92,000 per year. Councilor Sharon stated he just wants to thank the VNA for the great work they do in the Franklin community and if it wasn't for their efforts there would be a lot of seniors that wouldn't be able to stay in their homes.

Franklin Business and Industrial Development Corporation(FBIDC) – Councilor Dzujna commented that because he is on the Board of FBIDC he recused himself. Mr. Jim Aberg, Director wanted to recognize three members of their Board, Councilor Dzujna, Councilor Starkweather and Manager Dragon has joined the Board this past year. He stated there has been a lot better communication

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concerning details that get back to City Management and City Council. He stated this is the 17th year with the City, \$45,000 has been the level budget for the past several years and that is the request again this year. He offered some brief highlights of the last year: last spring the CDFA grant was closed on the marquee, FBIDC was awarded a fee of \$3,300 for the work done with that grant. Great feedback has been received on the marquee from the users and from the folks that read it. Last spring a ribbon cutting ceremony was taking place at Big Kat Coffee and FBIDC worked closely with NH Business Finance Authority in bringing Big Kat into the City and worked with the owners and they were so appreciate they donated \$3,000 to FBIDC for expenses. Another item FBIDC takes responsibility for is the Flower Project and raised money to buy the tractor and funds to pay the labor to water the flowers and buy the flowers and the basket and he stated that is about a \$3,500 per year. In the Industrial Park they spend most of their time talking to companies, prospects, investors, businesses that are looking to relocate. One of the issues faced last spring was a company that was looking to come into the Industrial Park that under the zoning regulations would fall under light industry and come to find out light industry is not permitted in the Industrial Park. So working with Dick Lewis in Planning and Zoning we were able to rectify that error and Fastenal Company was able to locate in the Industrial Park who was previously located in Tilton. About that same time he stated he was working with investors that bought two condo units up in the Park and after the closing American Fiberglass as a new business into the Park. He stated a lot of his time and interest has been trying to find the next owner the Isola Building, it was listed with Hart Corporation out of Philadelphia which is a national real estate company and is now listed with a different company that is also national and he stated they have worked with several potential buyers who were also users that were looking at that facility to move their operations into. The problem with that building has always been the amount of square footage for the offices which is 27,000 versus 70,000 for the manufacturing space and he stated that ratio is way out of whack. He stated he can say that the building is currently under contract to a group of investors and those investors are negotiating with a company located in Hooksett and this company would come in as a tenant with a potential purchase for manufacturing and he stated it would be great use for the building

and a great business for the City. He stated he would anticipate that by the end of the year there will be a new owner of the building. He advised Broadway Steel purchased a lot at the end of the Park but the owner has had some severe medical problems so the contract is pending and if the contract is closed they are looking to building a 5,000 to 6,000 square foot building. He stated last winter they hired Lindsay Cole as an outside consultant to conduct a holiday promotion for downtown business and this year they hope to expand the program. He stated you probably know FBIDC partnered with the City on a new website so FBIDC picked up 25% of the cost and they will continue to pick up something each month. He also advised they serve as a fiscal agent for groups that do not have their own 501C3 designation, one being Odell Park. As such money comes in to FBIDC which they is managed by FBIDC and then expend for the benefit of that organization and there is no charge for that. A \$20,000 grant will be coming in that they will manage. He advised a community survey is being offered through Survey Monkey on the Internet and after it was closed it appears there are about 125 responses. When they had received 52 responses he stated he gave one to Councilor Starkweather and City Manager Dragon. The results of the survey are published on line so the public can see the results.

Manager Dragon commented that this past year with the creation of the MOU and the change in the relationship and the additional her role as an x-officio Board member I stated it has been a wonderful change, the communication between FBIDC and the City has been greatly enhanced. We are working closely together.

Councilor Starkweather wanted it know that he is not a voting member of the Board that he is the Council Liaison for the Council and FBIDC.

Pemi River Advisory Committee - No one was present to speak from the Committee. Manager Dragon advised they did put in a request for funding and they were not included in the Manager's budget this year. She stated the reason she did not include them in the budget this year is because she advised she has been following their minutes which she stated she has been including in the

Councilors and Mayor's box. They seem to have gotten very political concerning the Northern Pass Project, the Lakes Region Planning Commission has been trying to give them guidance and suggesting to them that maybe that was not their role but they went ahead anyway and made resolutions opposing the project and even though it was a small amount of money requested, she advised she did not include it in the manager's budget.

Upper Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee – Member Mr. Tucker Noack and Ms. Dona Liolis were present and Mr. Noack stated their primary role is to make comments and suggestions when it comes to being presented with permits for any construction that pertains to or would affect the Merrimack River within the Franklin portion of the corridor. The monies requested goes toward the monitoring stations that are spread throughout the corridor of which Franklin has three. Those sites primarily monitor for increases in e.coli within the river corridor and Franklin is the only community that has three monitoring sites. We review permits for construction along the river to make sure they are acceptable with DES and within State and Federal guidelines. All their funding is provided through donations, grants, from communities along the corridor. All members are volunteers. He stated everyone is invited to Bug Night. Mayor Merrifield stated he has attended a Bug Night and it is most interesting and hard to believe all that is in the river. Mr. Noack stated they again are requesting \$250 which he believes had been the same request for a number of years. He advised their website is Merrimackriver.org.

Outing Club – No one was in attendance and Manager Dragon advised they did not submit a request for funds but it is carried forward in the manager's budget. Mayor Merrifield commented it is \$8,500 and it is for their liability insurance and workmen's comp.

Heritage Commission – No one was present to speak.

Public Comment regarding Granite State Animal League

Mr. Jeff Brewer stated he is a fairly new member to the Granite State Animal League Board and is also serving as the Treasurer. He stated Mr. Boyette is unable to be here tonight. He stated they are painfully aware that the Granite State Animal League has lost the City's confidence in the ability to manage and

run the City's Animal Shelter and understand that the City is looking at other alternatives to provide that service. He stated although the Shelter has stumbled quite a bit of time has been spent recently reformulating itself, refocusing itself and brining its management back into focus. As you are aware, the Shelter lost its charitable organization designation. This year they successfully submitted the application back to the IRS, and have received an acknowledgement and he commented they have no reason to believe that the 501C3 won't be approved and he stated their mission is exactly what it was ten years ago. That single step will provide them with a mechanism which will allow them to do a higher level of fund raising going back to organizations, institutions, and businesses that need to be able to take a charitable deduction on their taxes. He also advised that they have been looking at their operations and finding ways to improve. They are also negotiating with vets to find ways to reduce the vet cost which is their second highest cost. They also plan to train their staff to perform injections such as for rabies. They are also looking into a contract with the Town of Hill as another method of bringing in more income. He stated their expenses are about \$6,000+ over last year and we feel that if the City will level fund the shelter that the extra expenses can be handled on their own. He stated they would like to continue to be the animal shelter for the City of Franklin. He further stated they are prepared to do whatever it takes to make this happen.

Councilor Starkweather said it was mentioned about having the staff trained to give shots to the animals, and he asked if they have anyone at the shelter now that has experience giving shots. Mr. Brewer stated they do not, they have two part-time people and they have discussed this with their current vet and have been informed there is nothing about the process that could not be easily taught. Councilor Starkweather requested Mr. Brewer elaborate on the computer program mentioned in their packet. Mr. Brewer stated there is a computer program called Shelter Pro, used for many reason but primarily used for management of shelters. He stated he believes Franklin Savings Bank, using the City as the fiscal agent, provided \$1,100 for the purchase of software and just before the beginning of May they were preparing to purchase that software but everything stopped until they know what happens on July 1st. He stated that

Software would help them manage the animals, manage our process, keep track of the shelter's costs. Councilor Starkweather ask if they have a computer to run the software. Councilor Starkweather stated in your packet of information it shows there were 135 animals taken into the shelter in 2011 and he asked if there is a breakdown as to how many cats and how many dogs. Mr. Brewer stated he does not have that information with him but his guess would be more cats than dogs and he would guess 60% would be cats, we get them as litters, cats living on the streets and the dogs come in from the Police Department or surrenders but the numbers are much smaller. Concerning the Porta Potty, the cost has been doubled and Councilor Starkweather said we keep hearing about a septic system that has been installed minus the toilet. Mr. Brewer stated he was told that sometime in the past there was a septic system installed at the building and there is running water and drains and he was told it was designed as a full septic system. Mr. Brewer commented that unfortunately the Granite State Animal League has never been able to organize significant improvements on the building so the bathroom continues to be an issue.

Councilor Dzujna asked if people that would give shots if needed, do they have to be certified and Mr. Brewer stated no, just trained by the Vet and they would also have to purchase a weight scale as the dosage is determined by the weight of the animal. A refrigerator would be provided to house the vaccines.

Councilor Cournoyer commented that \$1,000 for a telephone line seems excessive. Mr. Brewer commented this is a business line.

Councilor Desrochers commented that a couple months back the request was for \$30,000, now back to \$20,000 and as you are aware the Council is looking into other alternatives. Councilor Desrochers asked what is the shelter's bottom line for funding. Mr. Brewer responded \$20,000 is the shelter's bottom line at least for this year. He stated we may find us doing better on down the line but right now raising that extra \$6,200 is a significant hurdle for them. Councilor Desrochers stated he read the article in the Concord Monitor and he stated he doesn't know how accurate it was but they didn't have a whole lot of good to say

about the management. Mr. Brewer commented he was interviewed for that article and is aware of the issues. At this point he stated he is very aware of the issues that were outstanding when he came on board in March. All of those things are being addressed and the only issues left for him in terms of the Shelter is whether or not he will renew the Department of Agriculture's License on June 30th. All the other issues have been resolved, they have contacted any agency that has had a problem with them and we have addressed all of them. Councilor Desrochers stated if the Council should go with Granite State at the \$20,000, how is that paid, monthly/quarterly? Mr. Brewer responded the payment have always been quarterly. Councilor Desrochers commented he wonders if Granite State will be around in 6 or 7 months. Mr. Brewer stated that is why he is here to hopefully convince you that we will be here, we have been here for 10 years and he stated the management now is much better than it was 2 years ago or even last year and we have continued to run the shelter for the City. He stated they paid most of the bills only coming up \$788 short expenses over income so despite the poor performance from a management perspective the shelter has been running every day and he stated if we are allowed to continue this coming year will be a lot better. Councilor Desrochers asked how many people are new on the management team and many are left from back years. The President, Lawrence Boyette is the oldest member; Mrs. Brewer has been on the Board since 2009 and the remainder 2010 and 2011. In the packet from the Shelter they list all the Board members. Ms. Sandy Sherman, Board Member and she stated she is here to represent and support the Shelter. She advised the biggest problems came from the former Treasurer which caused reports, etc. not to be done. She stated we welcome Mr. Brewer as our new Treasurer and we all are working very hard to make the Shelter something the City is proud of. She stated awareness is the key and they are all well aware now and moving forward. She further stated she feels the shelter is an asset to the City and we she expressed concern as to what would happen to animals without the Franklin Shelter.

Councilor Feener stated he is sitting here listening and you gave us a budget wherein you need \$30,000 from the City and now you are saying you can do it with \$20,000 and he asked where and how does the Shelter plan to make up that

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\$10,000. Mr. Brewer commented in the budget it is \$6,200. He stated they knew \$30,000 was not a realistic number, but it was just a place to start. Councilor Feener asked where will you going to get the \$6,200. Mr. Brewer stated they will do it through fund raising. We have fund raisers that we do every year and we will add some other and also when we receive our 501C3 that will help a great deal.

Councilor Cournoyer inquired about just how long animals are kept at the shelter that aren't adoptable. There is no set time as to how long a dog or cat is kept at the shelter, sometimes we look for rescues that will take them if they are non-adoptable but we try not to euthanize them down but sometimes they have to be euthanized. He stated their prime mission is to find homes for them.

Mayor Merrifield commented that the 20 minutes the City Council allocated to public comment has expired.

Councilor Dzujna commented that he knows it is hard to come here and talk about your failures and problems at the Shelter and he commended Mr. Brewer for doing so. Mr. Brewer responded the only way to heal them is to recognize them.

Ms. Ruth Bowley stated she gave her presentation on keeping the Animal Shelter where it is but possibly not being non-profit. Hiring an animal control officer part-time and as stated by Mr. Brewer maybe working with some other towns as far as getting contracts. What happens with shelter is they are grey area shelters, Hill, Tilton and Northfield are all grey area towns which means they have no contract with any other shelter. A solution to the financial problems is to contract with another local town. She stated the animal control needs to be stepped up and stated she encountered just today 12 pregnant cats in a one mile square radius of the Post Office and she stated that could be 516 cats by the end of September. Laconia or Concord is not going to come out and get those cats. She stated she worked at the Franklin Shelter and more than 65% of the animals there are cats.

She stated a part-time animal control officer could really help the situation and she realizes that the Police Department only picks up dogs. Councilor Clarenbach commented that there is a caring group of people in Franklin who continue to feed the cats which only helps to increase the population. He stated he understands people who feed the cats to trap them and have them spayed or neutered which is a good thing but most are just feeding them and that is part of our problem.

Mayor Merrifield reminded the Council they had approved only 20 minutes of public comment and that has now been doubled.

Motion made by Councilor Desrochers to hear from two more people and no more than three minutes each. Motion seconded by Councilor Dzujna. All in favor, motion passes.

Ms. Fisher, Ward Hill Road and she stated she is here to support the Animal Shelter and she stated she has given shots on her own but you do need to be certified to give rabies shots but it is possible to be certified. She stated as a volunteer and she stated she was working at the Toll Roll fund raiser at the Transfer Station and stated there is an outpouring of affection for the shelter. She stated she is willing to step up and do whatever she can to help.

Mr. Noack commented the pet owners and the pet feeders. He stated he takes his son on Saturdays to walk the dogs and the building is pretty much a mess. He recalls at one point there was some talk of revamping the building and it was just a matter of someone supplying the materials and he stated he assumes no one wanted to supply the materials. Mr. Noack commented they need to do more fund raising and get the word out there.

Mayor Merrifield stated that concludes the public comment.

Councilor Desrochers stated based on what he has heard tonight and he stated he has always been in favor of giving someone a second chance and he stated he has

a dog that was a rescue dog and he didn't like people or dogs and he stated 10 years later he still has him and he is a good hunting dog. If the Animal Shelter can do it at level funding of \$20,000, he offered the following motion:

Motion made by Councilor Desrochers to keep the Animal Shelter in Franklin, motion seconded by Councilor Clarenbach.

Councilor Dzujna commented it was good to hear the people come forth tonight and talk about the problems at the shelter and he stated we do need something in the City. He stated he has a concern about going elsewhere is the amount of time it would take from the Police Department to transport the animals.

Councilor Feener called the question, seconded by Councilor Desrochers. 4 yes votes and 4 no votes and the Mayor voted no to break the tie stating he wants the discussion to continue.

Councilor Clarenbach stated he is also in agreement in giving the Granite State Animal League a second chance and that they are not unlike FBIDC. He stated he hopes that lines of communication can be opened with a new and renewed Granite State Animal League Group; we will see a much different outcome not only for the betterment of the animals but the citizens of Franklin.

Manager Dragon stated this is an organization that is a 501C3; they should have a contract with Franklin and are not like FBIDC. FBIDC is the economic development arm of the City; the shelter is supposed to be providing a service to the City for the money that is given them. If they cannot provide that service to the City, they should not be receiving that funding. If they are not a stable organization that can provide those services then the City should not contribute to that. She stated what she wants to say to the Council tonight is she has been very supportive of this organization over the last few years working with Lawrence Boyette; we have brought them before the Council and the Council agreed to pay the electric bill when they couldn't keep the lights on; we have agreed to provide wood and materials to add onto the shelter when they wanted

to add an addition to the building; we have offered Transfer Station employees to help them with their Toll Road to raise funds; we don't charge the shelter anything for the building so they can provide services and we still pay them more than any other shelter would charge the City for the same amount of services. She stated she had been hoping and praying that the Franklin Animal Shelter could pull their act together and to be financially able to bring together a plan tonight that would make sense, they have not brought together a plan that balanced revenues with expenses; but she stated like most of you tonight that want to give them a second chance, she agrees and would like for them to have another chance because for us it most convenient not only for our Police Department but for our residents to go here in the City of Franklin. She stated she does not want to have to deal with another shelter that is out of town and have our Police Officers making trips out of Franklin; she stated that is not what she wanted from the very beginning until she was served with an ultimatum that if we did not include \$30,000 in the City budget, that they would shut their doors within six months. She stated what concerns her is tonight she did not hear the balancing of their budget, we are still relaying on the hope that they will be able to raise that additional \$6,200 to balance the budget. All the publicity that has taken place should help the shelter as most people care about animals and bring a renewed energy to the organization. So if there was ever an opportunity for the shelter to get out of the hole she stated she believes that now is the chance. She stated if the Council is willing to take that chance, she commented it would certainly make her job easier because we would not have to send our officers out of the community. But she stated she wants to make it clear that she has been hoping all along for that balance sheet balance of income and expenses so she could feel there was stability in the organization moving forward because the City of Franklin has been pulling for this organization all along whether it be through volunteers, running your grant through the City's financial office or helping with the electrical expenses because the City wants to help the residents deal with the animal population whether it be dogs or cats, we wanted to do that all along. It wasn't until we got to this point where we were forced to look at other options.

Councilor Clarenbach commented that FBIDC is also a 501C3 as well, we also had to have a contract with them to get them back in line of expectations and we do have a contract with Granite State and would expect them to hold uphold that contract if we engage with them for this upcoming year.

Councilor Starkweather commented he would like to see the Animal Shelter remain open. They are on the right track; they are recognizing their problems and trying to get it worked out. The City has made some offers in the past and he stated he does not know who failed to follow through. He stated of the alternatives available he would like to see the Franklin Shelter remain open. He stated there might be the possibility to give them a 6-month trial period and have them come to the Council with their budget and report to the Council. Councilor Dzujna commented that he likes the idea of the 6 months agreement and asked the City Manager if the City could enter an agreement with someone else at any time or is it just a certain time. Manager Dragon commented yes you can enter into a contract at any time, but she stated she would not recommend it to be fair to Granite State, they need time. She stated her opinion is if they are going through the process to gain their 501C3 back and their other forms in place, she would give them the year and do the quarterly payments and the City is not in harms-way paying quarterly and this would give them the time they need to accomplish their goals. We can check in with them periodically and we will evaluate things and if we need look at something different for the future we will. She stated she would hope that they would tell us, why you would want to do it if you are not able to do it. She stated she knows that some of the members have put their own money into the Shelter. She stated if the Council approves staying with Granite State Animal League, she would recommend the City renew the lease for one year and we touch base with the Shelter periodically to see how things are going.

Councilor Sharon commented that he came to the meeting tonight with some doubts about this whole thing and he stated he was leaning to go in a different direction but what he has heard tonight is some real concerned people who really want to put some effort into this program and if it is possible that we could make

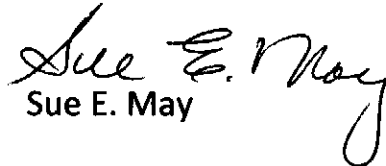
this work then it is the best thing for Franklin. He stated the only thing he would ask if that they come back before the Council in 6 months and give an update of their financial situation.

Councilor Feener stated he was going to suggest quarterly but he would go with 6 months to see how the Shelter is doing financially and what is the proposed fund raising outside of the City.

Motion to fund the Granite State Animal League at \$20,000 for one year pass by a unanimous vote.

Motion to adjourn made by Councilor Sharon, seconded by Councilor Feener. All in favor, meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Sue E. May