

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JULY 9, 2012**

Call to Order

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

In Attendance

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

Absent

Councilor Cournoyer

Public Hearings

Resolution #01-13 – this resolution concerns the Appropriations and Estimated Revenues for Fiscal Year 2013. Mayor Merrifield opened the public hearing on this resolution.

Mr. Bob Lucas, Ward I and School Board Vice-Chair stated he wishes to speak on possible School budget cuts. He stated he is very concern about a possible reduction in the School Board's proposed budget request for the new budget year 2013. In recent years many people have worked very hard to improve the quality of education in this School District and overcome the reputation of being one of the poorest performing school districts in the State. All schools deserve to be supported in many ways, not just monetarily. One of those ways is through monetary support; we owe the children our support. A motion was made to reduce the proposed school budget by \$50,000 and he stated he has heard even larger numbers but he is not certain about those. He stated he is not aware of why this cut was proposed; the school budget currently stands at 4.39 million which is an increase of \$129,000 over last year. The City budget currently stands

at 9.2 million. The City has suggested that the \$50,000 comes out of the school's surplus of \$369,000 which has mostly been used for various improvements. The surplus was primarily from money saved on heating and snow plowing because of the mild winter but is not typical. The school performs the buildings and grounds improvements and maintenance. Much needed improvements were corrected such as locker rooms, road repair, etc. According to the Concord Monitor the school did not seek input from the City Council before spending the surplus so the Mayor has proposed taking back \$50,000. Have a surplus is an indicator of good fiscal management and allows improvements to be made that need to be accomplished. It is far better to have a surplus than to run a deficit and the school should not be penalized for it. Franklin spends the least amount of money per student in the entire State of New Hampshire. It is difficult to attract and retain good and/or great teachers when salaries are not competitive. Franklin has imposed a tax cap for several years; the State average of tax dollars collected by the cities of New Hampshire for use by schools is 67.21%. Franklin appropriates only 41.5%. Grant proceeds cannot be factored into long-term budget planning as they cannot be anticipated. The Concord Monitor ran an article that stated that the extra \$50,000 could be used to increase the Veterans Tax Exemption. They said \$50 to \$100 and he stated he heard another number but is not sure on that. He further stated he is a Veteran but is willing to forfeit his exemption in order to do his part in supporting the students of this school district. A six-year look back shows that school budgets have been decreased by \$487,623 while the City budget has enjoyed increases of \$1,466,000. Even though it has been a struggle, the school has lived within their budget primarily because of sound fiscal management and efficiency. He requested that the citizens and elected officials support the schools with all of the conviction they can muster. Our future and the future of the students depend on this. We want to be a community where people want to live. If we have underfunded or poor performing schools families with children may be hesitant to locate in Franklin. Money alone does not insure great schools but the truth is well-funded schools can deliver quality education. If a motion is made tonight to once again reduce the school budget and he requested that you preserve the school budget by voting against any reduction.

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Mayor Merrifield commented he would like to clarify a couple of things and one being that the Mayor has proposed a \$50,000 reduction to the school budget, and Mr. Lucas stated he believes that is how it was stated in one of the news articles. Mayor Merrifield stated it was now and Mr. Lucas stated he stands corrected on that. Mayor Merrifield stated it is difficult to define budget, you can throw that term out and say the budget is x or y. He stated he believes it was said that the school budget is 4.5 million dollars and Mr. Lucas responded 4.39 million current year and Mayor Merrifield stated what that is would be the District assessment for the amount of property taxes that residents in Franklin contribute towards education but the actual budget is over 15 million, the total expenditure budget is over 15 million.

Ms. Lori Ingham, resident stated she is a substitute in the District and also a parent. She stated she does not believe the budget can be cut any further at this point; they need every penny they can get. The administrators and the teachers are working very hard to change the reputation of Franklin, to change the climate and culture that has developed over the years. She also stated although some repairs are made there are still many repairs needed. She stated she went into a classroom and the closet had mold in it because of a roof that still leaks.

Mrs. Toby, resident commented all students spend the daily majority of their lives in an educational setting and in a sense they too are veterans preparing for the great mission ahead, i.e. life. The Franklin students are our current and future hope of elevating this city to its past grandeur and accomplishments. Your support of the 2012-2013 school budget is your statement of support of the students and the community. Mrs. Toby stated the school budget over the past few years has been cost shifted to enhance the City's budget by over \$600,000, monies duly belonging to the schools and their missions. She ended by saying this is an opportunity for the Council and Mayor to shut off the cost shifting and being supportive of the Franklin School District.

Mr. Mike Mullavey, resident and member of the Odell Park Committee commented on the total budget stating he wanted to first address the area of

Maintenance; he stated if you want to mess up an organization anymore than you have you look at the way maintenance is done on the fields and in the parks. You have Director Alpers in charge of parks and she has some of her people do some small stuff and MSD does some stuff and then you have the school department with their fields and they have their equipment which is duplicated by MSD and the supervision is duplicated and the areas are a complete duplication. To top it all off, you have the schools coming in and playing ball in the parks and what happens if something goes wrong, the school doesn't do anything, the parks have to fix it. The areas of shared fields and parks do not correspond with the organization that we have as a City. He recommends that there be one organization and one maintenance group and possibly put it under a private fund and get it out of the City completely. He further stated the last couple of years have been somewhat bothersome in that the City is totally concentrating on chasing or catching or trying to help 10% of the people in Franklin and the 90% or being ignored or stepped on. He stated you fired John in the Rec Department; you fired someone in the rubbish area so the dump has to close more days, and you fired someone in the Library so the kids can't go in and read when they should. Half the equipment at Stone Park was eliminated so the kids don't play on the playground through the summer. Boards have been put across the balance beams at Odell Park figuring someone might get hurt but the kids have been using those beams for 18 years and no one has been hurt. He then stated to offset all of this, what has been the big purchase in last couple of years, you buy a fire truck that you don't even need, you call it an ambulance.

Mrs. Andreozzi, resident Ward III stated she believes there is going to be a proposed amendment to the budget and if there is she requested that the Council open comments from the public before that amendment is voted on. She stated all taxpayers have the right to let the Council know how they would like the monies spent. She stated nothing the Council does tonight will change the amount of taxes she pays but those taxes that are paid are suppose to benefit all citizens. The City currently gives 400 veterans tax credits and she stated she honors veterans and has veterans in her immediate family. Increasing the tax credit by \$100 is \$40,000 every year not just this year but every year. This

increase benefits only a portion of the citizens and not necessarily because they need it. In these times she asked is it appropriate for the Council to benefit only one section of the taxpayers. Quality of education of the children affects all citizens. You are considering taking money out of the school line and putting it towards veteran's tax credits, do the vets really want to take the money from the school children. In this budget there is a 1.5% cola for employees and 2.5 step increase and last month you denied nearly the same amount to the Franklin teachers and now you want to take money out of the school line so there would be no money in the school budget for teachers' raises. The city employees and the teachers deserve a raise; they are doing the service of the City now. She stated if you want to protect education you could take money out of the school line and put it in a special line reserved for school use and then the school would be able to come back to the Council and ask for money if there is a need. If you spend all the money or allocate it up front there won't be any money for teachers' raises or special education surprises. She also stated there have been no talks on increasing the fund balance and no planning in the CIP; the Council has not done an adequate job.

Councilor Desrochers address the public not as a councilor but as a member of the public reading an email he received from another resident. The email stating from reading articles in the paper and getting phone calls I see the school board is up to their usual (expletive). The email further stated they wished to give a little perspective over the last 7 years; it has been the same with the school board every year. They have money left over; they go on a spending spree so the Council cannot act on it. They play hide the football all year then blame the surplus or shortage on special Ed. Yet they never seem to know where their money is going. You look at the past few years numerous motions have been made to reduce the school budget by \$30,000, some have passed. They claim they need money for education but their spending sprees speak differently. The very fact that they did not bring up the surplus during the budget hearings shows they tried to hide it. The email continued saying they understand there is a proposal to reduce the school budget by \$50,000, I think it should be \$400,000. It is time the Council sends a clear message that they will not tolerate the board's

behavior. Councilor Desrochers commented this email was from one of his constituents. The public requested the name of the person who sent the email and Councilor Desrochers responded the email was from Jay Bowers, who served as a Councilor for Franklin, Ward II for 7 years and knows what he is talking about.

Mr. Donald Gagnon, resident stated he has lived in Franklin since year 2000 and the perception he is getting from the City Council is that education is not as valuable to the Council as other parts of the community. He stated most people that would consider moving into a community one of the first things they look at is not the exemption for the veterans but they look at the conditions of the streets, the parks, recreation and mainly education, the school district. He stated he taught in public education for one year and it is collapsing. Throwing money at the district will not solve the problem. Taking money from it will also not solve the problem. Those that have the means will send their children to a private school leaving the district which would probably be from the upper third. If you keep telling teachers they are the problem or keep under funding things, then the talented teachers will go elsewhere. He stated he has the ability to educate his children at home if he has to but not everyone has that option. He stated he does not want that to happen and he wants a public school system that works for the good of the community, both present and future.

Mr. Al Warner, Ward III and School Board member stated he really had not wanted to get up and speak, however, he stated his first priority is to find ways to reach out to the City Council from the School Board and build some bridges instead of walls. He stated right now he is adamantly opposed to any adjustment to the school's budget for reasons of what is called a surplus. He stated at home if he has saved some money over the winter and has a leaky roof at the end of the year I use the money I have saved to fix the roof and that is basically what has happened here. He also stated as a Veteran he has never claimed my exemption and for you to pull the money from the school's 2012-2013 budget because we had a surplus in the 2011-2012 budget would be like him getting mad tonight and showing up tomorrow wanting his exemption.

Mr. Edward Lind, resident on North Main Street and he stated he walks the streets in Franklin on a daily basis and he stated he is drug and alcohol free but because he does not do those things they think he is a cop. He stated the streets are horrible, there are drug addicts, drug users, kids in high school are throwing their lives away with drugs and the City is doing nothing about it. He advised he had a meeting with the City Manager and the Police Chief, nothing is getting done, and no one is reaching out to the community. These high school students that are throwing their lives away are smoking incense and K2. Instead of talking about a budget, we should be talking about the streets of Franklin. He stated the park has a huge facility there but it is not being used, it is wasted space. Education is number one and now there is no Casey Family help. He stated he would like to see a Community Outreach Center to tutor kids that can't read or write and he said he was told there are no funds available for that.

Ordinance #01-13 – this ordinance concerns Chapter 160 Fees of the Franklin Municipal Code. Mayor Merrifield stated the following changes would be made if the ordinance passes: Commercial Hauler Administration Fee is changing from \$10/ton to \$15/ton; Digging Permits \$100 each to \$150 each; Microwave Oven Disposal is reduced from \$20 each to \$5; Copies of Police and Fire Reports from \$1 per page to \$10 for each complete report.

Mayor Merrifield opened the public hearing; no one came forth to speak on this ordinance. The Mayor closed the public hearing.

Ordinance #02-12 – this ordinance, if passed, would increase the Veterans Exemption from \$200 to \$250 and is included in the current proposed budget. Mayor Merrifield opened the public hearing.

Mrs. Andreozzi, resident stated her father developed a disability from his service and he believes that his employer, the Federal Government, is responsible to help him with that disability and they do. He does not expect to be continually paid for the service that he did his Country. She stated she does not think in these times \$20,000 more dollars should be taken out of the budget to increase Veterans

exemptions. She stated she will assume, even though the motion for the ordinance is incorrectly written as it stands, that you intend to increase disabled veterans as well but the motion reads to increase from \$200 to \$250 but disabled veterans receive more from the City and the limit that the State allow is higher. She stated she would assume if this is what you want to do would be to give \$50 in addition to all veterans not just the able bodied ones. She stated she also believes that certain members of this Council would benefit from this if it is passed and she stated she feels strongly that they should not vote on this and also not vote on the budget because they would be directly benefiting financially.

No one else came forth to speak on this ordinance; Mayor Merrifield closed the public hearing.

Comments from the Public

Municipal Services Director Sullivan introduced Jeff Schuster, Junior Franklin High School stating he is a product of the Youth Government Week who is spending the summer with Director Sullivan because he is interested in Public Administration, Public Works. He has already reviewed the Code of Ordinances, the Annual City Operating Budget tonight, the organizational structure of MSD, the fiscal year budget for MSD, goals and objectives for Municipal Services and he is doing an in-depth division review.

Director Sullivan excitedly announced that today activated the Water Treatment Facility and after lots of testing and 9 years of work, 650,000 gallons of filtered water that is better than a well, pristine.

Mr. Mike Mullavey advised that the Odell Park Committee has accomplished the goals they established in 2006 plus some that were added along the way. He also thanked all the different volunteer groups in Franklin.

Mr. Chuck Farmer, resident commenting that the City has an ordinance concerning fireworks in Franklin and fireworks can go on until 11 pm and he

stated July 4th for fireworks is fine but day after day until 11 pm at night and he is sick of it. We do have a Noise Ordinance but the Police do not enforce it because it says in the ordinance up to 11 pm at night. He requested that the City Council look into this. Mayor Merrifield commented that he has always felt that this ordinance is really unclear and whether you want it to be more restrictive or less restrictive and the language should be changed so it is very clear what the Council wants the Police Department to enforce.

Mr. Farmer also stated the City property across the river from his house, right off 127, the stated they camp down there and have camp fires which you are not suppose to do on City property but he said that doesn't bother him but these people start screaming and he called the PD at 11 pm and then at 12:30 pm they got louder, now they are out on a boat with the music cranked. He stated he does not feel he has to close up his house at night so he can sleep.

Legislative Comments

Representative Palfrey was in attendance to answer questions, there were no questions.

City Council Acknowledgement

Councilor Dzujna stated he knows how hard Director Sullivan has worked on the Water Treatment Project even working on it at home during the past 7 years and he stated as a resident he wanted to personally thank him.

Mayor's Update

The Mayor advised that Mr. Steve Spain has resigned from the Library Board of Trustees which is a position that the City Councilors fill.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Councilor Dzujna that the Franklin City Council approves the minutes of the May 15, May 22, and June 5, 2012 City Council Budget Workshop Meetings and the June 4, 2012 City Council Meeting. Motion seconded by Councilor Feener.

Councilor Starkweather advised on Page 5 of the June 4th minutes third line up from the bottom the word mediation is spelled wrong.

All in favor; minutes approved as corrected.

School Board Report

Mr. Keith Lohmann, School Board Member read the names of the Spring Sports Award.

Proclamation

Mayor Merrifield read a proclamation concerning Arbor Day and also honoring Ian Burns, AKA "Johnny Elmseed" for the planting of over 178 elm Trees in Franklin.

Purchase of Water Meters for FY13

Motion made by Councilor Feener that the Franklin City Council, pursuant to Franklin City Code Article III, Section 4-15, B(3), grant pre-award authorization to the Municipal Services Director for the purchase of water meters and related equipment for fiscal Year 2013, from E. J. Prescott Company. Motion seconded by Councilor Desrochers. All in favor; motion passes.

Resolution 01-13/ Appropriations and Estimated Revenues for FY 13

Motion made by Councilor Feener that the Franklin City Council approves Resolution #01-13 by a roll call vote. Motion seconded by Councilor Trudel.

Councilor Desrochers offered the following amendment: "I move that the Franklin City Council reduces the local school district's tax assessment by \$50,000 and make the following adjustment to the Municipal Budget:

Increase Account Number 01-0-000-31100-000 Property Tax Revenue by \$50,000.

Decrease Account Number 01-0-000-39150-000 Transfer In from Capital Reserve Funds by \$17,500 which represents one half of FY 13 Ambulance Payment.

Increase Account Number 01-1-941-40439-000 City Hall and Other Contractual Services by \$8,274 to fund the replacement of tower roof \$4,784, heat paint for the front roof \$1,690 and refinishing the Council Chambers floor \$1,800.

Increase Account Number 01-2-109-40439-000 Police Building/Other Contractual Services by \$2,800 to fund the replacement of the Police Chief's office window \$800 and replacement of four police building security cameras \$2,000.

Increase Account 01-2-209-40439-000 Fire Building/Other Contractual Services by \$2,676 for the replacement of the Fire Station meeting room doors, and

Increase Account 01-0-000-31102-000 Veteran Exemptions by \$18,750 to fund a \$50 increase in the Veterans' Exemptions from \$250 to \$300.

Amendment motion seconded by Councilor Boyd.

Councilor Desrochers commented he does want to point out to the members of the School Board present that this amendment motion is not meant to punish anyone on the School Board or anyone in the Superintendent's Office for having a surplus. He congratulated them on having a surplus. He further stated he would like to see the district be able to carry over \$75,000 of their surplus each year, not have to spend it all. He stated the accounting practices in this country are flawed; you should not have to spend every nickel/dime at the end of the year. He stated he is very much in favor of education but he also stated he feels when you have a surplus we all need to sit down together and help each other out, then the whole City moves forward. Councilor Desrochers further stated that he was very irritated by the statement the School Board Chair made to the press that the City Council was going to cut the school's budget by \$400,000 or as much as \$600,000 and he stated that is the furthest thing from the truth and he questioned why couldn't the chair have come and talked to me about it as he lives about 200 feet from me but instead he went to the press. He stated there is Freedom of the Press but he would have like it if the chair could have contacted him or one of the other councilors. Going to the press with incorrect information like that only creates animosity, drives wedges between the Council and the Superintendent's Office and we don't need that. We are all the City of Franklin and we need to work together and talk to each other.

Councilor Feener commented he senses Councilor Desrochers frustration and he stated he has been very frustrated too. He commended the school for having a surplus at the end of the year. He stated two years ago the Council helped the school out by taking funds out of the City's fund balance as the school was \$146,000 in the hole. He stated he would have been nice when you learned you would have that amount of surplus to have discussed it with the City. Coming to a Joint Finance Committee to discuss the surplus would have been ideal. Councilor Feener stated he will vote

against the amendment and reach out and ask that you start working with us and start communicating.

Councilor Dzujna stated he heard about the school's overage on the last day of budget meetings, and people approached him and ask if some of the monies could have been used for an after school program because Casey Family pulling. They asked could it be used for teachers' salaries/raises. He stated no one wants to cut the school by \$400,000 as was mentioned. Councilor Dzujna stated he too will vote against the amendment as he does not want to take anything from the school but he asked why it was done this way.

Councilor Boyd stated he has listened to all the conversation tonight and has also spoken to a lot of people in the community. He stated this is a great community and he hates listening to negativity about this community. The volunteers, the teachers, the coaches do a great job. He stated he realizes it is a challenge. Councilor Boyd commented on the Veteran exemption stating some communities went directly to a \$500 exemption and then he hears that if you are a Veteran and if you are voted by the people to sit on the City Council that maybe you should not be voting for that. Councilor Boyd stated even though he seconded the amendment motion, he will vote against the amendment because the majority of the people that took time to come and speak tonight and are opposed to it. What we need to do is work together, we are all elected.

Councilor Clarenbach stated obviously he is not in support of the amendment and wasn't when it first came up in a budget meeting. He stated that all we are doing is spending money that was left over from the school and Councilor Desrochers had criticized the practice of spending the leftover money but yet a laundry list of things the City needs and the increase in the veterans' exemption has been listed in the amendment. He stated as others have stated, we all need to get together, work together and the Mayor creating the Liaison Committee was an attempt to have us all work together. Where the school and the City are right now is not a good place. There are needs in both arenas; there are areas that need addressing not only in the teachers' salaries but also infrastructure, building repairs, the fire

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Station is finally going to get a roof replaced in this year's budget which has been leaking for about 4 years. There are plenty of needs but we should have one common list so when there is some surplus we can talk about that common list.

Councilor Trudel stated we are all in this together and we keep saying the same thing over and over about trying to work together. He stated when this amendment was discussed at the budget hearings he was in favor of it, however, to echo Councilor Clarenbach and also the number of people that have come out and voiced being against the amendment, he will take what everyone has said here tonight when it comes time to vote.

Councilor Desrochers commented that someone spoke earlier that any veteran on the City Council should not vote on this budget because they have a conflict of interest. He further stated I don't know any Councilor on this Council who is not a tax payer so would there be a conflict of interest every time the Council votes on a budget? He stated he takes disagreement with the statement. The Mayor commented that he has had conversations with the City Attorney on just this sort of issue and the City Attorney would agree when you are voting on a general policy that affects a number of people especially as was stated a budget which affects everyone in the community; that would generally not be seen as a conflict of interest. In the end however, it is up to each individual Councilor to make that decision.

Councilor Feener commented the comment made earlier concerning Councilors who are veterans should not vote as they stand to gain if the motion is passed was uncalled for.

Councilor Feener called the question, seconded by Councilor Starkweather. All in favor to end discussion on the amendment.

Seven Councilors voted no on the amendment, 1 Councilor voted yes. The amendment does not pass.

Councilor Clarenbach commented that it has been mentioned this evening about fund balance, it has been mentioned about CIP, obviously this budget does not do anything to address either of those and continuing to not put any funds there will have dire consequences somewhere down the road. The operating budget in the City is too large for what can be supported with taxes under the tax cap and we need to change what we are spending on our operating budget. We need to provide fewer services in an area to make it so we can better fund our fund balance and our capital improvement plan. Mayor Merrifield commented he would not dispute anything Councilor Clarenbach just stated, however, people in the community need to realize this City has seen dramatic losses in revenue particularly from State funding sources that had always been in place before. This has happened because of the economy and he stated we need a hot economy as there is no revenue for government. With reference to the Northern Pass the Mayor stated some of us are out there fighting this fight every day and we are out- numbered so if you want to see more revenue to the City, help us out as this project would mean a world of difference for Franklin.

Councilor Feener commended the City Manager, Department Heads, and School through this budget process this year, it was good this year. He stated particularly the School as the budget that the school brought forth this year was very comprehensive and he also commended them for coming up with an after-school program.

Roll Call on Resolution #01-13 relating to Appropriations and Estimated Revenues for fiscal Year 2013:

Councilor Clarenbach – Yes
Councilor Sharon – Yes
Councilor Boyd – Yes
Councilor Desrochers – No

Councilor Dzujna – Yes
Councilor Feener – Yes
Councilor Trudel – Yes
Councilor Starkweather – Yes

Resolution #01-13 Passes.

Ordinance #01-13 – concerning Chapter 160 Fees of the Franklin Municipal Code

Motion made by Councilor Clarenbach that the Franklin City Council approves Ordinance #01-13 by a roll call vote; motion seconded by Councilor Trudel.

Roll Call Vote on Ordinance #01-13:

***Councilor Boyd – Yes
Councilor Clarenbach – Yes
Councilor Desrochers – Yes
Councilor Dzujna – Yes***

***Councilor Feener – Yes
Councilor Sharon – Yes
Councilor Starkweather – Yes
Councilor Trudel – Yes***

Ordinance #01-13 passes by a unanimous vote.

Ordinance #02-13 – this ordinance represents an increase to the Veterans Tax Exemption from \$200 to \$250.

Motion made by Councilor Clarenbach that the Franklin City Council approves Ordinance #02-13 which increases the Veterans Exemption from \$200 to \$250 by a roll call vote. Motion seconded by Councilor Boyd.

Roll Call Vote on Ordinance #02-13

***Councilor Boyd – Yes
Councilor Desrochers – Yes
Councilor Dzujna – Yes
Councilor Feener – Yes***

***Councilor Clarenbach – Yes
Councilor Sharon – Yes
Councilor Starkweather – Yes
Councilor Trudel – Yes***

Ordinance #02-13 passes by a unanimous vote.

NH Fish and Game OHRV Enforcement Grant Award

Motion made by Councilor Desrochers that the Franklin City Council authorize the City Manager to execute all agreements necessary to enter into an agreement with Fish and Game to accept and expend a grant for OHRV wheeled vehicle enforcement for July 2012 through June 2013. Motion seconded by Councilor Trudel. All in favor, motion passes.

Other Business

Committee Reports – None

City Manager's Update

Manager Dragon advised in the Contingency Grant Line the City received \$15,000 from KaBoom for playground equipment, \$2,353.43 from Odell Park Centennial for the Basketball Court and a very nice donation from the Mayor's Drug Task Force which is being used for the Basketball Court at Danielle Park. \$250 was received from the Elks to Parks/Rec with no specific purpose. \$750 from the US Tennis Association for tennis equipment and Manager Dragon commented Councilor Dzujna had something to do with the City receiving those funds. \$4,558.28 from the State of NH for fire training and the Fire Department is taking advantage of those funds for training.

Tiny Twisters is up and running at the Bessie Rowell Community Center, they have their licenses and occupancy permit. It was a tight deadline to get all the construction done but it was accomplished. The Head Start project is out to bid and she advised she has begun very productive meetings with the TRIP Center. They have met with the architect and are beginning to finalize their design plans and they are doing fund raising.

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Manager Dragon congratulated Jason Jenkins on his promotion as the new shift captain and she announced the hiring of two new firefighters, Mike Foss FF/Paramedic and Zachary Mellett FF/EMT-1.

Manager Dragon congratulated Chief LaChapelle on recently graduating from the Certified Public Manager's Program.

Mayor Merrifield inquired of Councilor Boyd if a Highway Safety Committee Meeting could be scheduled sometime soon. Mayor Merrifield also commented on the information the Council received concerning a change concerning caps on rents in the Welfare Guidelines and that will be on the Agenda for the August meeting.

Concerning the gate at the lower end of Victory Drive, Director Sullivan advised a message board will be posted tomorrow at the intersection of Central Street and Victory Drive that will announce the closure. The gates has been on order for about a month, it is a heavy duty gate and should be installed within the next week or two.

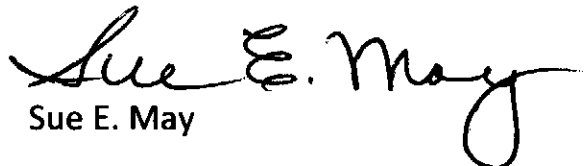
Councilor Feener commented that earlier in the meeting someone had stated the City is not doing a whole lot concerning drugs and he stated he feels that is not accurate as we have the Mayor's Drug Task Force and the Police Chief is very dedicated concerning the drug situation, it is a very difficult situation to take care of and he commended the Police Department for their efforts. Much of the work the Police Department does is behind the scenes that people don't know about. Manager Dragon commented there is a lot of police activity and the public is not always aware of it. She also commented a lot of work is being done with the youth through the Mayor's Drug Task Force and other avenues. She stated someone had commented they were afraid to walk the streets of Franklin and Manager Dragon stated she is not afraid to walk the streets of Franklin and that this is a wonderful community with lots of good things happening and the City is headed in the right direction. Councilor Dzujna commented several of the store

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fronts have been painted and the shed in Marceau park has been painted but whether people notices these things or not he does not know. Councilor Dzujna stated we still have a ways to go but things are happening in Franklin.

Motion to adjourn made by Councilor Clarenbach and seconded by Councilor Starkweather. All in favor, meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Sue E. May