

**CITY COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING
MAY 22, 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.

In Attendance

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

Absent

Councilor Sharon and Councilor Cournoyer.

**Tax Collector/City Clerk Department – Elections, Registration and Vital Records
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City Clerk/Tax Collector Holly Burbank stated there are not a lot of changes in her budget this year. Profession Development has a slight increase because the City Clerk and the Deputy are required this year after 5 years to do their recertification training as certified City Clerk/Tax Collectors. Under equipment maintenance there is a slight increase due to a new copy agreement. She advised there are three elections coming up September, October and November so that is why there are increases in the lines under Elections (Page 4 of 43). Ballots have to be printed because we use the ballot machines for the primary and the presidential election.

Library – Section 6

Director Rob Sargent advised there are no changes from last year's budget, it is level funded. He stated last year the library lost one full-time and person and we closed 1/3 of our hours. The level funding is being sought to maintain the personnel and current hours.

Planning & Zoning – Page 8 of 43

Planning & Zoning Administrator Dick Lewis stated he knows revenues have been covered but Mr. Lewis offered a couple of comments: even with the slowdown in the economy building permits have remained fairly steady, a lot of property owners have come in for upgrades in electrical work. There has been a drop in the number of zoning board applications. The Planning Board held a meeting on May 9th where the site plan was considered for Webster Valve Watts Water Technologies and a conditional site plan approval was issued that night. He issued a second conditional approval so the building permit application should be coming in soon.

Administrator Lewis advised his assistant Angie Carrier works 30 hours a week and is contributing significantly to the website and she has terrific computer skills. The professional development and staff development line is used by himself as well as the members of the Planning and Zoning Boards. He stated he is attempting to do some in-house training and is working with Attorney Fitzgerald in getting something going for the Zoning Board. The other contracted service is the mapping project working with Director Sullivan on the tax map project for utility work that has been described by Director Sullivan and the base map is needed to perform all the utility mapping work. Dues are mainly for Lakes Region Planning Commission.

Welfare – Page 33 of 43

Director Sara Tracy stated the biggest increase is the rentals. She stated with the writing of an ordinance the City would be allowed to cap rental assistance and checking rents over the past three years and the average is just about what the cap would be that Legal Aid recommends which is \$500 which would probably represent a 20% up to 30% decrease in rental assistance which would be a real help to the City. She stated she is working on the guidelines to give them more clarity as some do not understand the capabilities of the Welfare Office are and that the office is here for assistance, not as a means to pay all the bills. Utilities

have been high, fuel assistance was cut dramatically last year and lot of people either just shut down or didn't pay their rent and instead filled up the oil tank and then came in for rental assistance. Burial costs are down as many are now using cremation. Mayor Merrifield commented that he has always been confused concerning the State versus Local role and where the lines of responsibility. Ms. Tracy responded she feels where the applicant goes first tends to be where the assistance comes from. She stated within 7 days of assistance the applicant must apply for all available State programs and if they fail to do so they can be under suspension with the City.

Councilor Desrochers asked what is the average the Welfare Office pays in rent for applicants. Ms. Tracy advised \$504 has been the average for the last 3 years. He also asked how long people are allowed to stay on rental assistance. Ms. Tracy responded two months if there is unemployment in the house and after that they either have to downsize or move to a shelter.

Parks and Recreation – Page 35 of 43

Director Krystal Alpers advised there is an increase in the travel line because they go over that line every year. She advised that last year the Santa letters were cut from the budget, this year she stated she went out to the Lyon Club, Rotary and local business and not a lot of funds were donated. She was able to do the program but did not advertise, just put out the boxes out. She advised that she has put funds back in the budget this year for the Letters to Santa.

Assessing – Page 6 of 43

Manager Dragon stated Corcoran and Associates is recommended that the City do an update in the year in the year that we are due to have a recertification and she stated if you look Page 3 of Mr. Corcoran's memo concerning his proposed plan he states considering the City's recertification is in 2013 and states we hold for 2012 in preparation for full values anew in 2013, this will give us time to

accumulate sales data and spread the revaluation costs over the two fiscal years. This is what is in the proposed assessing budget. The memo shows the breakdown of the categories and she stated when she reviewed she brought their attention to the last page and she stated the only category she feels that is even close to even close to valid is the single family homes. She states the other categories have maybe 1 or 2 or at the most 3 sales. Manager Dragon stated she has just sent Mr. Corcoran a time line asking when will they be meeting with residents, when will each phase of the project be done? Councilor Dzujna commented there was also mention of a public relations program to notify taxpayers and he asked is that the City's responsibility. Manager Dragon stated he will meet with taxpayers over a number of days to talk about the values and some notices that go out which is part of their job, however, basic public relations would probably have to be done by the City which might consists notices and just spreading the word and answering questions. Sending out he notices and meetings with the taxpayers will be part of the contract. Councilor Desrochers suggested the holding of a public meeting where Mr. Corcoran and his company could be at the meeting where they could learn what is going on and why. Manager Dragon commented she could make sure that a public meeting is included in the contract.

General Government – Page 1 of 43

Mayor and Council's section, no changes.

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Manager Dragon commented on Professional Development that there is quite an increase and it is for one of two things. She stated in her contract there is the ability to take classes for a Masters Degree, she stated this was approved but she has not had time to take the classes. Also every other year she can attend the ICMA classes and she stated she has done that once but has not had time and usually only attends the New Hampshire Manager's courses which are in State and close by. This year Manager Dragon stated she put the funds in this year to

do something along those lines so it was increased by \$1,500. Manager Dragon stated the Contingency Fund is a catch all, a buffer for the overall budget and we try to put as much in this line as we can. She stated they will try to do as much of the roof for the Fire Department this year as they can from the Contingency Fund.

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Data Processing Section – all of the software and hardware. The software section is the same and the website hosting has been added and the website hosting is more than \$1,500, however, the cost is being shared with the Drug Task Force and FBIDC and the cost of building the new website was shared and the cost of hosting is shared. She advised serious consideration was given to switching software to AVATAR and she stated she would really like to switch. The program currently used for the assessing software is dos based and it is terrible and creates a lot of double entry. AVATAR would be a much smoother system that talks to other pieces in the building and would cut down on the double entry and it would cut down on errors but it is expensive and she stated that was the last cut she made in the budget. She advised that if you are going to switch to AVATAR, it is best to do it when you are doing your assessment update as your software is benefited for at that time. It would bring great value to the City and cut down on the errors and double entries and would be more efficient. Director Milner advise the amount that was cut from the budget for the AVATAR was \$12,394 net and the first year is more expensive because the old software and the new both have to be run so support fees have to be paid for both in year one. Manager Dragon commented the opportunity will not come around again for 5 years.

Legal – Level funding.

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Equipment & Supplies – Copier, funds based on current lease agreements. Advertising is level funded. City Hall Travel – Manager Dragon advised that the use of the old cruiser for travel is helping to save monies. The entire City Hall staff

uses the cruiser to attend training seminars. The blue cruiser is going to go to the Recreation Department for the beach attendants and City Hall will get an Impala from the PD, it is an old cruiser but not as old as the blue one. The cruisers are used until something major goes wrong and costs too much to repair.

Page 39 of 43 – Debt Service – No questions

Page 42 of 43 – Interfund Operating Transfers Out – No Questions

Page 43 of 43 – Overlay and Exemptions – Councilor Clarenbach stated Janis Caruth with Corcoran had mentioned increasing overlay and in shows that it has been reduced. Manager Dragon stated that is because the pole exemption was taken out because of the change in legislation. The amount for abatements is a little higher than last year. Veterans Exemption has gone from \$200 to \$250.

Other Business

Manager Dragon requested a vote on the Tiny Twisters Childcare Center Lease, one change that has been addressed is the use of video surveillance to note that the building is under video surveillance and also adjust the hours of operation for the center. She also stated this same lease agreement is to be used also for Head Start.

Councilor Desrochers inquired if Tiny Twister will be able to be in the Bessie Rowell Community Center by June 30th. Manager Dragon stated another construction meeting was held today and that question was asked and that is the plan for them to be in June 30th. She stated it is an aggressive schedule and she advised that Tiny Twisters had asked the school for a couple weeks extension but the extension was not granted but they were offered the band room by the school but that would require a relicensing.

Councilor Feener asked if Attorney Fitzgerald has reviewed the lease and Manager Dragon stated Attorney Fitzgerald wrote the lease.

Motion made by Councilor Desrochers that the City Council approves the Tiny Twisters lease. Motion seconded by Councilor Boyd.

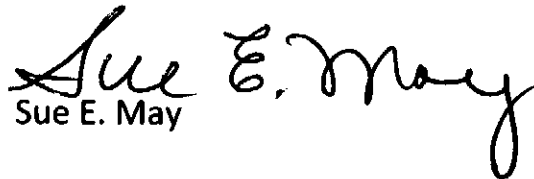
Councilor Feener commented that this has been a good project since the beginning and he thanked Manager Dragon for all her work in making this happen.

All in favor, motion passes.

Councilor Boyd inquired about the facility at Odell Park and if any steps have been taken to look into that. Director Milner advised the Trustees of the Trust are meeting Thursday, May 24th and she stated she will discuss this item with them and get their take on it.

Motion to adjourn made by Councilor Desrochers, seconded by Councilor Boyd. All in favor, meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Sue E. May