



Town Council Meeting Minutes



Thursday, July 16, 2026, at 7:00 PM, in the Matthew Thornton Room

Call to Order

Chair Harrington called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. Present at the meeting were Chair Harrington, Vice Chair Jobin, Councilor Albert, Councilor Landrigan, Councilor Murphy, Councilor Rothhaus, Councilor Thornton, and Town Manager Paul Micali.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Harrington led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements

Upcoming Town Council Meetings:

- Thursday, August 20, 2026, 7:00 PM Regular meeting
- Thursday, September 10, 2026, 7:00 PM Regular meeting
- Thursday, September 24, 2026, 7:00 PM Regular meeting

Pursuant to New Hampshire state law ([RSA 75:8-a](#)) requires every municipality to conduct a full property revaluation at least once every five years. This ensures all taxable real estate is equitably assessed at the **current market value**. The Preliminary Notice of value advises Merrimack residents of their new assessment. The letter includes instructions to schedule a phone hearing with the Assessor to discuss their property.

National Night Out

Tuesday, August 4th 5:30 to 7:30 pm.
MHS parking lot
Free Ice cream and Free Entertainment
Fire Engine Pull between MPD and MFD
Various community groups

At the last Council meeting I discussed the importance of being extra careful of opening emails and that fraud is everywhere. Fraud can occur anywhere and to anyone. The Town of Merrimack were victims of fraud in the month of June. We are working with an IT company that specializes in digital forensic examination to determine the effects of the incident. At this time we believe we have determined the source of the fraud and that no information was at risk, however we cannot yet say for certain as the investigation remains ongoing. We will provide further updates once the investigation concludes.

This incident is a reminder of how prevalent these issues have become. We ask that you all please be extra vigilant when you receive a phone call or email from someone you do not know.

In addition, if you believe you were a victim of a cyber-crime please contact the Police Department.

The NH Department of Banking has previously published some tips available online:

https://www.banking.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt621/files/inline-documents/sonh/avoiding-scams-brochure_1.pdf

Comments from the Press and Public

None.

Recognitions, Resignations and Retirements

1. Recognition of Town Committee Members

Submitted by Town Council Chair Nancy Harrington and Vice Chair Jennifer Jobin

The Town Council to recognize to the following individuals for their volunteer service to the Town of Merrimack:

- **Danielle Melanson** – Conservation Commission
- **Rich Conescu** – Zoning Board of Adjustment

MOTION made by Councilor Thornton and seconded by Councilor Rothhaus to accept the resignations of Danielle Melanson of the Conservation Commission and Rich Conescu of the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

Appointments

None.

Public Hearing

None.

Legislative Updates from State Representatives

None.

Town Manager's Report

All States Asphalt will be in the Town of Merrimack for crack sealing for two days: 7/23 and 7/24.

Two Police officers with vehicles have been requested for traffic control.

Road list is:

Wilson Hill Road, Mullikin Road to Town Line

Naticook Road, Palmeri Drive to Dirt Rd (yes, the road is named dirt)

Peaslee Road, Naticook to Dena for one section, Dahl to Amherst Rd for the other.

Mr. Micali also stated that with the property revaluation coming up, they need to come to a consensus on the elderly exemption. The Council agreed to review this and have a special meeting in August due to the Ordinance. He will present a first read on August 6th to the Council.

Councilor Albert wanted to note that Sargeant Dennis Foley retired from the Merrimack Police Department after 40 years of service.

Consent Agenda

None.

Old Business

1. Merrimack Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) Program Analysis

Submitted by Town Manager Paul T. Micali

The Town Council to review CCA Analysis and savings for the first 3 months.

Mr. Micali shared that he spoke with the consultants from Freedom Energy, and there are mailings going out to the community that should say First Point Power, Town of Merrimack, and Freedom Energy on it, and if the mailings do not say these specific words, then they are not from the Town of Merrimack. First Point Power is the supplier of the electric rates, and Freedom Energy is our consultant who handles the website and

program enrolling/unenrolling. Mr. Micali then shared that for the month of April, they had about 5.5 million kilowatts in the community choice aggregation. In May, this number jumped to almost 7.5 million kilowatts. Although they don't have the numbers yet for June, he expects the numbers to increase even further due to the hot weather. For enrollment status for Merrimack, there are 11,605 meters in town, with 9,611 residents (82.8%) enrolled in the program, and 1,266 residents (10.9%) that have opted out. 728 residents (6.3%) have dropped out of/rejected the program. From April through August 2026, the projected savings for enrolled residents are estimated at \$565,110. The current FPP rate is \$0.09699, and the utility rate from EverSource is \$0.11303. The projected savings from August through November 2026 is estimated to be \$1,077,500, with the FPP at \$0.09699 and the EverSource utility rate at \$0.14009. The projected savings from November 2026 through February 2027 do decrease, with estimates at \$117,880, and the FPP at \$0.13588 and EverSource utility rate at \$0.14009. One of the factors for the FPP rate being at \$0.13588 is that the short-term energy market is very volatile right now and therefore the rates are very volatile. Mr. Micali took a few minutes to share how to opt-in to the program, stating that you can either call First Point Power at (888)875-1711, or visit the Opt-In/Opt-Out form online through the town website/CCA page. For more information, residents can visit the Merrimack CCA Program: felpower.com/cca/nh/Merrimack, or firstpointpower.com, as well as call First Point Power at (888) 875-1711 or Freedom Energy Logistics at (866)568-4725.

2. Merrimack Time Capsule Initiative Follow-up Discussion

Submitted by Neil Anketell & Troy Aarthun

The Town Council to be presented with an update and to consider authorization and approval of the installation of a 250-year commemorative time capsule on Town-owned property.

MOTION made by Councilor Thornton and seconded by Councilor Rothhaus to table this agenda item.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

New Business

1. Committee Appointments

Submitted by Town Council Chair Nancy Harrington and Vice Chair Jennifer Jobin

The Town Council to consider appointing the following individuals to Town committees, pursuant to Charter Article 4-8:

- **Sarah Lumens** – Conservation Commission (*Alternate member*)
- **Rachel Carey** – Parks & Recreation Committee (*Full member*)
- **John Manuele** – Planning Board (*Full member*)
- **Ben Niles** – Planning Board (*Alternate member*)
- **Ken Asai** – Town Center Committee (*Full member*)
- **Rodney Buckley** – Zoning Board of Adjustment (*Alternate member*)
- **John DeFrancisco** – Zoning Board of Adjustment (*Full member*)
- **Wolfram von Schoen** – Zoning Board of Adjustment (*Alternate member*)

MOTION made by Councilor Murphy and seconded by Councilor Landrigan to appoint Sarah Lumens to the Conservation Commission as an Alternate member.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

MOTION made by Councilor Thornton and seconded by Vice Chair Jobin to appoint Rachel Carey to the Parks & Recreation Committee as a Full member.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

1 **MOTION** made by Councilor Albert and seconded by Councilor Landrigan to appoint John Manuele
2 to the Planning Board as a Full member and Ben Niles to the Planning Board as an Alternate member.
3 **MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0**
4

5 Mr. Niles was present and sworn into his position.
6

7 **MOTION** made by Councilor Rothhaus and seconded by Councilor Thornton to appoint Ken Asai to
8 the Town Center Committee as a Full member.
9 **MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0**
10

11 Mr. Asai was present and sworn into his position.
12

13 **MOTION** made by Councilor Murphy and seconded by Councilor Albert to appoint Rodney Buckley
14 to the Zoning Board of Adjustment as an Alternate member, John DeFrancisco to the Zoning Board of
15 Adjustment as a Full member, and Wolfram von Schoen to the Zoning Board of Adjustment as an
16 Alternate member.
17 **MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0**
18

19 Mr. DeFrancisco and Mr. von Schoen were present and sworn into their positions.
20

21 **2. Acceptance of Donation of Granite Benches - Watson Park**

22 *Submitted by Bill Wilkes*

23 The Town Council to consider the acceptance of two (2) granite benches from the Rotary Club of
24 Merrimack, with a value of up to \$3,000, in honor of Peter and Jackie Flood, to be placed at Watson
25 Park, pursuant to RSA 31:95-e and Charter Article 8-15. C
26

27 Bill Wilkes of the Rotary Club was present along with Rotary Club President Carl Ellis to discuss the
28 donation of two granite benches in honor of Peter and Jackie Flood. Mr. Wilkes shared that Peter and Jackie
29 made a positive impact in Merrimack, with Peter being a founder of the Rotary Club and Jackie being on the
30 Council for several years. Both were very active in the community and very involved in Watson Park, with
31 Jackie being involved in the beautification of the grounds with the Garden Club and Peter being a driving
32 force with the pavilion. Because of this, the Rotary Club would like to donate two benches around the
33 pavilion, with an inscription for Peter and Jackie, with the total cost being around \$3,385 paid 100% by the
34 Rotary Club and other private donors.
35

36 **MOTION** made by Councilor Thornton and seconded by Councilor Rothhaus to accept the donation
37 of two (2) granite benches from the Rotary Club of Merrimack, with a value of up to \$3,385, in honor
38 of Peter and Jackie Flood, to be placed at Watson Park, pursuant to RSA 31:95-e and Charter Article
39 8-15. C.

40 **MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0**
41

42 **3. Acceptance of Heating Assistance Donation - Welfare Department**

43 *Submitted by Welfare Administrator Sandra DeLosa*

44 The Town Council to consider the acceptance and expenditure of a donation in the amount of \$4,000
45 from Merrimack Friends and Families to be used towards the Welfare Department's Heating
46 Assistance account, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and Charter Article 8-15.

47 Mr. Micali shared that Merrimack Friends and Families is donating \$4,000 to the Welfare Department to use
48 towards heating assistance for this winter, and also shared that their yard sale will be September 19th at the
49 Town Hall parking lot, with all the proceeds going towards various town organizations.
50

MOTION made by Councilor Rothhaus and seconded by Councilor Thornton to accept and expend a donation in the amount of \$4,000 from Merrimack Friends and Families to be used towards the Welfare Department's Heating Assistance account, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and Charter Article 8-15, and authorize the Town Manager to sign any necessary documents.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

The Council took a 3-minute recess and resumed at 7:39pm.

4. Ambulance Capital Reserve Fund Withdrawal Request – Stryker Xpedition Chair

Submitted by Fire Chief Joseph Guarnera

The Town Council to consider the Merrimack Fire Rescue Department's request to withdrawal up to \$21,564.40 from the Ambulance Capital Reserve Fund to purchase a Stryker Xpedition Chair, associated accessories and a 5-year service contract.

Fire Chief Guarnera was present with Asst. Fire Chief DiPaola to discuss the withdrawal request to purchase a Stryker Xpedition Power Chair from the Ambulance CRF, which includes the battery kit, battery charger, power cord, and a 5-year service contract, at a total quoted cost of \$21,564.40. He shared that the power chair is used for large patients, with a capacity carrying weight of up to 500lbs, and is designed for safety and to minimize back injuries, in addition to being comfortable for the patient. They currently have an older chair that was donated many years ago that they find very useful. The chair and accessories total \$16,196.40, and the 5-year service agreement totals \$4,960.

MOTION made by Councilor Murphy and seconded by Councilor Thornton to authorize the withdrawal of up to \$21,564.40 from the Ambulance Capital Reserve Fund to purchase a Stryker Xpedition Chair, associated accessories and a 5-year service contract, and authorize the Town Manager to sign any necessary documents.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

5. Transfer of Funds Request – Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Two Command Vehicle Purchase

Submitted by Fire Chief Joseph Guarnera

The Town Council to consider a request for the purchase of two Fire Command Vehicles from the Fire Equipment Capital Fund.

Fire Chief Guarnera and Asst. Fire Chief DiPaola then discussed the request to purchase three (revised from two) Fire Command Vehicles from the Fire Equipment Capital Fund. Chief Guarnera shared that there is currently \$80,000 CIP for the next three fiscal years totaling \$240,000, and the last three command car replacements were 3 years ago, 7 years ago, and 12 years ago. Since the last command vehicle replacement was put into the CIP many years ago, the price of vehicles has increased on average of 4% per year and will continue to do so. Further, when these vehicles are purchased, they are all basic vehicles with no luxury additions, and all prices for the vehicles and equipment are from the lowest state bid price. He would like to buy all three vehicles now because they are having a hard time keeping them in good working conditions and up to safety standards, and repairs are costly. He would also like to save money by having lettering and pick-up caps done locally, and reuse some of the command modules from vehicles they already own. Additionally, they already own the radios and will transfer from one vehicle to the other. He shared that he would like to purchase one command vehicle, which would be the same as what they have now, one F-150 pick-up for A/C support services that is more conducive to missions (incident command, transporting equipment, significantly more room compared to an SUV), and one F-250 pick-up for Station 1 that is more conducive to the purpose (plowing, transportation to/from training, additional seating capacity, transporting, towing). The Council discussed this, asking if there would be any future impact of purchasing three vehicles

at the same time, which Mr. Micali clarified that the replacements would be staggered and would not all be due together, and went over the cost of the vehicles and the expected longevity of them and the accessories/equipment. Mr. Micali is suggesting they purchase one Tahoe (or similar) and one F-150 for \$160,000, and then revisit once they have purchased these two vehicles. The Council overall agreed, expressing that this is a reasonable compromise and more research needs to be done before they agree to the purchase of the third vehicle.

MOTION made by Councilor Thornton and seconded by Councilor Albert to approve the transfer and use of funds from the Fire Equipment Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of purchasing one SUV Command Vehicle and one F-150 requested by the Merrimack Fire Rescue Department, and authorize the Town Manager to sign any necessary documents.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

6. Merrimack Fire Rescue Department Proposal for Habitual Non-Emergency Lift Assist Fee

Submitted by Fire Chief Joseph Guarnera

The Town Council to consider the Merrimack Fire Rescue's request to establish and implement a fee for habitual non-emergency lift assists.

Fire Chief Guarnera began by sharing what an acceptable non-emergency lift assist is vs a non-acceptable non-emergency lift assist; acceptable lift assists include an elderly or incapacitated person who fell, but is not injured, and needs help up, or an elderly or incapacitated person is on the floor and needs help up, or a person is just back from the hospital and needs assistance into the home. Non-acceptable lift assists include a person needs to go shopping, needs to be brought down the stairs to go to a doctor appointment, needs to be brought back up after a doctor's appointment, needs to go to the casino, or needs to go to a family function. He then stated that from January 2025 to June 1, 2026 there have been 277 lift assists, with 115 (41%) from 9 residents; all requests were between 5 to 15 requests, and 1 requested more than 39 times. Non-emergency lift assists are the cause of multiple injuries on duty, which cause firefighters to be out of work for months at a time and can cause long-term or even career ending injuries. They also generate thousands of dollars in overtime due to shift coverage, and shift shortages if not covered, and they leave an already understaffed shift unable to respond to a true emergency. Chief Guarnera then highlighted that surrounding communities, such as Nashua and Hudson, do not provide assistance for non-emergency lift assists, and others such as Milford, do not provide the service for convenience type calls (shopping, to the car, etc.) and only average 30-35 times a year. He also shared that Derry has entertained a fee, but has not implemented one as of yet. He is proposing that there is a fee imposed for habitual non-emergency lift assists for convenience reasons, and to limit the amount of responses to any one address to 3, at which time the fee will be imposed and no response will be provided. All calls will be directed through the 911 system and not be called directly to the fire department, and if such a call is made through 911, it be considered an emergency and will be dealt with as such. If a 911 call is made and there is no emergency, the caller may be civilly charged for a false emergency call. He stressed that this is only for habitually non-emergency requests and NOT for the 1 or 2 time legitimate requests.

Mr. Micali wanted to discuss this with the Council and stated that they can get this policy written and approved in August if the Council is interested in moving forward. Councilor Murphy shared that this makes great sense to her given the staffing issues and need to prioritize real emergencies, but she questioned if there is a way to get the Welfare Administrator involved for living arraignments or other opportunities so they are not relying on the fire department for non-emergency assistance, and she also inquired what agencies would be hired for these non-emergencies/routine trips. Chief Guarnera shared that private ambulance companies offer services that can bring people up and down their stairs or to their shopping trips, and that would be an option if this moves forward. Vice Chair Jobin suggested looking up the prices of the transport service to ensure the fee is equal or more that way habitual offenders are not still relying on the fire department as a

cheaper alternative if the fee is less than the transport service cost. The Council agreed that there should be something in place for the repeat offenders, and want to get Welfare's input to see what they can add to the conversation, and they also don't want individuals to feel homebound or afraid to call for legitimate help.

7. Acceptance of NHDES Waste Oil Grant Funds

Submitted by Solid Waste Foreman Patrick Davis

The Town Council to consider the acceptance and expenditure of grant funds in the amount of \$2,500 from the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), for the Department of Public Works Solid Waste Division to be used towards the disposal of used waste oil, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and Charter Article 8-15.

Dawn Tuomala was present to share that she received an email on April 1st from NHDES stating that there is a grant program for waste oil for \$2,500 that can be used towards disposal. They applied and have since received the grant, and just need the Council to sign off on accepting and expending the funds so they can begin disposing their waste oil.

MOTION made by Councilor Thornton and seconded by Councilor Rothhaus to accept and expend grant funds in the amount of \$2,500 from the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), for the Department of Public Works Solid Waste Division to be used towards the disposal of used waste oil, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and Charter Article 8-15, and authorize the Town Manager to sign any necessary documents.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

8. Donation Acceptance for the Merrimack USA 250th Anniversary Committee

Submitted by Parks and Recreation Director Matthew Casparius

The Town Council to consider the acceptance and expenditure of donations totaling \$1,004 received and raised through the Jail & Bail Fundraiser and the sale of commemorative t-shirts, to be used towards the Merrimack USA 250th Anniversary Committee's 4th of July expenses, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and Charter Article 8-15.

Mr. Micali shared that after the Jail & Bail Fundraiser, a gentleman walked in with a few more checks to put towards the 4th of July expenses, as well as the sale of t-shirts that were made for the 250th anniversary that were made in house.

MOTION made by Councilor Thornton and seconded by Councilor Murphy to accept and expend donations totaling \$1,004 received and raised through the Jail & Bail Fundraiser and the sale of commemorative t-shirts, to be used towards the Merrimack USA 250th Anniversary Committee's 4th of July expenses, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and Charter Article 8-15.

MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0

9. Donation Acceptance for the Merrimack 250th Speech & Essay Contest

Submitted by Parks and Recreation Director Matthew Casparius

The Town Council to consider the acceptance and expenditure of a donation in the amount of \$400 from the Watkins Forest Income Fund for the Merrimack 250th Essay Contest and \$500 from the Gage & Lawrence Fund for the Merrimack 250th Speech Contest, to be used towards the reimbursement to the Town for funds already spent, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and Charter Article 8-15.

1 Mr. Micali shared that these donations are to reimburse for the prize money for the winners of the essay and
2 speech contest – because the funds originally came from the Trustees of the Trust Funds, they had to write
3 the check to the 250th Committee and then the Committee gives the money to the individual because the
4 Town sponsored the event.
5

6 **MOTION** made by Councilor Thornton and seconded by Councilor Albert to accept and expend a
7 donation in the amount of \$400 from the Watkins Forest Income Fund for the Merrimack 250th Essay
8 Contest and \$500 from the Gage & Lawrence Fund for the Merrimack 250th Speech Contest, to be
9 used towards the reimbursement to the Town for funds already spent, pursuant to RSA 31:95-b and
10 Charter Article 8-15.

11 **MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0**
12

13 **Minutes**

14 Approve the minutes from the following Town Council meeting:

15 ♦ June 25, 2026
16

17 **MOTION** made by Vice Chair Jobin and seconded by Councilor Thornton to approve the minutes
18 from June 25, 2026 as amended.

19 **MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0**
20

21 **Amendments:**

22 Page 5 Line 215: change “please contact name @email” to enter in name and email address
23

24 **Comments from the Press & Public**

25 None.
26

27 **Comments from the Council**

28 None.
29

30 **Adjourn**

31
32 **MOTION** made by Councilor Thornton and seconded by Councilor Landrigan to adjourn the
33 meeting.

34 **MOTION CARRIES 7-0-0**
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36 The meeting adjourned at 8:56pm.
37

38 Respectfully Submitted,
39

40 Jennifer Steagald
41