

City Council Minutes
Tuesday, January 12, 2016
City Hall Auditorium
7:00 pm

1. Called to Order @7:00 pm
2. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilor Bartley
3. Roll Call was taken and Councilors Bartley, Einson, Lavoie, McClure, McMilleon, Sherwood, Sickorez, Stanganelli and Scorzoni were present.
4. **Councilor McMilleon moved to approve the minutes of December 8, 2015 and January 4, 2016. Councilor Sickorez seconded and it was voted Unanimous.**

5. **Correspondence**

a. President/Vice President Communications

Councilor Scorzoni stated that as discussed at the January 4, meeting he had provided to the Council a list of appointments for City Council Committees.

Councilor Lavoie moved to approve the list of committee appointments. Councilor Stanganelli seconded.

Councilor Scorzoni stated that he looked at the committee list and some of these are outdated and need to be revised. He stated that at some point they will need to discuss and clean the list up. He offered up a potential workshop possibly in March.

Councilor Stanganelli asked if there were mission statements or definitions of the committees available.

Councilor Scorzoni stated that most of them have a scope and membership spelled out in the Council Rules. A few are not listed and have been developed through different Ordinances or Orders that have been approved in the past so perhaps in preparation for the March meeting we can gather that information.

A vote was taken and it was Unanimous.

b. Communication from Elected Officials, Boards and Commissions

c. Council Communications, Announcements and Committee Reports

Councilor Lavoie brought up that the Mass. Municipal Association Conference is coming up on the 22nd and 23rd and he recommended that the New Councilors attend.

6. **Mayoral Appointments**

2016-007 Re-appointment of Russell Saboo to the Liquor Licensing Commission for a term to expire June 30, 2022.

Councilor Stanganelli moved to approve. Councilor Bartley seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

2016-008 Re-appointment of Derek Balaam to the Liquor Licensing Commission for a term to expire June 30, 2022.

Councilor McClure moved to approve. Councilor Sickorez seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

7. Licenses & Permits – List attached

Councilor Stanganelli moved to approve the attached list. Councilor Einson seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

8. Public Comment

Alison Wahn, 9 Newton Rd, spoke regarding the Off Leash Ordinance. She stated that Woodsom Farm is used for so many things and feels there is a way for responsible dog owners to use a portion just as other activities do. She suggested a consideration of a change and compromise to either certain days, or certain hours or use of one property either Woodsom or Battis for off leash as there has to be some way to accommodate everybody in the town. She believes there were a couple of bad apples but most are responsible and the ACO has been incredibly kind and professional.

Ellen Norton, 5 Spring St, stated that she loves the fact that she can walk her dog at Woodsom Farm. She does not own she rents and it is important for her to have that place. She would like to see a change in the Ordinance.

Tracey Brown, 2 Arlington St, stated she has been here since 1998 and having dogs there is lots of open spaces. She has been going there for quite some time and it is great socialization for both herself and the dogs as well as exercise. She stated that she has been using the farm as off leash but understands that not everyone wants to be greeted and has trained her dogs. She has been working with a group of people in gathering support because many want to see off leash privileges at the farm legally and above the board. The ACO has been terrific and there is no negativity towards him, he is doing his job. She would like the Council to consider a change in the ordinance to allow something that has been going on for some time.

Susan Jenkins, not an Amesbury resident but has been walking her dogs at Battis Farm for a few years and was not aware of a leash law because everyone has been letting dogs run off leash. She stated that most people who come to the farms are responsible owners. Their dogs either have a good recall or they are leashed, they don't chase people or other dogs. Most people pick up after their dogs. She states that it would be nice if the ordinance could be changed

Jonathan Deily-Swearingen, 44 Sparhawk St commented in favor of changing the bylaw. The community has spoken and this is what this space has been used for. He

feels the majority of the people use it very responsibly and that he never feels in danger over there. He understands that by advocating a more open leash law that he is assuming some risk and is okay with that because he feels the trade off in quality of life far outweighs that risk.

Carolyn Giannini of 2 Essex St spoke but did not come up to the podium. She is in support of the off leash at the Farms.

9. Council Response to Public Comment

Councilor Lavoie stated that Woodsom Farm where most of the walking happens is in his district and he stated that he often walks there himself even though he does not have a dog and also cross country skis. He stated that he has had constituents contact him over the years and his response has always been that the Council's job is to find a reasonable balance for everyone's legitimate interests. There is a leash law and ignorance to the law is no excuse, so if you get fines you will have to pay them. He stated that he would be happy to work with a group to help fashion an ordinance.

Councilor Bartley stated that she had received letters from non-dog owners who walk with the children and they complained of pack dogs that when they are off leash they end up in packs. One woman complained that one owner could not control their dog and it continued to jump up on the children and the carriage. We don't want Newburyport's problems.

Councilor Einson stated that he is also willing to work with people to work something out.

Councilor Stanganelli stated that he was at an informational meeting by the Freedom Trails Group with a number of people who had a very intense discussion and a proposal was put forth. He stated that he is in favor of a reasonable balanced approach to use of the land and now as a new member of the Woodsom Farm Committee he is wondering if this comes into that area. He is also willing to work with anyone to come up with a balanced reasonable use for all.

Councilor McClure stated that she believes that Woodsom Farm was meant for passive recreation for all of our residents and she believes there is a way to make it happen and is also willing to work with anyone to come up with a solution.

10. Public Hearings:

11. First Readings

2016-006 An Order to appropriate the overlay surplus as determined by the Board of Assessors – Mayor Gray sponsor

Summary: this order will authorize the use of overlay surplus for the funding of the Revaluation and Triennial certification work of FY2017.

Councilor Stanganelli moved to send this to the Finance Committee and to schedule the Public hearing for the City Council meeting on February 9. Councilor Sickorez seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

2016-009 A Resolution to accept the expenditure of \$5,500 in capital funding for the purposes of replacing air conditioning units at the Amesbury Public Library – Mayor Gray sponsor

Summary: In the Fiscal Year 2016 Operating Budget, the City Council appropriated \$431,500 for various capital needs. This resolution reiterates the City Council's support of the expenditure of \$5,500 in capital funding for the purposes of replacing air conditioning units at the Amesbury Public Library

Councilor Scorzoni stated that this money had already been appropriated and is offered to us as a resolution tonight so it could be voted tonight and also that he received notice that the Library Director was not able to attend the meeting but there is a packet attached with information.

Councilor McMilleon moved to approve 2016-009. Councilor McClure seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

2016-010 A Resolution to accept the expenditure of \$60,000 in capital funding for the purposes of upgrading radio equipment in the Amesbury Police Department – Mayor Gray Sponsor

Summary: In the Fiscal Year 2016 Operating Budget the City Council appropriated \$431,500 for various capital needs. This resolution reiterates the City Council's support of the expenditure of \$60,000 in capital funding for the purposes of upgrading radio equipment in the Amesbury Police Department

Chief Ouellet stated that this is a system upgrade for communication between Amesbury and other communities who have already upgraded. The current system is about 12 years old. This will give the Police Department new portables and new radios for the cars.

Councilor McClure moved to approve the resolution to accept \$60,000 in capital funding for the purposes of upgrading our radio equipment for the Police Department.

Councilor Stanganelli asked what will happen if there is new technology in a year or two?

Chief Ouellet stated that technology changes quicker than the hardware that goes with it. There is talk that there will be another band out there that we will be able to communicate separately using our government issued phones but hope to get at least a decade out of this. This does not have anything to do with dash cams and there is no discussion on having them.

Councilor McMilleon seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

2016-011 An Order to authorize a transfer from Ambulance Receipts to Fire Expenses for the purpose of purchasing a new Ambulance – Mayor Gray Sponsor
Summary: Transfer \$185,000 from Ambulance Receipts to Fire Expenses to cover purchase of a new ambulance.

Chief Burkenbush stated that this will replace the 2010 chase; a Ford F450. This is known as the UPS Brown Ambulance. That one will go to the back row and adding a third ambulance. This is to keep us in line with the ambulance replacements. We are going to start a capital program where every three years we buy a new ambulance and the oldest one will go to the back of the line and will get traded out and so forth. This has not been done here in the past. This is the first ambulance within this program.

Councilor McMilleon moved to send this to the Finance Committee and to schedule the Public hearing for the City Council meeting on February 9. Councilor McClure seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

2016-012 An Order to authorize the Mayor to accept and expend a grant in the amount of \$525,000 from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs – Mayor Gray sponsor

Summary: Funding from this grant will be used for the following purposes:

- Design coordination with MassDOT of Riverwalk, kayak launch, and bulkhead design.
- Permitting/legal costs of Riverwalk, kayak launch, and bulkhead design
- LSP remediation permits of Riverwalk, kayak launch, and bulkhead design
- Construction of planting and other improvements
- Design of bike trail
- Permitting/legal costs of bike trail

Councilor Sickorez moved to send this to the Finance Committee and to schedule the Public hearing for the City Council meeting on February 9. Councilor McClure seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

2016-013 An Ordinance to request that the City Council vote to amend the Amesbury Zoning Bylaw and Amesbury Overlay Zoning Map – Mayor Gray sponsor
Summary: The proposed zoning amendments seek to modify the existing Renewable Energy Development District (REDD) boundary to include specific parcels not currently included in the overlay zoning district and to make modifications to the provisions of Section 11 and Section XI.S of the Amesbury Zoning Bylaw.

Councilor Lavoie moved to send this to the Ordinance Committee and the Planning Board for a public hearing and to schedule a public hearing for the City Council meeting on February 9. Councilor McMilleon seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

2016-014 An Order to authorize the Mayor to accept and expend a grant in the amount of \$225,865 from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources – Mayor Gray sponsor.

Summary: The Office of Community and Economic Development was awarded the 2015 Green Communities Grant to support energy conservation measures. The grant will allow Amesbury to make energy conservation updates at the Amesbury Middle School. There is no local match required for this grant.

Councilor Einson moved to send this to the Finance Committee and to schedule the Public hearing for the City Council meeting on February 9. Councilor Sickorez seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

12. LATE FILE

Councilor Stanganelli moved to accept the late file. Councilor Sickorez seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

2016-015 Amesbury City Council Resolution to support the following steps by the City of Amesbury as outlined below:

Summary: A Resolution to support the following:

- The development of a Regional joint application, to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, by the City of Amesbury, as the lead applicant, and the Town of Merrimac as a co-applicant with the Town of Salisbury serving as management entity. Said CDBG funds are available through competitive grants to municipalities for affordable housing projects, social services, economic development, and public facilities that benefit low and moderate income persons. The FY 2015 grant round will involve an application seeking the maximum award possible which is \$1,000,000 in FY 2016. Further the program will continue the success of the Housing Rehabilitation program and Social Services targeting low and moderate income households in a manner consistent with the FY 2015 program.

William Scott, Director of Community and Economic Development gave a brief presentation. Included in the packet is a letter from him to the Mayor dated January 8. It gives notice that we were awarded with the Town of Salisbury a grant in the amount of over \$900,000 for housing rehabilitation and social services. The breakdown was \$415,000 for Amesbury and \$325,000 for Salisbury with a mix of social services and housing rehab. Total grant awarded was \$985,922. We are considered a CDF1 community which is a Community Development Fund 1 which means we can apply every single year for a grant. Salisbury and Merrimac are CDF2 communities and they can apply only every other year. So Salisbury will continue as management entity and Amesbury will remain lead role because of CDF1 status and then we would bring in Merrimac. All three communities have a distinct need for housing rehabilitation and social services so it was a good idea to sustain a program for the city, start a program for Merrimac and also sustain the Planning Office work from Salisbury. This grant will be similar to the current grant. Our goal is to create a strong administrative competitive

program. We will write inter-municipal agreements between the City of Amesbury and the Town of Merrimac and that will come back before the Council. We will then have a specific consulting contract with the Town of Salisbury to provide the services.

Councilor Sherwood asked if the Housing Rehab applications were open.

Mr. Scott stated that they were and were available on the website and Salisbury is doing the intake.

Councilor Scorzoni asked if Salisbury was compensated for the work they are doing to prepare this application.

Mr. Scott stated that they are. That is out of our current grant application. Merrimac will pay part from the new grant.

Councilor Sickorez moved to approve. Councilor Sherwood seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

Councilor Bartley asked that Nipun be present at the Ordinance Committee meeting.

Councilor Scorzoni also stated that the Ordinance Committee will need to set their schedule.

Councilor McClure moved to adjourn at 8:05pm. Councilor McMilleon seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Dunning
Assistant City Clerk

***Discussion of topics not reasonably anticipated by the chair 48 hours before the meeting.

13. Adjourn