

Municipal Council Meeting  
Tuesday, June 19, 2007 @7:00PM  
Town Hall Auditorium

Call To Order 7:08PM

Roll Call: Robert Lavoie, Alison Lindstrom, Donna McClure, Mario Pinierio, Michelle Thone, Roger Benson, Thomas Iacobucci, Ann Connolly King, Christopher Lawrence

Carol Casey, Chairperson Amesbury Council on Aging – statement attached.

Gregg Hyatt, 20 Prospect St. – Mr. Hyatt invites the entire town of Amesbury to join him at a meeting on June 30<sup>th</sup> at the Amesbury Play House at 1:00PM. They are looking for people to help change the property tax bite in the state. They hope to change Prop 2 ½ to 1 forcing the state to find other ways to fund things like education and other things.

### **Public Hearing**

**2007-028** Amend original 2007-028 “An Order to Provide for Salary Increases”  
President Lawrence reads 2007-028 and opens the public hearing.

James Thieverge, Friend St. – Mr. Thieverge agrees with a salary increase to \$75,000.

Councilor Lavoie proposed the original order to increase the Mayor’s and Municipal Council’s salaries. The Finance Committee was not in favor of it. The Municipal Council’s salary increase was taken out and made a separate bill and the salary for the Mayor was reduced to \$75,000. At a workshop the automatic cost of living increases were not supported and has since been deleted. He believes you have to look at where the Mayor’s salary stands in relation to inflation, other communities and in terms of the Mayor’s function as the administrator of a 48 million dollar budget. He states the cost of living index from 1997 to 2007 has gone up 56.7 points, based on percentages that would be 33.8%. If you take the original salary of \$50,000 and keep pace with inflation over the past ten years the salary should be at \$75,000. The Mayor’s salary in Haverhill is \$90,000, Lawrence \$70,538, Peabody \$94,933, Salem \$80,000 and Saugus \$95,000. Amesbury is truly at the low end of the scale compared to other communities in the area. Because of budget cuts he knows there is no good time to bring up the issue of a salary increase but it can only come up in the first 18 months of each term of office. He urges his fellow councilors to support the increase to \$75,000.

President Lawrence closes the public hearing of 2007-028

**2007-069** An Ordinance to Establish an Annual Expense Allowance for Members of the Municipal Council

Councilor Thone reads 2007-069 into the record.

Councilor Lavoie states the Finance Committee reviewed his first proposed salary increase for the council and was not in favor of it. To pass a salary increase for the council a vote of 8 out of 9 would be required to do so. At a workshop it was acknowledged that each councilor has paid out of pocket for supplies to do their job. He proposed this expense allowance to cover those supplies.

President Lawrence closes the public hearing.

**2007-001** To Vote to Adopt an Operating Budget for FY2008  
President Lawrence opens the public hearing.

Dr. Chaurette, Superintendent of Schools – Dr. Chaurette thanked the Finance Committee for their work on the School Department budget. He stated the FY08 budget continues to promote current curriculum development initiatives; it continues to support the arts, music and student activities. It supports an adequate level of supervision and purchases some additional technology. It provides for the good maintenance of the facilities and incorporates staff development and funding. There is a small increase in fees and it does not eliminate any programs. It does provide a competitive edge in the school choice world.

Libby Arsenault, 118 Elm Street – Ms. Arsenault feels if the budget is cut further it would be devastating for the district.

Gail Brown, 2 Woodlawn Street – Ms. Brown would like to see the school budget fully funded and to have the town to continue to maintain and support community assets through the Mayor's capital improvements plan.

Mayor Kezer thanked his staff for their extra effort to implement the new form of budget. He stated he submitted a \$47.5 million budget, a 2.3 million dollar increase over last year's budget. If you take into account the increased costs for benefits and retirement on the city side there is a balance of \$33,000 in new money to cover all programs and services and to absorb the inflationary costs. On the school side the School Committee met his target of 1.6 million dollars less than what the Superintendent submitted. They were able to get to the bottom line target and maintain the fundamental education which is one of the more attractive education systems in the region and that is indicated by the school choice numbers of being a net positive. He states the Finance Committee cut one million dollars from the Whittier budget however; the town will be paying that whether it is appropriated or not. The second item cut by the Finance Committee was \$48,000 to the Police budget. In general Amesbury is a safe, quiet town. There are things that go on in town; there are bad people who come through and the reason why the community feels safe is because of the work of the Police Department. Last summer the police pulled back to adjust for the budget and as a result crime went up and it took more resources to regain control. The third item that was cut was the Chief of Staff position. Mayor Kezer states the council voted to reduce that line item last year because the position was vacant and estimated it would take some time to fill. When the Chief of Staff was hired, she was hired at the same pay grade as the previous aides to the mayor. The difference in numbers from last year to this year, reflect funding the position for a full year plus a step increase. Mayor Kezer states right now the town has the minimum number of people in just about every function that is required to deliver the services. Any cuts would come down to a choice of tax dollars versus delivering services. He hopes the Council will vote for and support his budget that he delivered on May 8<sup>th</sup>.

Councilor Iacobucci asks how the Mayor plans to fund any of the union contracts that get settled between now and the end of the fiscal year. Mayor Kezer states his options are; between now and when the tax rate is set he could seek the additional appropriation which would go on the tax levy or from free cash or other miscellaneous sources. He states the problem with miscellaneous sources is salaries are an annually reoccurring expense, if you don't put it on the tax levy, the following year you are in a hole to make up for what you have already given and what you have agreed to add on from that point. He would prefer appropriation.

Councilor Pinierio asks how much extra money is in the budget. Mayor Kezer states after health care and retirement costs on the general government side it is \$33,000. On the schools side after the increases in special education costs there is about \$140,000 of new money in the budget. Councilor

Pinierio questions why the custodians at the schools were laid off and the new technicians hired with a \$6,000 increase in salary totaling \$48,000. Dr. Chaurette states they contracted out the cleaning services for the schools and created much more highly skilled positions called multifaceted facility technicians who will be doing more complicated tasks than simply pushing the broom therefore increasing the salaries. Councilor Pinierio asks if the new technicians have the training to do maintenance work. Dr. Chaurette states there are only two people in the maintenance department; the new technicians will be able to do light maintenance work which will free up the two skilled maintenance people. The job description for the new people is quite different from the job description for the custodians. There was a very thorough interview process. The people were selected on past performance, attendance and many other different factors. Councilor Pinierio states for the record that he disagrees with what the school department is doing, getting rid of the custodians. He believes it is a safety issue for the students. He does not agree with outside people coming in.

Councilor Thone states that in the Mayor's cover letter for the budget he indicates the budget represents a 5.1% increase over last year. She makes it clear for the taxpayers that all the unions with the exception of the Police are being negotiated which means the town is looking at raises in addition to the 5.1% increase. Councilor Thone also states that Mayor Kezer will be coming to the council with a 3.1 million dollar bond. Mayor Kezer states he is currently putting together components of the CIP which would increase the debt service but won't impact the budget until FY09.

President Lawrence agrees with Dr. Chaurette and the changes made with the custodians. He believes it is a move in the right direction. The town needs to do a better job maintaining the school buildings.

Paul Jancewicz, 19 Whittier Ave. – Mr. Jancewicz asks to council to support the school budget.

Matthew Einson, Fern Ave. – Mr. Einson believes the council will support the school budget as proposed and will follow the Finance Committee recommendation to pass it without making further reductions. He states the current pattern of decreasing school services has got to stop.

Debra Bibeau, 17 Monroe St. – Ms. Bibeau thanks the council and the finance committee for communicating with the school committee on the school budget. She asks the council to please support the finance committee recommendation for the school budget.

Mike Greaney, 50 Orchard Street – Mr. Greaney asks Dr. Chaurette if there is money in maintenance to repair water damage at the Middle School. Dr. Chaurette responds no but, it is something that would have to be put into the capital plan and he would have to investigate it.

Recess 8:30PM

### **Public Hearings**

**2007-028** Amend original 2007-028 "An Order to Provide for Salary Increases" – Councilor Lavoie cont.

President Lawrence opens the public hearing.

*Councilor Lavoie moves to amend 2007-028 as submitted. Voted – Unanimous*

*Councilor Lavoie moves adoption of 2007-028 as amended to raise the Mayors salary to \$75,000. Voted – 5 No, 4 Yes (Lindstrom, McClure, Thone, Iacobucci) motion fails*

**2007-069** An Ordinance to Establish an Annual Expense Allowance for Members of the Municipal Council – Councilor Lavoie

Councilor Lavoie moves passage of 2007-069 as submitted.

Councilor King states she believes the council deserves a raise and would supported one. She does not believe it should be in the form of an expense account where the council does not have to produce any documentation on spending, where they automatically get the money each month. During her years as a councilor she has never come near spending \$1,200 a year in expenses.

Councilor Benson supports a raise and believes it should be called what it is. It is a raise and not an expense account.

Councilor McClure explains to the public the council now receives \$100.00 a month and this expense account would make it \$200.00 a month.

Roll Call Vote – 2 Yes, 7 No (Lavoie, Lindstrom, McClure, Pinierio, Thone, Iacobucci, Lawrence)  
motion fails

**2007-001** To Vote to Adopt an Operating Budget for FY08

*Councilor McClure motions to accept the recommendation of the Finance Committee on 2007-001.*

President Lawrence states they will be following the Kaufman Bylaw. They will read each department with the Finance Committee recommendations and vote all the departments that are not objected to as a whole. Then they will go back to all the departments with objections.

			<u><b>Finance Recommendation</b></u>
Municipal Council	Personal Services	\$20,598	
	Expenses	\$49,857	\$70,455
Mayor – Councilor Benson objected			
Reserve Funds	Expenses	\$50,000	\$50,000
Admin & Finance	Personal Services	\$266,380	
	Expenses	\$10,530	\$276,910
Assessor	Personal Services	\$197,725	
	Expenses	\$64,309	\$262,034
Collector/Treasurer	Personal Services	\$164,630	
	Expenses	\$29,850	\$194,480
Legal Services	Expenses	\$100,500	\$100,500
MIS	Personal Services	\$107,229	
	Expenses	\$131,116	\$238,345
Central Supply	Expenses	\$68,960	\$68,960
Town Clerk	Personal Services	\$142,359	
	Expenses	\$7,669	\$150,028

**Finance Recommendations**

Elections	Personal Services Expenses	\$16,945 \$16,086	\$33,031
Liquor Commission	Personal Services Expenses	\$900 \$100	\$1,000
Cons Com	Personal Services Expenses	\$22,102 \$8,398	\$30,500
Com & Eco Dev	Personal Services Expenses	\$263,569 \$36,431	\$300,000
Planning Board	Personal Services Expenses	\$5,400 \$9,600	\$15,000
Board of Appeals	Personal Services Expenses	\$4,400 \$3,200	\$7,600
Municipal Buildings	Expenses	\$121,320	\$121,320
Animal Control	Personal Services Expenses	\$25,666 \$10,950	\$36,616
Police Department	Expenses	\$3,314,263	\$3,314,263
Fire Department	Personal Services Expenses	\$2,417,770 \$230,492	\$2,648,262
Inspections	Personal Services Expenses	\$229,811 \$31,345	\$261,156
Weights & Measures	Expenses	\$4,500	\$4,500
Emergency Mgmt	Personal Services Expenses	\$7,500 \$15,292	\$22,792
Harbormaster	Personal Services Expenses	\$6,000 \$1,500	\$7,500
DPW	Personal Services Expenses	\$903,045 \$355,352	\$1,258,397
Engineering	Personal Services Expenses	\$78,090 \$59,041	\$137,131
Snow & Ice	Personal Services Expenses	\$27,900 \$100,100	\$128,000
Outdoor Lighting	Expenses	\$170,000	\$170,000
Refuse/Recycling	Expenses	\$839,220	\$839,220

**Finance Recommendations**

Health Department	Personal Services Expenses	\$57,294 \$6,571	\$63,865
Council on Aging	Personal Services Expenses	\$123,026 \$5,174	\$128,200
Veterans Services	Personal Services Expenses	\$44,799 \$79,300	\$124,099
Library	Personal Services Expenses	\$406,023 \$146,007	\$552,030
Youth	Personal Services Expenses	\$148,272 \$31,728	\$180,000
Debt Services	Expenses	\$2,332,171	\$2,332,171
Other Assessments – Councilor McClure objected			
Employee Benefits	Expenses	\$4,439,484	\$4,439,484
Insurance Expense	Expenses	\$358,300	\$358,300
School – Councilor Pinierio objected			
Landry Stadium	Expenses	\$6,500	\$6,500
Sewer Department	Personal Services Expenses	\$482,207 \$2,145,096	\$2,627,303
Water Department	Personal Services Expenses	\$652,071 \$2,011,484	\$2,663,555

*Councilor McClure moved the recommendation of the Finance Committee on all unquestioned departments.  
 Roll Call Vote – Unanimous*

**Mayor’s Budget**

Councilor Benson objected to the Finance Committee recommendation for the Mayor’s budget.

Finance Committee Recommendation:

Mayor	Personal Services Expenses	\$153,828 \$18,965	\$172,793
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Mayor’s Recommendation:

Mayor	Personal Services Expenses	\$159,819 \$18,965	\$178,784
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Councilor Benson motions to fund the Mayor’s budget at the Mayor’s proposal. He feels the Mayor has stated his case on the Chief of Staff’s salary and it should be reinstated.

Councilor King supports the Mayor's proposed budget. She believes there was an error made in calculating last years salary and it should be reinstated.

Councilor Lindstrom states there was no error in calculating the Chief of Staff's position. The previous Aides were funded at \$46,000 which is what the council funded the position at.

Councilor McClure and Councilor Pinierio do not support Councilor Benson's motion.

Councilor Thone states the position was fully funded at \$46,000 for the year. She will not be supporting what she sees as a \$6,000 raise.

Councilor Benson motioned to fund at the Mayor's recommendation  
Roll Call Vote – Yes 4, No (Lindstrom, McClure, Pinierio, Thone, Lawrence)  
Motion fails

*Councilor Iacobucci moves the recommendation of the Finance Committee.  
Roll Call Vote – 7 Yes, 2 No (Benson, King)*

### **Other Assessments**

Councilor McClure objected to Other Assessments  
Finance Committee Recommendation: \$ 25,191  
Mayor's Proposal: \$1,042,125

*Councilor McClure motions to Fund the Whittier Budget at the minimal level of \$626,670*

Councilor McClure states she would like to fund the Whittier budget at the minimal level forcing the Whittier School to come back for the balance. Councilor King asks where the funds would come from because ultimately the funds would have to be paid. She does not want it to look like the council cut the budget by \$600,000 Councilor McClure states she would like to see what they come back with and then worry about it. Councilor King asks Mike Basque where the funds would come from; he states the Mayor would have to decide if he will file for supplemental appropriation.

Councilor Lavoie states the balance of the Whittier assessment will have to be paid and if it is before the tax rate is set it will impact the tax rate. If the requisite number of communities reject the Whittier budget as submitted they will have to go back to the drawing board. If they don't, Amesbury is bound by contract to pay it.

*Councilor McClure motioned to appropriate \$651,861 for Other Assessments  
Roll Call Vote - Unanimous*

### **School**

Councilor Pinierio objected to the School Budget  
Finance Committee Recommendation  
School Expenses \$24,200,719

Mayor's Proposal  
School Expenses \$24,200,719

*Councilor Iacobucci moves the recommendation of the Finance Committee \$24,200,719*

*Councilor Pinierio objects to the motion and amends it to \$24,152,719 which would be minus \$48,000 less for the Custodial Technicians.*

*Roll Call Vote – 1 Yes, 8 NO (Lavoie, Lindstrom, McClure, Thone, Benson, Iacobucci, King, Lawrence)*

*Amendment Fails*

*Councilor Iacobucci moves the recommendation of the Finance Committee \$24,200,719*

*Roll Call Vote – 9 Yes*

President Lawrence reads for a **total appropriation of general fund \$43,951,522**

That to fund said appropriation, the Municipal Council approves \$ 43,397,222 to be raised by taxation and other revenue sources and further that \$ 554,300 be applied from the sources detailed below:

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Sale of Cemetery Lots	\$ 11,800
Ambulance Receipts	400,000
Youth Revolving	130,000
Cemetery Interest	12,500

Therefore, the Municipal Council hereby appropriates the following:

TOTAL APPROPRIATION **\$ 49,248,880**

*Councilor Iacobucci moved to adopt \$49,248,880 the approved operating budget for FY08*

*Roll Call Vote – 9 Yes (Lavoie, Lindstrom, McClure, Pinierio, Thone, Benson, Iacobucci, King, Lawrence)*

Councilor Lavoie asks the Council to appoint a sub committee of 3 members to meet with the Mayor regarding the Attorney McDermott invoice. He further motions to take back 2007-067 from Finance and Ordinance and appoint a 3 member committee consisting of himself, Councilor King and Councilor Pinierio to discuss it with the Mayor and come back with a recommendation for the July 10<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

Roll Call Vote – Unanimous

Councilor Iacobucci asks that the Auditors come to the July meeting to discuss the previous fiscal year audit, the management letter and the upcoming audit of the current fiscal year.

Councilor Benson motions to adjourn – Voted Unanimous