



# AMESBURY

CITY HALL  
62 Friend Street

Amesbury, MA 01913

**Special City Council Meeting  
Minutes  
City Hall Auditorium  
Tuesday, June 18, 2013  
7:00 pm**

1. Call to Order at 7:05 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilor McMilleon
3. Roll Call Present: Councilor McMilleon, Councilor Neale, Councilor Gilday, Councilor Kelcourse, Councilor Kimball, Councilor Lavoie, Councilor Ferguson and Councilor McClure arrived at 7:20 p.m.  
Absent: Councilor Scorzoni
4. Act on Minutes – None at this time.
5. Mayoral Appointments – None at this time.
6. Licenses and Permits – None at this time.
7. Correspondence – None at this time.
8. Public Comment: Councilor Ferguson stated that because this was a special meeting specifically to address a public hearing. Comments will be about the budget only.
9. Council Response to Public Comment- None at this time.
10. **Public Hearing**  
**2013-001 FY14 Annual Budget**

Councilor Ferguson opened the public hearing.

Jim Thivierge, 106 Friend St., spoke against the budget.

Claude Gonthier, 112 Kimball Rd., stated that he prepared a spreadsheet of new growth from 2007-2014. He commented that the rate of spending now in the town is at \$18.6 million dollars and would like to know what we have to show for it. He stated that new growth is not going to get us out of the hole, the spending has to stop and the council should not spend

any more money than they spent last year as the residents have to do. He stated that if they don't at least level fund then the Council is not taking the short term interests of the town and they are not looking beyond tomorrow.

Barbara Coutinho, 27 Paige Farm Rd., stated she would like to see more money given to the school as her child is going to lose courses that she wanted to take. The Spanish course she wanted to take is not going to be offered because it will impact the least amount of students and she is saddened about that as this is a bilingual country and this course could help with getting into competitive schools and also employment. She would like the schools to be fully funded which may attract students from other schools to choice in.

Jane Snow, 44 Fern Ave., commented that she taught for 36 years and stated that she had a lot of questions about the school budget and submitted them and never got answers to her questions. She stated that last year there were many positions that were appropriated with specific numbers given for hiring and when she looked in the budget the hires were anywhere from \$10,000 to \$20,000 more, so now there is a gap for this year's budget. She stated that she wants a good education for kids and she is concerned about the issues with children with emotional issues because she does not see the support that the kids need and because she doesn't live in the school system in Amesbury anymore she cannot get that information and she lived in a different community in terms of school life. She stated that they can't keep up with the tax rate. There needs to be a better plan and the budget should be level funded and she can't support this budget.

Cindy Russell, 78 Market St., stated that she supports the schools both as a substitute teacher and a mother of three boys in the school system. She stated that she is there to read a letter from another school supporter, Kathy Proctor who could not be there and asked that the Council give more to the school budget.

Erin Hutchinson-Himmel, 7 Winkley St., stated that she moved to the city because of the schools. She commented that the budget does not show that the kids matter. She stated that she is starting to question if this is where her family needs to stay because if the town doesn't care about the kids she stated that she will find another town that does.

Gretchen Marinopoulos, 12 Sanborn Ter., thanked the Council for there service to the City of Amesbury and stated that she does not envy their difficult decisions they are forced to make year after year during budget time. She stated she is confident that they will all do their best represent the needs of the residents for whom they serve. She stated that she is proud to be an Amesbury resident and supports the public schools and encourages them to take care of the students.

Gail Browne, 2 Woodlawn St., stated that as a community we need to contact our State Representatives and State Senator to ask them to help us fund the unfunded mandates which take away money from the schools. She asked that the budget be passed as is.

Allie Dulcimini, a High School Student stated that classes are being cut and giving raises to the Mayor and City Council is unfair to the school system.

Patricia Moors, 1A Jacqueline Dr., stated that she does not want taxes to go up but if she has to sacrifice she will as the kids are what are most important.

Debra LaValley, 14 Greenwood St., state that she is a School Committee member who is a volunteer who does not get stipends. She stated that the proposed budget cuts have not been voted on by the School Committee. They will meet on June 24.

Tim Angerhofer, 9 Pine St., challenged the City Council to be effective leaders and meet the needs of the children.

Gail Greenbaum, 45 Macy St., stated she is a teacher who states they cannot run on any less than they have now. She urged the Council to pass the budget the way it is.

Cindy Yetman, 31 Portsmouth Rd., stated that she is proud to be a leader of AFT Amesbury. She urged the council to pass the Superintendent's budget with additions to level service.

Councilor Ferguson closed the public hearing.

Councilor Ferguson stated that they will be using the Kaufman Ordinance and read it to the audience.

Councilor Gilday stated that they will be meeting with State Rep. Costello and Senator Oconor-Ives in the near future and his top item on the list will be about state mandates and the lack of funding. He encouraged everyone to write a letter to them.

Councilor Neale read off the recommendations of the Finance Committee and stated that any department that was objected to would not be included in the vote to adopt, it would be dealt with separately.

City Council = \$91,085

Mayor = \$203,681

Reserve Funds = \$50,000

Administration & Finance = \$292,863

Assessor = \$218,635

Collector/Treasurer = \$208,607

Legal Services = \$100,300

Mgmt Information Systems = 29,833

Central Supply = \$72,000

City Clerk = \$158,987

Elections = 39,016

Conservation Commission = \$47,733

Community and Economic Development = Objected by Councilor McMilleon

Planning Board = \$15,728  
Board of Appeals = \$5,891  
Municipal Buildings = Objected by Councilor Gilday  
Police Department = Objected by Councilor McMilleon  
Fire Department = Objected by Councilor McMilleon  
Inspections = \$199,127  
Weight & Measures = \$4,500  
Harbormaster = \$7,500  
Department of Public Works = Objection by Councilor McMilleon  
Snow & Ice = \$225,000  
Outdoor Lighting = \$174,000  
Refuse/Recycling = \$878,920  
Regional Health Department = \$161,977  
Councilor on Aging = \$137,182  
Veterans Services = \$441,360  
Library = \$768,713  
Youth = \$304,684  
Debt Services = \$2,251,222  
Other Assessments = \$856,790  
Employee Benefits = \$4,805,967  
Insurance Expense = \$278,300  
School = Objection by Councilor McMilleon

Councilor Neale moved to accept the unquestioned recommendations of the Finance Committee. Councilor Gilday seconded. A Roll Call Vote Was Taken and it was Unanimous.

Councilor Ferguson stated that the first objection was Community and Economic Development and asked for discussion.

Councilor Neale stated that they had initially removed \$42,000 from this budget and has since learned that this money is to be able to make applications to apply for all of the grants.

Mayor Kezer stated that we have a deadline to file application for a Mass Works grant that will pay for the realignment and enhancement of Water St. We need that money available to get that application together.

Councilor McMilleon asked if the money could come from Free Cash.

Mayor Kezer stated that they could, however they would have to go through a separate appropriation and go through the whole process. This is part of Economic Development and the desire is to fund it though the Economic Development Department. There is a timing issue.

Councilor Scorzoni stated that they are working with some pretty complicated grant applications for the Lower Millyard project and some of these funds we are precluded from using for

bond purposes. The worst thing we can do is delay the timelines we are already in. He feels it is wise to continue with the appropriation within the operating budget at this point.

Councilor Kimball asked if there is any way to get the money added to any future bonding.

Councilor Lavoie asked if there are any prospects on the horizon that we can convert this money into some kind of re-imbursement qualification under the main grant.

Mayor Kezer stated that the language that the council approved was specific to the fact that the authorization is reduced by the amount of grants received. We don't have that flexibility that we thought we had when we discussed it the last time.

Councilor McClure asked if there was guarantee of the grants.

Mayor Kezer stated that they have guarantee of the \$400,000. Park Grant but they did not have the EPA grant which is outside of the \$725,000 bond authorization. That is the component that we are trying to fill but the rest of the grants are guaranteed as long as we hit the timelines in order to get the projects done. Timing is an issue in these matters.

Joe Fahey, Director of Community and Economic Development, explained the applications and what grants went with what.

Councilor Neale moved to make the Community and Economic Development budget \$353,065.00. Councilor Gilday seconded. A Roll call vote was taken: McMilleon-N, Neale-Y, Scorzoni-Y, Gilday-Y, Kelcourse-N, Kimball-Y, Lavoie-Y, McClure-N and Ferguson-Y (6-Y/3-N) Motion passes.

Municipal Buildings:

Councilor Gilday stated that this budget was cut to help make the sale of the condo that the city owns go quicker.

Councilor Lavoie stated that the Council has twice sent the Mayor unanimous resolutions for this condo to be surplus as it never materialized for its intended use.

Councilor Neale moved to accept funding Municipal Buildings at \$165,986.00. Councilor Scorzoni seconded. A roll call vote McMilleon-N, Neale-Y, Scorzoni-Y, Gilday-N, Kelcourse-N, Kimball-Y, Lavoie-Y, McClure-N and Ferguson-Y (5 Yes/4 No) Motion passes.

Police Department

Councilor Ferguson stated that the recommendation of the Police Dept was to fund at 3,740,871 and it was objected to.

There was discussion as to how a School Resource Officer would be funded.

Councilor Kelcourse withdrew his objection.

Councilor McMilleon moved to fund the Police Department at \$3,740,871. Councilor Kelcourse seconded. A role call vote was taken. McMilleon-Y, Neale-Y, Scorzoni-Y, Gilday-Y, Kelcourse-Y, Kimball-Y, Lavoie-Y, McClure-N and Ferguson-Y (8- Yes/1-No) Motion passes.

#### Fire Department

Councilor Ferguson stated that there was a recommendation of funding the Fire Department at \$2,994,470 and it was objected to.

Councilor McMilleon withdrew his objection and moved to fund the Fire Department at \$2,994,470. Councilor Neale seconded. A role call vote was taken. McMilleon-Y, Neale-Y, Scorzoni-Y, Gilday-Y, Kelcourse-Y, Kimball-Y, Lavoie-Y, McClure-N and Ferguson-Y (8-Yes/1-No) Motion passes.

#### Department of Public Works

Councilor Ferguson stated that there was a recommendation to fund the DPW at \$1,358,277.00 and it was objected to.

Councilor McMilleon withdrew his objection and moved to approve the recommendation of \$1,358,277.00. Councilor Gilday seconded. A role call vote was taken. McMilleon-Y, Neale-Y, Scorzoni-Y, Gilday-Y, Kelcourse-Y, Kimball-Abstain, Lavoie-Y, McClure-Y and Ferguson-Y (8-Yes/1-Abstain) motion passes.

#### Schools

Councilor Ferguson stated that there was a recommendation to fund the schools at \$27,348,496.00 and it was objected to.

Councilor McMilleon stated that they have cut almost \$1 million from their budget. He supports the \$115,000 that was added and moved to increase that by another \$85,000 to bring it to a \$200,000 increase for a total funding of \$27,433,496.00. He feels that money that has been returned back from the departments into the General Fund could be used to do this. Councilor Kelcourse seconded.

There was discussion about taxes based on numbers tonight. It was determined that it looks like approximately \$20.73 assuming the current valuations.

A role call vote was taken. McMilleon-Y, Neale-N, Scorzoni-N, Gilday-N, Kelcourse-Y, Kimball-Recused, Lavoie-N, McClure-N and Ferguson-N (2-Yes, 6-No, 1-Recused) Motion fails.

Councilor Neale stated that he would like to see a lot of help from the public contacting our state legislators for help with the unfunded mandates that steal our tax dollars. He commented on our bond rating status and how he would hate to see us lose our current status.

Councilor Ferguson asked for each councilor to give some input.

Councilor Kelcourse stated that he feels there are more creative ways to come up with money to support some of the budgets.

Councilor McMilleon commented that he feels we should put another \$85,000 back into the schools.

Councilor Gilday stated that they have already given \$115,000 to the schools and he doesn't feel that they can afford to give more.

Councilor Lavoie stated that this is never an easy time of year and he has reached a point where he just can't ask the taxpayers to give us an open checkbook. He stated that he believes that this budget gives the departments just what they need to get by.

Councilor McClure stated that the taxpayers are at the end of their rope. It is \$1 million every year. She stated that she cannot support a budget with zero accountability, bloated salaries and no plan for a change next year.

Councilor Scorzoni stated that because we are at a point of potentially hitting prop. 2 ½ he feels we are at a breaking point. There is only so much that we can do and we cannot spend what we don't have. He feels that he agrees with the Finance Committee recommendation.

Councilor Ferguson stated that this process is hard to understand. She has been doing this for six years and every year she studies it. She stated that she has been criticized that she does not have any compassion towards the schools. She stated that anyone who knows her knows that she is the biggest advocate for the schools; she put 4 daughters through the school system and has the highest regard for the quality of staff that we have in our schools. Cuts are hard for everyone to handle. We have to come up with a number that we can all agree on so she supports the Finance Committee recommendation.

Councilor Gilday asked for a vote to be taken on Councilor McMilleon's motion.

A role call vote was taken. McMilleon-Y, Neale-N, Scorzoni-N, Gilday-N, Kelcourse-Y, Kimball-Recused, Lavoie-N, McClure-N and Ferguson-N (2-Yes, 6-No, 1-Recused) Motion fails.

Councilor Neale moved to fund the Schools with the Finance Committee recommendation of \$27,348,496. Councilor Gilday seconded.

A role call vote was taken. McMilleon-Y, Neale-Y, Scorzoni-Y, Gilday-Y, Kelcourse-Y, Kimball-Recused, Lavoie-Y, McClure-N and Ferguson-Y (7-Yes, 1-No, 1-Recused) Motion passes.

Councilor Neale moved a total appropriation of \$49,240,766.00; that to fund said appropriation the city approves \$48,207,582.00 be raised by taxation and other revenue sources and further that \$1,033,184.00 be applied from sources detailed below:

Sale of Cemetery Lots	\$ 9,000
Ambulance Receipts	\$ 650,000
Youth Revolving	\$ 304,684
Cemetery Interest	\$ 12,000
Waterways Improvement	\$ 7,500
Regional Health	\$ 50,000

Further voted that the City Council approves the following enterprise fund budgets:

Landry Stadium	\$ 9,000	Total Landry
Sewer Department	\$ 2,790,362	Total Sewer
Water Department	\$ 3,815,093	Total Water

Therefore the City Council hereby approves the following:

Total Appropriation \$55,855,221

Councilor Gilday seconded. A roll call vote was taken. McMilleon-N, Neale-Y, Scorzoni-Y, Gilday-Y, Kelcourse-N, Kimball-Y, Lavoie-Y, McClure-N and Ferguson-Y (6-Yes, 3-No) Motion passes.

Councilor Gilday moved to adjourn at 10:00 p.m. Councilor Kelcourse seconded and it was voted Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Dunning  
Assistant City Clerk