

**TOWN OF NEWMARKET, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
TOWN COUNCIL NON-PUBLIC MEETING**

**June 3, 2015 6:15 PM**

**NON-PUBLIC RSA 91-A:3 II – PERSONNEL**

PRESENT: Council Chairman Phil Nazzaro, Council Vice Chairman Gary Levy, Councilor Toni Weinstein, Councilor Amy Thompson, Councilor Amy Burns, Councilor Larry Pickering

EXCUSED: Councilor Dale Pike      ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator Steve Fournier

**AGENDA**

Chairman Nazzaro called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm.

Councilor Thompson made a motion to move into Non-Public Session, and Vice Chair Levy seconded.

Town Administrator Fournier polled the council and the motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

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**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR GOALS**

Town Administrator Fournier presented an update on the progress he had made towards his goals, as assigned by the Town Council, and what he was planning. He listed the three goals as reviewing and finding departmental efficiencies, commissioning a study of the structure and operations of the Town, and presenting a comprehensive road maintenance plan. He said that the proposals for the Town organizational study had gone out, with eight (8) firms submitting proposals. He said that he received the proposals in early spring, and that they mostly proved to be too costly, in the range of \$40,000-\$60,000, with only one coming in at \$14,000. He felt they might want to plan to find funds for the next fiscal year budget. With regard to the road improvement plan, he stated that he had reviewed contracting with a private engineering firm for the road study, but that it had been determined to be cost prohibitive. He said that he had met with the UNH T<sup>2</sup> program and that they had agreed to conduct the study at no cost to the Town. He said that he had informed them that project costs should stay within the \$250,000-\$300,000 range. He said that he had met with the Department of Public Works Director to review the 2012 road maintenance plan and asked him to present a rough update to the Town Council when requesting funds for the 2016 paving season. He said that the road paving would be a spring project which would be done in the late summer/early fall of next year.

Councilor Thompson asked where the road paving plan was up to this point. Town Administrator Fournier replied that he had provided an update as to where they were now, what they planned to do, and the reasons behind the decisions. Vice Chair Levy asked what had been quoted for the organizational study for the Town, and Town Administrator Fournier replied the quote had come in at \$42,500. Chairman Nazzaro asked if the Council could view the Request for Proposal (RFP) that had been sent out. Town Administrator Fournier said that the Council had voted on it, and that the study for the road project would be provided by the university at no cost. Councilor Weinstein felt that the timeline was pretty far out and asked if anything was being done now. Chairman Nazzaro suggested that perhaps the project could be scaled back due to the \$40,000-\$60,000 costs.

Town Administrator Fournier stated that with regard to finding departmental efficiencies he had met with Stratham concerning combined Fire/Rescue/Dispatch for the two towns and was waiting for a reply. He said that he had also met with Portsmouth/Exeter/Stratham regarding the Regional Waste Water Treatment Facility and that it had been determined not to be a feasible option. He said that the Department of Recreation had begun a reduction of printing costs, by printing fliers annually and posting them online. He said they were also looking at reducing staff hours in the department and had begun soliciting proposals for new recreation software. Town Administrator Fournier said that he had been discussing alternative health care programs with the Finance Director in an effort to reduce and stabilize costs to the Town, and would be soliciting proposals for programs which could be implemented in FY17. He said that he planned to request proposals from Health Trust and Harvard Pilgrim in an effort to prepare the Town for the Cadillac Tax coming in 2018. He said that he had reviewed software packages for Planning and Code Enforcement and that he had also reviewed prices for permits and fees to insure the fees covered the costs. He stated that the Finance and IT Departments were soliciting proposals to provide a single software package across departments, as the current software was outdated and systems did not match. He said software packages ranged from \$75,000-\$200,000 and that he would be making recommendations on the software package to the Town Council for inclusion in the FY17 budget.

Town Administrator Fournier stated that he planned to begin negotiations with Stratham on a Fire/Rescue/Dispatch plan. Councilor Thompson asked about Ambulance and Fire coverage with the Town of Newfields, and Town Administrator Fournier replied that only Ambulance was currently covered. He said he had told Stratham that if they decided to come back, dispatch must be part of the deal. Vice Chair Levy felt that the study would give a level of justification for Stratham to combine resources with Newmarket, but asked Town Administrator Fournier if there were things he could implement now without the study. Chairman Nazzaro suggested a study on Dispatch looking at the whole Town and all departments to possibly reduce dependencies. Town Administrator Fournier replied that any changes to departments would require Council approval. He felt that if funds could not be found in the next fiscal year they should start working piece-meal, as waiting another year would be too long. Councilor Pickering felt that Dispatch needed changes and asked how dispatching from the Department of Public Works was covered at night. Town Administrator Fournier replied that the Director would be called during the night and the call then forwarded to the Police Department. Councilor Pickering asked about other possible ramifications.

Chairman Nazzaro reiterated that he wanted to see the RFP regarding the commissioned proposals for the Town organizational study, adding that they may appear more reasonable. He said that in regard to the first goal, Town Administrator Fournier had only presented tactics without any strategy. He felt that the Town Administrator should look for an actual percentage of savings by each department, and added that the departments would need encouragement in the process. He said that he did not want to wait until November without specifying departmental efficiencies. Town Administrator Fournier said that the departments would report to him whether or not they found efficiencies. Councilor Thompson asked what would happen if the Town Administrator found efficiencies that the departments did not. Councilor Weinstein asked if other concrete examples were available, and Town Administrator Fournier replied that he did not have any as of yet. Chairman Nazzaro said that if the departments were required to cut a specific item by a certain percentage, they would then have a concrete objective to reach. Councilor Thompson asked how much the Council was involved in departmental reviews. Town Administrator Fournier said departmental reviews were done in January at the beginning of the fiscal year. Chairman Nazzaro felt that reviews were looking back and goals were looking forward. He said that the goals were to be reviewed over an 18-month period and that an update should be provided. He then asked when the personnel reviews would be completed, and Town Administrator Fournier replied they would be done by July. Councilor Pickering asked about merit pay raises, and Town Administrator Fournier said that he was currently working on them and that the Finance Director had assured him the funds were available.

Town Administrator Fournier left the Council Chambers at approximately 6:50 pm.

Chairman Nazzaro asked the Council how they wanted to see things changed. Vice Chair Levy said that the Town Administrator had stated he had not done the employee reviews yet as he was waiting for his goals to be presented, and felt that he had not put much thought into any of them. Chairman Nazzaro pointed out that the reviews were separate from the goals. Councilor Burns felt that what had been presented did not make a lot of sense and that she would like to see a timeline. Councilor Thompson said that she would like to see action, and had wanted more information. Chairman Nazzaro stated that the Town Administrator had simply provided a list on paper of what he was going to do. He asked the Council what they wanted to ask him to do differently and suggested that they should come to the next meeting with suggestions on how to approach the matter. He felt the Council would need at least an hour for the discussion and recommended starting the next Non-Public Session one hour earlier.

Chairman Nazzaro closed the Non-Public Session at 7:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Denmark, Recording Secretary.