

TOWN OF DERRY

Town Council
First Parish Congregational
Church
47 East Derry Road



Tuesday, June 30, 2026
Sanctuary Room

MINUTES

Goals Setting Session

7:00 PM Call to order – Chair Spencer

Pledge of Allegiance, warning of fire exits, handicap access, & turn off all cell phones

Roll Call: Councilors Milz, Healey, Flood, Foote, Webb, Chair Spencer

Absent: Councilor Chase

Present: TA Michael Fowler, Town Clerk Tina Guilford

Host: Pastor Carrie Burnap, First Parish Congregational Church

Consent Agenda

26-61 Approve Minutes – June 2, 2026

Councilor Milz moves to approve the Consent Agenda as published, seconded by Councilor Webb

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0

FY 27 Goal Setting Session

Councilor Spencer: To get into our goal-setting session, some of us have sent in goals, some have just brought them tonight so we can discuss. This is more of just a discussion. And then the Town Administrator will put those together for us to kind of have a final run-through at our meeting on the 7th.

Administrator Fowler: I wanted to set the process up, just for the public and for, obviously, the council. Last year the process was a little different in that each councilor was given an opportunity to identify their five top goals. They were compiled into a single list, and that list for fiscal '26 was distributed amongst all the council. I had put within the packet the update on the progress of those goals. Many of those have either been completed or are well along the way of completed. There are some that are just ongoing goals. I think tonight what I'd be looking to do is talk about where we're going into fiscal '27. So maybe the way to kick this off is for each individual councilor to provide their goals. I did also put within the packet a list of some priorities that I see town-wide that I've taken in from some of the department heads and some of our own thoughts. That list is about 43 items long. My guess is this evening that your individual goals will probably touch, if not all of those, many of those. And then the goal would be, coming out of this, I'd like to publish either a top 10 list, a top 15 list. You can tell me how you want to script that. But on July 7, I'd like to push that list back out to the public, put it up onto a PowerPoint

presentation briefly during our regular town council meeting. And then those will be the goals that I'll push out to each one of the departments, and we'll keep moving on that front.

Councilor Milz: I'll start off with one of my top ones, which was Exit 4A gateway development. I think it's a huge business opportunity for the town, and as it gets closer, we need to make sure, once again, we don't have an overabundance of pizza parlors and hair salons there. No offense. And in Councilor Chase's absence, I'd like to deliver a couple of his, because his and I's were very similar. His is to continue the downtown projects and revitalization. Route 28 infrastructure improvements. We're going to evaluate the housing needs in town and start planning to meet the needs, and along with that, the housing needs, the town facility needs and continue to plan for the wastewater and water expansion to support further growth in that section of town. And I could certainly recite more, but I'm sure they're all duplicates. And my only other one was, I'd like to reexamine, because I know all the issues against it, but I'd like to reexamine the veterans' benefits at this point in time. And that's both my and Councilor Chase's. I went through the VFW, and I got an actual list of all the towns around us. It's two years old now, but it was the latest one they had of what everybody else is doing. And although it's got nothing to do with what we do, it'll just give us a general direction on what the support is for veterans.

Councilor Foote: To that point, I agree with all of that, with the veterans' credits. We need to reexamine that, although we did just recently, a couple of years ago, increase that. But along with that, I think we really need to look at the seniors as well, because let's face it, the cost of living is going up dramatically, and it's going above the cost that they are receiving for their inflation, the Medicare or any kind of benefits they may get, isn't keeping up with the inflation rate that we currently are experiencing right now. I fear that a lot of the senior residents, some of them lifelong residents, are getting pushed out, forced out, with nowhere to go. And, you know, a lot are living minimalistic lifestyles right now. You know, by that I mean like their food challenged, whatnot, and, whether it be health insurance issues and things like that. I think we really need to examine that a lot deeper this year. I know we have a lot of constraints, but what we can do to be as transparent and forthcoming with that, I think, would be helpful.

Councilor Healey: The veterans' credit was also on my list. And looking back at the increase, the last increase that the town of Derry did, I believe, was in 2023, to the current \$550, I'd be in favor of once we get close to the budget time, potentially increasing it another \$50, maybe this upcoming year. I have the same type of list that Councilor Milz has with the surrounding towns. And the majority, besides Auburn, are all at \$750. So Auburn, last I checked, was at 500. But Derry is near the bottom with the amount that we give out compared to surrounding communities. I think we can, I'm always in favor of a veterans' credit increase. I think that before we start to talk specific numbers, we need to look at what our numbers are.

Councilor Spencer: I think we all, in some way, shape, or form, have this or most of us have this on there. I also have veterans and elderly. I think we have to look at to evaluate where we're at, where we compare to others, what we have for money to be allocated into it. And then we can definitely talk. I think one goes on the list for me. We can agree on that.

Councilor Flood: Just to Charlie's point, and I wasn't part of the last discussion of this, but the previous year, in '23, I was. That's where I learned, like Charlie said, you know, the veterans were definitely behind, and it had been a long time since they had been involved, and they need to be. But it brought to my attention that there was the elderly, and there's another group, and I thought, and I know we can't handcuff the next council, we can't just make a set of rules that they increase a little bit every year or something and try to keep them or play catch-up. But that would be one of my goals, is to sit down and try to find out which group was given a bump last and who's due this time, and try to, you know—you don't want to spread so thin that we're really

not helping anyone. But we need to make sure that, you know, like I said, I'm not saying veterans are first on the list, or should be, or whatnot. But we've got to make sure that there are other groups that aren't dropping too far behind, you know.

Councilor Foote: And to that point, and not to get into the weeds of it, but just for full transparency, when those groups are given these exemptions or these special credits or instances, that doesn't mean they get it and it just comes out of nowhere. That is shifted to everybody else. So, I just want to be fully transparent and let people watch at home that we fully acknowledge and understand that that cost just gets shifted to other taxpayers. So just for full transparency, you know, we can get into the weeds of that as we get closer to it. That was the other challenge with veterans' is that's an ever-changing delta. The numbers change, pretty regularly, year by year. Even in the year, some die off, some come out, some are 100%, some are not 100%. So again, just food for thought.

Councilor Webb: Pardon my executive fire office training. Develop a labor and leadership group to evaluate healthcare options with a goal to reduce costs and reduce the weight of health insurance increases. This committee should evaluate, at a minimum, self-insurance with a third-party manager and stop loss/and grow-up insurance, different health insurance vendors, purchasing insurance outside the health insurance trust, and/or making no changes. The final report should be completed and implemented before the next round of CBA negotiations, which is in roughly two years. And that would be the police patrol and police supervisors. I think this is important because health insurance is the second largest bill that the town pays, largest being, of course, wages. And I think we do a disservice both to our employees and to the taxpayers by not taking part in health insurance discussions. The next one is in regards to the police station, which is to secure land and financing by fiscal year 2029 and start construction by fiscal year 2031. I know it's a process. I know that we have bond issues and stuff like that that we have to think of. But just looking at the timeline that the fire station took, and that was actually started discussion seriously in 2016, 2017. Next, through incremental funding, through grants, opioid funds, and operational budget of part-time police social worker position that by fiscal year '31 is a full-time position and is fully funded in the operational budget. I've talked to several of the police officers about this. I think this is an important thing because, unfortunately, many of their interactions are with people with either mental health issues or they're in, you know, domestic situations that are impacting either their behavior or contributing them to being a victim. And across the country, we're finding that by adding a social work component to law enforcement has proven to be very effective. But like any full-time position, we can't just say, "Poof." We have to increment the financing over a period of time. Next, to develop a town-wide improvement in hiring and marketing plan, which I discussed this during our budget sessions. Vacancies equate to increased overtime spending, which further equates to less funds and personnel available for projects or other operational needs and concerns growth and development. Furthermore, vacancies can directly impact employee retention. Towns should explore targeted marketing work in specific geographic areas whose access to public education is less, whose cost of living is higher, and/or whose quality of life is less than that available here. Again, that number, both one and four, are looking right now at personnel costs. Some departments are between 94 and 97 percent of personnel costs. And that really does hamper the ability to grow for those programs for us. And, you know, even if we can incrementally make changes, it took a long time for us to get to these ratios. My last, even though I came up with six, my last real goal is for code and ordinance development, planning and approval processes, increase the availability of one and two-family workforce housing units. For example, this could specifically target any new multifamily apartment development of over 20 units and require one and 25 percent to be made available as workforce housing. Part of that would also be to make certain that we keep on our radar the redevelopment of the Fisher Craft site, which is 19 Elm, I believe. I know that project has sort of seemed like it sort of stalled because of hazardous waste issues. But that was being

considered specifically as a workforce housing development. And my number six goal just sort of goes with what everybody else has been saying, and that is just a traffic management, Exit 4A, traffic management plan to ensure that protects the residential areas that are being impacted by the project.

Councilor Flood: I'm basically on board with what everyone has been adding to their list. I don't need to add mine, but it was pretty much in check. I want to make sure that the police department is, we know they're going to need a new building. Let's try to be as proactive as we can so we're not playing catch up. I mean, the fire station ended up costing the town more than it should have because it was put off longer than it should have. It's no one's fault. They can't predict what's going to happen now. But had it been built back in 2015, 2016, 2017, it would have been better. If it can be avoided with the police station, I'm not ready to build it today or tomorrow. But we should just make sure that everyone has it on the radar and everybody knows to just chip away at it. So, when the time comes, we're ready. And part of that would be making sure we maximize 4A. That's beyond me and my scope of knowledge. But we need to make sure that, you know, I've been here for 35 years, and Derry is generally reacting to growth. It'd be nice to be proactive to it. I know it's being done. Try to make sure that the town and the school board work better together. They have needs, we have needs. We're the same. And I know it's being done. I'm just kind of putting that out there again. We need to make sure that we work together. I hope neither one of us gets left behind.

Councilor Healey: So the first on my list is the veterans' credit increase, which we have already talked about. Next was review of potential charter amendments. I just have that on here so we all kind of look at the charter, see if there's anything in there that may be outdated that potentially could be changed. Next is policy on the appointment of town councilor. And with this one, being someone that applied for a vacancy, the only difference, the only change I would look to see would be giving each person from the public a time to speak before a decision is made. I'd be interested in drafting a policy for the council's review or working with a few other councilors. I'd like to see, we had, I think, the second time seven people apply, and just giving them maybe three minutes to just quickly run down why they think they're a good candidate for the position, and then you'll have the council discuss it. So, nothing major on that, but I think when you have people apply, a lot of them were there in the room and giving them the opportunity just to say why they think they're a good fit for the position. The next one was non-represented employees' compensation study. This goal, I'd like to see an outside company come in and study our non-rep to see how they fall into the pay scale. I know we've had some, I believe it's probably more internal phone calls to other communities to kind of get the pay of the non-rep. But a full-on study goes into more detailed specific functions of their job and gives more of an accurate pay scale. Last week we got a memo regarding some of the non-represented employees. I don't think it's entirely fair to single out a few and only give them an increase, especially after we just passed the budget. I'm in favor of the increase overall. I think they're deserved, but I think there could be a better way to do this so it's more equitable for all the employees going forward. And the last thing on my list is a town hall space study. I know a few departments like Fire have moved out of the town hall. There are companies that will come in that can better manage the space. It's just an idea. Maybe some departments can shift around and utilize the space in town hall better. But there's, again, it's professional companies that come in and actually manage the space, and that's their primary function. So, in short, those are my goals.

Councilor Milz: As far as the non-covered employees, do we not only have four or five?

Administrator Fowler: It's a very small number. It's your three department heads. You have Sheila, so the executive secretary, human resources director, chief financial officer. There's a

couple of positions that, like accounting manager, that no longer have a person in that spot. And then the town clerk's compensation isn't set. You guys, as the council, set that compensation. You did that by resolution, but in general, that policy covers that. So, it's a very small number of employees. And what Councilor Healey, for the public, is referring to is I had sent out a real rudimentary salary compilation that was done to show what our comparable communities were as we were setting the rates for July 1, 2026. All the unions have negotiated numbers, and your non-representative group is your last to kind of get settled. So many of the unions got 4 percent cost of living. The other two police units are based off of the CPI at 3.3 percent. So essentially, what had happened there, we looked at some of the numbers. Within that policy, the administrator has the ability to look at a market adjustment if it's viable. And as a result of what I had seen, there were two positions, the human resources director and the CFO, where I thought they were low in the range to make an adjustment. The other groups, the others in that group, I felt were new to that particular position and were keeping with that range. Because one of the nuances in that, and we can get into the weeds of this later on, but that non-representative range, it moves up by CPI. So, in other words, if you have \$100,000 or \$150,000 as your range, if it moves up, there's no opportunity for the employee to say, as they gain proficiency, to get to that top of the range, right? Whereas the unions have steps. There are some flaws in that particular pay system, and maybe that's something that they bring to light as they do the study on that. But it's not a large group, to answer your question.

Councilor Healey: I just want to be clear, too, that the recommendations by the town administrator, I fully agree with. I think that we should be looking at all of them. And I know some of them were just adjusted when they took the position, but there's still a few in there that maybe could be looked at. I think there's nine in that policy. But I do fully agree with giving the increase based off of what we received.

Councilor Spencer: I think we should keep everything on your list of goals here but, but one is a precedent we all need to think about is making a policy that's going to affect another council down the road. So, when it comes to something like appointing a town councilor, there isn't a policy as exists right now because, according to the charter, if it's not established, then we run it as we see fit to run it. And it's come up on other things, too, where we've been very hesitant to say, "We're going to put something in place because the seven of us think it's a good idea," that 10 years from now, seven different people have to follow because we need some sort of resolution or policy or whatever. Now, I mean, you can make, if it's just a policy, it's a manual, you can change those instantly. So, I think we should leave it on there. But when I read that, that was my thought, is it's come up before, and I don't want to start getting into situations where we set a precedent that we're starting to set policy that has to be done a certain way because different situations call for different approaches sometimes. I just want to throw that piece out there. But I think it should stay on the list for consideration, but I just want to kind of put that in there.

Councilor Milz: I agree with you on that also, simply because, like you said, it's not that it's vague, it's just that it's in there in the charter that the town council does what it sees fit. As far as having a chance to present for two or three minutes, that should all be covered in any kind of a resume that they send in for qualifications. If we have any questions, we can always contact a certain person. We can ask them to come in. But otherwise, I think that the policy, the way we have it right now, is sufficient. And I agree that we shouldn't be binding future town councils, and that's where the regulation is.

Councilor Spencer: And I think, to your point, you are looking for this one thing. But if we're going to do that, we have to have a whole policy of how it all runs. And just to use Councilor Mogé as an example, I think we talked about it. If she had put her resignation in a month or a

month and a half sooner, we would have let it run until the election, but we couldn't do that. So I think it isn't a small change. It's actually establishing a full policy. So that was where my mind was. I think for what you're looking for that would be fine. We can look at that if that's what the council makes sense to do. But again, I don't think it should come off of the list for consideration right now, but I just wanted to put that out there during the conversation.

Councilor Healey: I just want to add, hopefully, that if we did have a policy, we wouldn't be using it. I just like the idea of giving them just a little time to speak. But I do understand that maybe we could ask if it is a situation in the future to maybe have the resume or the letter be a little more detailed or something along those lines, just to get kind of the full picture of each candidate. It's last on my list, but I just figured I'd throw it out there.

Councilor Foote: Like we talked about, the senior and vets are one here. The 4A opportunities, and to Councilor Milz's point, we really need to hone in on that and really kind of oversee that and what we're going to do with that initially to maximize the opportunities while they're being built now and not have regret or buyer's remorse down the road, "Oh, we should have done this or done that." I think we just need to all stay on point with that. This is one of my old things from a few years ago, Hood Park. And I know it's not the fault of the town, but the revitalization in Hood Pond and the park itself, I think that's important because now we have the Abbott Court project going on. I personally believe that the Hood project will help with that downtown development. When it goes to the next phases with the apartments, it's going to be a big draw. People will be able to walk to the park right there. They can have that. There are coffee shops downtown. There are restaurants. There are all these things, amenities that they can easily walk to. A park would be a great idea with the pond and take it as far as getting the initial goal back then was getting Pinkerton involved, the CTE program, the wilderness students having to come out and try to get involved with the invasive species, things like that. I think it's a win-win all around for that. I know that was put out to RFP. It was a small fish in a big pond that people just weren't buying because it was such a small project in the grand scheme of the contracts that it was left behind in favor of bigger projects. But I'd like us to really try to refocus on that. And again, that's no fault of the town or DPW or anything like that. It's just how things went. Another one from a few years ago that I want to revisit with you. We looked at the ACO position. I would like to kind of review that and see, you know, our ACO, what the actual job is entailed right now versus what, if any, expansion can be made, whether it be other animals, what our policy on wild animals is. I know people sometimes call companies and things like that, but let's say an owl, what happens when an owl gets hurt or injured? What do the police do with it? Does it sit on the road? And I know not everyone's an animal lover, but in today's world, the pet industry is a multi-billion-dollar business, and people on social media, you'll see all the people, if it has an animal in it, people are going to click on it, subscribe, they're going to watch it, and the views are going to be up. I think we just need to be cognizant of that and revisit the ACO position and what, if anything, can we do to maximize that. Ryan's Hill, I know we've had that on our radar for a while. We've worked on it for years, and I know water and sewer, and we talked about redevelopment and things like that. Again, as far as business opportunities are concerned, I think that's something we need to really still focus on, now that the water and all the mitigation issues have been dealt with up there. That's something. I know Hyla Brook has gone in there, and that place is beautiful. We started on the northern side of Bypass 28. Now we need to kind of continue further south and see what we can do with that. And I think Councilor Webb mentioned this earlier, health insurance. It was 27 percent that we went up? 27 percent. I think that's just the market out there for everything, but I think we can do better. I'm pretty sure if we with the mass buying power, whatever that looks like, whether it be getting involved with other communities, I'm not sure if that's something we can do, get like a buying power type thing and really try to hone in on lowering those costs. You know, unfortunately, everyone needs health insurance, and it's a monopolized market. People, there's a demand for it, so they're going to

raise the prices, but I think we need to really do better at that. And again, that's no fault of anybody in the town, just how things have fallen over the years with post-COVID and whatnot. I think there's a lot of money, maybe not to be saved, but we could do a lot of cost avoidance if we get very diligent and really hone in on that. But it was two years, I think, we have to do that. Obviously, we want to get that settled before then, but, you know, Derry was not the worst, but we're definitely not the best that's out there as far as the health increases.

Councilor Webb: It was really interesting. I know I sent it around, that the editorial that was recently, the op-ed that was in the Union Leader talking about a health insurance trust. And the numbers that this op-ed pointed out was that the family plan through a HealthTrust was \$50,000, which is what we're seeing, where some of the surrounding states are looking at similar family plans at \$27,000. That's one of those numbers you want to trust the source, but you have to verify. And I think to go with health insurance, this is one of the areas where we don't have expertise enough. I think that we have people that are stakeholders, but I don't think we necessarily have it. We've got a numbers guy who's fantastic, Bob McCarthy, but I don't think we have the expertise in-house. This might be an area that we do put this group together and we should look a facilitator.

Councilor Foote: And to that point, again, not to sound crass about it, but the town is a business. We're running a business for the residents. We're providing them with services. To provide those services, we have employees. The employees have to be compensated, and they have to be compensation with insurance. Many people take second and third jobs for health insurance purposes. So, if we have the employees right now retained, we need to provide them with insurance that's worth them staying here, number one, because if they leave, that creates vacancies, which, as we know, the overtime costs go up. It's around and around and around. And then that's a disservice to the residents because their tax money is kind of just getting recycled, recycled, recycled. I think it's important as a business to look at it from that point of view, like how do we maximize the best for the customer and the best for the employee and find that happy medium.

Councilor Spencer: Well, mine are all just repetitive, so I'll go quickly. I definitely have the new police station on the radar and continuing to make a plan. The goal is not to build a police station this year, but to kind of continue to have it front of mind and to, Councilor Floods point earlier, try to be a little ahead of things instead of behind. I think by the time we got to the fire station, we did a good job of managing the costs that existed at that point. But had we built it 10 years ago, it wouldn't have been as expensive. I'd like to continue to work on this so that we're ready to go when the time is right for that. We've talked quite extensively already about reviewing the veterans and elderly exemptions and hopefully figuring out where we can increase a bit. And then I also have, as Councilor Foote and I have kind of talked about over time, reviewing and updating our animal control, both the position of what it is and what the role is and the policies that go with it. I'm not even at wildlife. I would just like cats included. If we could just get cats, I'd be happy. In having talked with some animal control officers within the state that have some really well-developed positions and departments, there's a lot that we can be doing and, in my opinion, we should be doing too. To Councilor Foote's point, it's just a matter of time until somebody comes after us because we weren't there to do something. And I think that is because our policies are very, I don't want to diminish the importance of our animal control officer's role, but we have a dog officer right now. And I think we should have an animal control officer in today's world, whether it's to coordinate wildlife efforts, whether it's other pets, whether there's other things going on. I just think I sit on the Governor's Commission for Animal Welfare, and there's way more to an animal control officer's job than dogs at this point. And we have some of the primary animals that normally would be dealt with those. We have them all over the

town. So yeah, I really think that should be a priority at this point. We are a little behind the times on that one.

Councilor Foote: To that point, so again, it's not repetitive, but we're a business and we're providing customer service. And I think that we might get the standard, but we are perfectly capable of increasing that standard and optimizing and maximizing customer service experience for the people in town. Again, the pet industry is a multi-billion-dollar business. And if people care more about their animals than they do about other social events and things like that, you know, if you look on social media, you'll see a lot of that. I think if the council is amenable to us reviewing all this down the road, I think that's something we can reach out to other departments who do have different disciplines and whatnot and see how they're doing it and maybe take a hybrid, kind of take up a few communities and kind of pick and choose what's going to benefit Derry the most and put those together. And again, at the end of the day, we want to provide the best customer experience that we can. And I think this is the way we can do that. Again, it's no secret, I'm an animal lover, but these are things that I've also heard on a regular basis from officials. I know you and I have had some experiences in the past with some things that we know we can do better. So, and that's not a knock towards anyone currently, it's just that times change. With evolution, we need to evolve with those times.

Councilor Spencer: A lot of the things that I had had on past goals, we're doing some. We have a fire department. We have our new fire station now. So, I'm good. I can take that off the list finally. I think a lot of what everybody has put forth are definitely good. I like how we all came together from our own areas when we came in there. Anyone have anything else they want to add before we move on to our next step?

Councilor Milz: I just want to say one more thing about going back to veterans because it stuck in my mind. Councilor Healey was talking about doing that \$50 jump and doing things like that. As I listen to all our goals, we just managed to bond, I don't know how many millions for the fire station, and we're going to have to do the same thing for the police station. I can't see an earthly reason why we can't jump and pay veterans. We're paying them, giving them a \$550 tax break while we can't add \$200 a veteran to that. I think this is going to be one of my goals to make the council address that increase, it to heck with the \$50. Let's go right through \$750 and put this to bed. I've been listening to this for 25 years now about this veteran's exemption. And if we can build fire stations, we can build police stations, we can fix all our wastewater and increase our sewage, we can give the veterans a \$200 credit.

Councilor Spencer: Councilor Chase wasn't able to join us tonight. I did just want, I know most of this was said but for the public, I just was going to read through his goals. I can't elaborate, but most of them, are in line with what we've talked about. He had continue downtown projects and revitalization, Route 28 South Infrastructure Improvements, evaluate housing needs in town and plan to meet needs, evaluate town facility needs, and plan for water and wastewater expansion to support future growth. Just so that we have complete what we all had submitted. And then we will turn back over to you, Administrator Fowler.

Administrator Fowler: I think one of the things that I think to cap this up, we'll kind of compile these goals. I have a couple of questions here, but I do want to at least throw out a couple of other items that maybe we neglected to mention. I just want to kind of run through a couple of items that I've identified, and if there's anything that stimulates it, the council, stop me and we can have some discussion about it. But looking at, obviously, we have HB 1300, we have HB 1331, which is the absorption of the town, the school, tax cap, all those issues. That is a pending issue that could be moving forward to the voters here very soon. We obviously have to make sure we articulate the impacts of our upcoming tax rate. And I'm going to use the word

torpedo, right? We're going to see in December, that's going to be a difficult pill to swallow. We just got done with the acceptance of the June bill, and now we're looking at, with the increased spending, primarily out of the school district, we're going to see some significant increases. So, in that September, October range, we have an idea of where that tax rate is. I will be presenting to the public, to the council, to kind of elaborate where those pinch points are going to be, but I want to make sure that we articulate that transparently for everybody. Obviously, in my department, I'm going to be looking potentially to backfill the retirement of our executive secretary. That's going to be probably coming fairly soon. She's had a wonderful career. Obviously, we still have to have some discussions about the disposition of the central fire station. That is on my list of things to do. Councilor Webb, you'd mentioned about opioid settlement funds. CHS has done some preliminary application towards a grant. And if that is moving forward, there's an opportunity for the town, at least on a short-term basis, to utilize some funds to co-join with them. So that's a decision that the council would be seeking to make at some point down the road. So that's probably something we may see on a September or October agenda, if it looks like that is possible. But you could potentially bridge through a grant to CHS while we're still figuring out if we want to have a full-time or multi-town individual that's dedicated to social services within our police department. Obviously, we're going to keep an eye on the landfill solar, and I'll report those findings. Community power, that's still on my list. I have an RFP that's out right now. When we identify that, hopefully we will catch some identified rates that will work in favor of our residents. We're going to look at the financial health of the organization through comprehensive financial forecasting for sustainable and non-sustainable funds. One of the things that I did want to ask in listening to all of this is, would you like me to do a brief tidbit-style presentation on our UFB, our unallocated fund balance on July 7th? I'm ready to do that. And we can at least give you some ideas as to what you may want to do, and it ties in with a lot of the goals that have been identified. So, I'll put that on the agenda for the 7th, and we'll have, it could just be an open discussion, but I'll put it under the town administrator's report. Obviously, we're going to continue to look at the new valuation. We had a good year last year. We're projecting another probably \$50 to \$55 million in new growth. That's a good thing. Monitor state legislative process to ensure that Derry's interests are being met. We're going to look at human service agencies because obviously their costs have been increasing as well. And I'm hearing some items that they're struggling in certain instances. So we need to kind of keep an eye on that. We've talked a lot about veterans credits and exceptions for elderly. That's definitely something that we want to take a look at. And I think if you tell me when you want to slot that in, I can start to prepare some of the information. A lot of what the other communities do is already published on the Department of Revenue's website, so you can get that information without a heavy lift on our part. We just would need to look at the scenarios. If you increase to X, what does that do for what you have to make up on the other side? Cable, that is one thing. I think sooner rather than later that we need to have that discussion. We talked a lot about FY27. I'd like to do some form of a workshop, perhaps when we get into September or October, so we can roll that out. On the economic development front, we're continuing with the Abbott Court construction. Obviously, we've got a secondary wave of development, Crystal Ave, some of the other ancillary roads. That's been going very well. And obviously, we still have three drug stores that are vacant, so we need to kind of keep working on those. One looks like there'll be a reuse that's in place, but we're keeping an eye on that as well. Fire department, obviously, they've got a number of items to look at, backfilling that assistant chief position. We're looking at dispatch staffing, the restructuring model. They're looking to build a new training facility, update their strategic plan, address staffing needs, particularly with paramedics, and then obviously working towards implementing a comprehensive training program. Human resources, we've talked about ways to continue to retain and recruit employees and market that. Health insurance is definitely a high-priority goal. We've already had some preliminary discussions with health trusts and looking at some outside brokers. So that's definitely something that's on my plate.

And then we do have one contract that is coming due as of June 30th, 2027. So, the patrolmen are out of contract as of a year from today. The supervisors are congruent with the other five that you just approved. There'll be six that will be coming up on June 30th, 2029, but we do need to address negotiations with them coming up in this upcoming year. Obviously, IT, we're going to be looking at a future retirement in that department and maybe some restructuring there. Planning, obviously, we're going to be coming to the town council on a few changes in the CBD, which might spawn some growth in terms of some areas that have been neglected. Police department, obviously, we're looking at the rebuild or new facility. We're going to continue to look at all those options and obviously access in the interim through the 4A process. In public works, we're looking at Southern New Hampshire phase two. We've had a lot of discussions that there's some interest in that kicking up, so I'll be providing some information as that moves forward. We're doing some work on the engineering design for the rail trail north of 4A. Obviously, we're underway with the design of the Ryan's Hill sewer as well. So those are projects that are in the pipeline. We obviously have to prepare for a wastewater treatment plan upgrade. That's probably two to four years out. So, as you can see, there's a lot of things that we've accomplished, but I think there's a lot of things that we can put into that list. I think we've had a wonderful year. If you look back at where we were a year ago, we were just kicking off the water project down on Tsienetto Road. Abbott Court really hadn't broken ground, but we had sold the bond. Fire station, we had not moved in. There's a lot of things. We replaced the longstanding town administrator, and we've had a lot of vacancies that we have filled. So, we've survived a year, I think, is an accurate way to look at that. And we have some, obviously, a few new faces here on the town council. So personally, I've enjoyed it working with all of you in terms of working towards those goals, and we're going to continue to do that. So out of all of that, what I'm looking to decide, I think, for purposes of articulating those goals, do you want to set your top five? Do you want to set your top 10, or do you just want me to take everything that's been discussed verbally and everything that's been compiled in these submissions and put them into one pile? It really doesn't matter to me how you want to do it, but I was just looking for some consensus.

Councilor Spencer: I would like to see as we've kind of had a discussion about some of the priorities, but either one of two things. Taking what we've talked about tonight and kind of doing a kind of backing into what we've done for the past couple of years, you can see it on the list that was included in our packet that there was almost like a point system. How many people have this on their list? How many people have this on their list? We could do that. But I think everything that was said was valid. Obviously, we don't have to list veterans credits seven times on the list, but kind of pulling together where there's overlap, making them into goals, and then sending them out to the council to rank them ourselves. With the list that exists once you put them all together. I counted like 20-something of what we roughly submitted, but some of those are the same, right? So, we could kind of put that list together and send it out to all of us to rank them ourselves and then come back to see how we ranked them. I think that the next step is to kind of rank and see where we are. I think what we'll come out with is a bit of a long list, but then we can prioritize. I don't mind leaving something on there that's a low priority. If we get there, we get there, but seeing which the priority is, I think, is the big thing for me.

Councilor Foote: I think some of the things on the list don't necessarily have to be a full council panel at one time. There could be some things kind of done offline, two or three counselors working in conjunction with the town administrator and whoever it is that that goal addresses. Obviously, what every council says is important to them, and so it should be important to the council that we don't take everyone's iteration and look it all through. So I think that just my suggestion would be, to your point, make a list of everything we can rank them. But I think everything, whether it's first or it's last, should at least be addressed at some point to move for a fair due process by that councilor.

Councilor Milz: If we've got that many, why don't we just do something like a top 10 list and then everything else list as ancillary? And when we get the list, I don't think it really matters what order the top 10 are in. Let's just look at it. And if we see if a couple of us feel very strongly that one of the ancillary items should replace one of the top 10 lists, that way we've at least got a manageable list to play with and just not try and get to 12 and 14.

Councilor Webb: The ancillary items can also be called goals of opportunity. If the opportunity comes up, if the funding comes up, hey, we can address this or some of the goals might be relatively straightforward. Like veterans' credits, we might be able to satisfy before we even come up with our goals.

Councilor Foote: I think to that point as well, that chair, you can install a subcommittee on certain things. I know years past, we did one on the veteran's credit because you have the common veterans and non-common veterans. And because of the RSA change at the state level for the veterans' credits, it was to include all veterans, not just the common veterans, but that was opt-in. And it just financially was not feasible to opt in because, again, like I said earlier tonight, we didn't know the delta and that was ever-changing of who that would affect and what would that cost burden be to the town, the up and down, up and down, and how can we sustain that realistically on a tax cap. Having said that, I think that you and your purview can create subcommittees on certain things that do not have a monetary aspect right away, but procedural or whatever, or vetting out. I guess it's a good way to put it.

Councilor Spencer: I think if we maybe took an opportunity to send out what we had, we can all kind of rank them ourselves and then kind of see how that shakes out to build a top 10. And then you can talk about that maybe. At the meeting on the 7th, is that reasonable for us to look at a list and send that back or at least come with your rankings? Ideally, have it before the 7th so we could look at what that is and then to Councilman Milz's point, say, "Okay, wait, I really don't want this on the ancillary, or I really don't think this is should be kind of that thing." And then we could finalize them.

Councilor Foote: Is that doable for the 7th?

Administrator Fowler: I'll publish this full list, get it out to the council via an email on Thursday and then we'll put a hard copy in the packets for your meeting for the 7th. If you can respond back to me with your ordinal 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, I can compile those. Then when we convene on the 7th, we can look at those. If they're not complete, I mean, ultimately, this isn't necessarily something that you as a body have to vote on per se. I mean, it's good to have consensus, but if you've given me your individual votes, we can compile that and publish that at any time. So, it's really up to you. I'd prefer it if we had it by the 7th, but if it's not going to be possible, then that can be something at a later date.

Councilor Spencer: First goal is to try to do it by the 7th. And if we don't, then we'll do it after.

Councilor Milz: There are things on the list, for instance, exit 4A. Exit 4A should be about one of the top priority ones, but there's not a heck of a lot we can do right now. We've got to see how it develops and things like that. So that could be up there but would require little or no management.

Councilor Spencer: If there is a subgroup that's kind of looking at those things and just monitoring it or whatnot. Yeah, I think that's a good idea.

Councilor Webb: The planning board, some of the other boards in town can do some of the heavy lifting on these things too, such as a lot of the exit 4A stuff and housing stuff really is up to the planning board. And maybe that's where it is, is that our guidance and opinion gets passed down to the different boards.

Councilor Foote: Is there any updated word on the tunnel and where it stands and what's the procedure moving forward?

Administrator Fowler: There meeting was, I want to say late May, it was right after Memorial Day with the state, and it was the cultural resources meeting. One of the hurdles and one of the reasons that there was an overturn of the decision to make it an at grade crossing was the impact on the cultural and the historic value of the Manchester Lawrence Railroad. And now because of that ruling, it's forcing DOT to go back through that process to talk about mitigation measures and all that. So that's more of a procedural item. From a design perspective, I've had a conversation with Wendy Johnson, they are working on a design as if everything's going to work itself through that cultural resources process, but they're not ready to publish what that's going to look like. So, the pickle the contractor is in right now is they can't commit to purchasing any of the construction items. They can't go forward with any of the work, that's because you do it once and then your grade changes ever so slightly. So that whole area from about, say, American Excavating's entrance to the bridge that's being or actually further down by Franklin, really can't do much work in there. So that's why you've noticed recently they've been working in front of North High Street and then also on the other end of the project by the traffic signal at Ross's corner. I know they've got to make a decision fairly soon. It's going to happen as a tunnel passing under, but the specific engineering requirements, I don't believe, have been finalized as of yet by DOT. As it stands right now, the projected finish date is June of 2028, and that's what it has been from the beginning because there's multiple years of phases. But remember, this contract B takes us as far as basically Fire Eye. There'll be a signal that has to go in place at Pinkerton Street and Tsienneto, and then there'll be a taper, if you will, from two lanes to one lane and match into the existing, but all that should be done by June of 2028. Contract C is not even going to be bid out until 2029 at this point. And our expectation of the actual construction probably is now between 2030 and 2032.

Councilor Webb: So that's from Fire Eye down to 102?

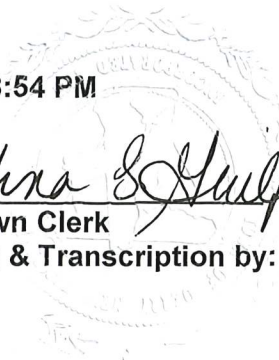
Administrator Fowler: That is correct. That would be the signal, and that would obviously be all of the couple of culverts in that area as well. But remember, the C contract isn't nearly as intricate as far as widening is concerned because the section from Irving to 102 is basically going to stay as you see it. It's just a one-on-one in each direction, not like Folsom Road where there's been a massive widening. It's not going to look like that.

Councilor Spencer: All right. Are there any other questions or comments before we finish up our goals for the evening? All right. The last item on our agenda is that Paul Lindemann has offered to give us a tour.

Council takes the tour of the facility.

**Motion by Councilor Milz to ADJOURN, seconded by Councilor Foote
All Agreed**

Adjourn: 8:54 PM


Cristina Guilford
Town Clerk

Recording & Transcription by: Cristina Guilford, Town Clerk

July 7, 2024
Date