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Council vote on raises is delayed

Decide mayor should have set up an appropriation; Hawke says it's not needed

■ GARDNER
By Andrew Mansfield
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The City Council decided it couldn't hold votes on salary increases during Monday's meeting because Mayor Mark Hawke didn't provide a funding appropriation.

The council was scheduled to vote on several different proposed pay raises, including for the position of mayor, School Committee, appointed positions and nonunion city staff.

"Because we have not received a supplemental appropriation — the statute is very clear — a supplemental appropriation has to be in place before we can vote on it," City Council President Ronald Cormier said.

Hawke was not at the meeting but spoke afterward and objected to the City Council's decision, saying there was available funding within the city budget already and therefore a supplemental appropriation was not necessary. He added that the city solicitor agreed with him.

The council was meeting to discuss salary increases it already passed for first printing during its Sept. 5 meeting, but needed a two-thirds majority to pass for the second and final printing.

All of the proposed salary

increases were submitted to the City Council by Hawke.

The end result of Monday's meeting was that voting on most of the proposed raises has been delayed to another meeting.

The proposals include increasing the mayor's salary from \$88,650 to \$92,196, the pay for the six School Committee members from \$5,000 to \$5,200, and giving small stipend increases for the appointed positions, which include the members of the various city boards and commissions.

Those three categories of raises would be effective January 2018 and total \$10,846.

The exception to the decision to not hold votes were the nonunion raises, which the City Council did unanimously approve for the final printing.

Funding for those raises was already included in the budget for fiscal 2018, which began July 1, so the concern over needing a supplemental appropriation did not apply.

The reason that the nonunion raises had not already been approved was due to a disagreement between Hawke and within the City Council over how to fund the assistant city clerk position. The City Council voted against the raises in July.

Now that they are approved, they will be retroactive to July 1.

RAISES 4

'Just give me a smile — that's all I need.'

Lillian Haynes, on what she'd like back for volunteer garden work



FLOWER POWER

Gardner's Garden Lady spruces up Senior Center

■ GARDNER
By Andrew Mansfield
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Pleasant Street resident Lillian Haynes livens up the neighborhood with beautiful gardens and a personality just as colorful.

She lives across the street from the Gardner Senior Center, at 294 Pleasant St., and takes care of 300 plants featuring different flower varieties in front of the building entrance.

Every day since the spring planting, she can be seen out there checking on the plants and making sure they stay nice-looking for everybody's enjoyment.

"I love to do this. This is my passion. I could grow anything under a rock," she said. "I'm always volunteering for nothing. Just give me a smile — that's all I need."

Haynes took over the role of gardening in front of the Senior Center from Gardner resident Nancy Hawke this year, who for many years previous did the job and the Senior Center staff expressed gratitude for her efforts.

The Senior Center pays for the plants and their maintenance worker helps put in the soil and mulch, but on a day-to-day



Pleasant Street resident Lillian Haynes shows off the garden in front of the Gardner Senior Center entrance.

News staff photos by ANDREW MANSFIELD

basis, it's Haynes' role to be out there tending to the garden.

Senior Citizens Director Claude Leger commented on how Haynes' presence has brightened the whole area up, making Pleasant Street look more like it sounds.

"She's the most energetic person in the neighborhood," he said.

Haynes credits her enthusiasm to her attitude, saying ever since she turned 50, she feels like she's going backwards in age.

She's now 64.

"I try just to make everybody change their ways a little bit. I don't stop for one minute. I refuse to grow old," she said.

Plantings in front of the Senior Center include flowers such as azaleas, zinnias, mini dahlias and blue angels.

Haynes also tends to an impressive garden at her residence including morning glories, sunflowers, hollyhock and strawberries.

FLOWERS 4

MAKING THE MOST OF MATH

Accountant honored

■ HUBBARDSTON

By Christine Smith
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Jennifer Williams, a certified public accountant who has just been singled out as a Woman to Watch in her industry, has always loved math and working with numbers, but she truly lights up and her eyes sparkle when she talks of the actual strategy and the analysis to be found behind these figures.

"The things that turn me on are the strategic elements of accounting. What do the numbers mean to the health of the business? Why is the business



Courtesy photo

Local accountant Jennifer Williams was recently honored with the 2017 Women to Watch Award.

fledgling?" she said, noting the analytical thought behind what she works on with clients to

help a company succeed in its goals.

Williams was recognized last month as a 2017 Women to Watch Award winner by the Massachusetts Society of Certified Public Accountants, which represents over 11,000 members. Each year, the organization "recognizes women who have made an outstanding contribution to the accounting profession, their community, place of employment, and/or to the development of women as leaders."

Williams is currently serving as a partner and director of operations at the firm McLaren & Associates CPAs, PC, in Shrewsbury, and was selected for the Women to Watch honor by a selection committee after nomination for the award came from her peers.

MATH 4

Senior Center exterior lighting considered in grant request

Insulation of Public Safety Building on hold

■ WESTMINSTER

By Doneen Durling
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After working out multiple "Green Projects" the Energy Committee recently had to withdraw one item from its list before the final contract is to be submitted to the Department of Energy Resources for a grant approval. It seems a different committee is deciding whether it is time to completely renovate the Public Safety Building.

The Board of Selectmen voted to subtract \$25,815 from the Green Communities Project request that was to be directed toward insulating the building.

Selectmen Chairman Heather Billings is also a member of the Energy Advisory Committee that helped compile projects related to Green Communities grant.

She said Monday, "There is a group studying what we are going to do with that building, and if there is renovation, it wouldn't be the right thing to do to put new insulation in there, and then take it out."

Billings said the Energy Advisory Committee removed the request for insulation from the line item for the contract with Energy Conservation Inc. The contract will be submitted for approval to the state before Oct. 6. The original contract was written for a \$103,340 Green Community Grant.

"What we are doing is looking at other projects in town to use the remainder of the grant money for, and one of the things we are looking at is updating the lighting of the exterior of the Senior Center. That would be a second contract later on," Billings added.

WESTMINSTER 4

WEATHER

TODAY:
PARTLY CLOUDY,
HIGH 85

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