

City Council Work Session
January 15, 2018

Present were: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Otis, Gentili, Theberge, Rozek, Higbee, Nelson and Remillard
Councilor Morgan Allain was absent.

Others present: City Manager Jim Wheeler, Corrine Cascadden, Nicole Plourde and Barbara Tetreault *Berlin Daily Sun*

Mayor Grenier opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Committee Assignments

The list of City Council Committees from 2016 was presented to the Mayor and Council. Mayor Grenier asked if anyone wanted to make any changes. Councilor Theberge stated that he has been on the Committee on Accounts and Claims since the beginning of his tenure and would like to be removed. Councilor Nelson stated that she would take his place. Councilor Higbee stated he has not been getting emails for the Berlin Airport Authority, while Councilor Nelson is. Mr. Wheeler will check into that. BIDPA was discussed and it was decided that Councilor Nelson should be the Ex-Officio member and Councilor Higbee will be the Council Appointment. There were no further changes made. Councilor Rozek moved, with a second from Councilor Higbee to accept the City Council Committees as presented, with the noted changes, for the years 2018 through 2020. So moved, the motion carried.

City Council Rules and Policies

The Rules and Orders of the City Council were presented to the Mayor and Council. Councilor Rozek moved, with a second from Councilor Remillard, to accept the Rules and Orders of the City Council as presented. So moved, the motion carried.

Lead Poisoning Prevention Bill

Mayor Grenier stated he had been contacted by Mayor Lovett of Claremont regarding SB247. Mayor Claremont asked Mayor Grenier if the City of Berlin would join in with the other City Mayors in support of SB247. Mayor Grenier wanted to review the matter with the Council prior to making any statements whether in support of or not. This amendment to the current law, states that all 1-2 year old children will be tested for lead disease during their regular vaccination schedule. The proposed amendment requires insurance companies to pay for the testing. Further discussion took place regarding sportsmen/police training as it relates to lead that may be embedded in the ground from ammunition. Also, concerns were expressed regarding landlords and the already strict laws in place, noting that just because a child lives in an apartment does not mean that the lead poisoning took place in the home. It may have very well come from a daycare, babysitter, etc. It was agreed that as this amendment is not a large change, nor does it take away rights as a parent, support will be given in this matter. Councilor Nelson moved, with a second from Councilor Higbee, that the City take a position in favor of SB247 and join in/sign the City Mayors' letter of support of the bill. So moved, the motion carried.

Ladder Truck Grant Resolution

Jim Wheeler, City Manager, stated that this grant/resolution is similar to the past attempts in receiving grant monies to replace the FD ladder truck. At this time the truck is 1 to 2 years away from its age limit, which is typically 25 years.

Other

Mr. Wheeler stated that NHMA sent out a copy of SB438 on Friday. This proposed bill is relative to the postponement of local elections due to emergency situations. NHMA is opposed to the bill. Further discussion took place regarding SB438. Councilor Nelson moved, with a second from Councilor Rozek, to not take a

position regarding SB438. The vote resulted in 7 ayes, with Councilor Remillard voting against, therefore, the motion carried.

Mayor Grenier asked Mr. Wheeler if he had spoken with John Richard Rozen regarding North Country Growers. He stated that there had been an article recently in the Union Leader that stated they would be closing the finance portion in March and would break ground once the frost lifts. Mr. Wheeler has not heard from Mr. Rozen, but noted the March date coincides with the federal money date.

Councilor Nelson asked when the new Fire Chief would start. Mr. Wheeler stated that he will officially start on February 5th, but that he has already started to help do daily work.

Mayor Grenier closed the work session at approximately 7:20 pm.

Prior to starting the regular City Council meeting, Mayor Grenier requested that the *Swearing In Ceremony* take place.

Swearing in Ceremony by:	Elaine Riendeau, City Clerk
Mayor - Elect	Paul Grenier
Councilors – Elect	Diana Nelson
	Michael Rozek
	Russell Otis
	Lucie Remillard

School Board – Elect	Scott Losier
	Denise Valerino
	Louise Valliere
	Nicole Plourde

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Monday, January 15, 2018

Mayor Grenier called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 7:30 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers. The pledge of allegiance to the flag preceded roll call. Present: Councilors Remillard, Otis, Nelson, Higbee, Gentili, Rozek, and Theberge. Absent: Councilor Morgan Allain. Also present: Jim Wheeler, Corrine Cascadden, Scott Losier, Denise Valerino, Louise Valliere, Nicole Plourde, several members of the public and Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Daily Sun

Minutes, Previous Meeting

Councilor Remillard moved with a second by Councilor Otis to accept the minutes of the January 2nd Regular Meeting/Work Session and the January 8th Work Session. So moved, the motion carried.

Disbursements:

Disbursement Summary Draft #1806 start date 1/3/2018 end date 01/12/2018 for a total cash disbursement of \$1,389,153.03. Councilor Theberge moved with a second by Councilor Gentili to accept the disbursement summary and pay all bills as recommended by the Committee on Accounts/Claims. So moved, the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Joshua Ewalt, 68 Charron Avenue – Mr. Ewalt asked why during the recent storm were the streets not plowed until late day. While he can understand that the back roads were not plowed, he stated that it is important to keep the main arteries and the streets needed for school open so that children can be picked up at school. He especially stressed the importance during school hours.

Martha Creegan, 404 Church Street – Ms. Creegan stated that she was one of those who called in angry about the state of the roads after the last storm. Although she was not in to complain about Public Works, she asked that the Mayor and Council consider increasing the budget for the Public Works Department. Public Works is always on the bottom of the list when it comes to fulfilling its budget request and the first to have to absorb cuts. She noted that the Council has been doing well at keeping the tax rate level and building a reserve for unforeseen emergencies, and thanked them. However, she would like to see them work aggressively to try to consolidate police, fire and school departments with area towns.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Council Committee Reports – There were none.

NEW BUSINESS

2. Resolution 2018-02 Authorizing an application to the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program for the replacement of the 1995 Ladder Truck (1st read)

Councilor Theberge moved, with a second from Councilor Higbee, to table this matter and schedule a public hearing for Monday, February 5th. So moved, the motion carried.

3. City Manager's Report

1. The City has received four proposals for a new phone system at the Berlin Police Dept. The proposals will be reviewed by City and Police Dept. over the next few weeks before a decision is made.
2. We received bids on the two Bombardier sidewalk tractors and spare parts. These were sold for approximately \$6,500 total. A bid summary is attached.
3. There are four lots of land out for bids: The Western Avenue and Forbush Avenue lots are being offered to abutters and are due on January 18th. The Cates Hill Road and Jericho Road lots are out to bid to the general public and they are due on January 25th. We will report the results of the bids at the next regular meeting.
4. KOBO Utility Construction installed a rotating beacon and tip down pole at the Berlin Airport during the week of December 29th. To the contractor's credit, work was done in sub-zero temperatures. The new equipment is funded with Capital Improvement money from the FAA, NHDOT and the airport. A field report with pictures is attached.
5. Executive Councilor Joe Kenney's annual report is attached.
6. The Public Works YTD Activity Report and Work Order Summary for December 2017 is attached.

Mr. Wheeler also wanted to add that over the cold snap there was a shortage of heating fuel. A call was received from EMO and Public Works delivered oil to an elderly resident. From there, with the assistance of CN Brown, a protocol was prepared regarding assisting private, elderly residents.

Councilor Theberge asked why the phone system was being changed. Mr. Wheeler stated that the system is relatively old and the police department is looking to change to voice over IP.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to accept the City Manager's Report and place it on file. So moved, the motion carried.

4. State of City Address – Mayor Grenier

I first want to welcome back all of you who were re-elected to council and school board positions. Thank you very much for your hard work and dedication. Your long hours and self-sacrifice have made a huge difference in moving our community forward. In the aftermath of the 2006 closure of the pulp mill, and with it about 22% of the property tax revenue to the city, all of us proudly stood up and met the challenge head on. We all knew reinventing Berlin would be a daunting task. Our efforts would also be viewed through a microscope. Though our path forward was met with doubt, cynicism and criticism from some naysayers, we held fast to our vision. You should be extremely proud of your commitment.

First, for the first time in Berlin's long and proud history, we have developed a recreational economy. Who would have thought ATVing would be such a resounding family success! There are hundreds of people here in Berlin who work tirelessly to make this annual 7 ½ month 4 wheel paradise the envy of the eastern United States.

Secondly, the huge financial boost Burgess Biopower provides statewide is finally being recognized by a whole lot of people. For the upcoming city fiscal year that will begin in July, Burgess Biopower will provide the following: 8.5% of the \$14M Berlin raises through property taxation and rising yearly; roughly half of the total Berlin Water Works budget is paid for by Burgess in water usage fees. To simplify, Burgess payments represents the entire improvement effort taken on by the water commission. Today, BWW has some of the purest water in the state. Burgess Biopower's payments to Berlin's sewer user department account for roughly 20% of that budget. Add the economic activity of 30 employees who work directly as well as the tens of millions of dollars that are annually spent right here in Berlin on goods and services make this facility the cornerstone of Berlin's revival and economic diversification.

In 2011, my heart sank at the news of the Isaacson Structural Steel bankruptcy. One of Berlin's oldest businesses with a stellar reputation in their field, the lives of over 130 people were suddenly turned upside down. It was a trying time, coming just days after the re-opening of the paper mill. It certainly would have been real easy to throw in the towel. Instead, however, Berlin doubled down. Through the efforts of BIDPA and chairmen Dick Huot and Mike Caron, Dave Presby purchased the steel business and bought the building in the industrial park. AVRRODD absorbed the ISSI employees who worked at the transfer station and Capone Iron Corporation, one of the industry's most modern building steel and fabrication manufacturers, set shop in Berlin. It was a huge leap of faith from Stephen and Gary Capone to invest in Berlin, but today Capone has nearly 30 employees. Their goal is to have 50 by year's end. The collective efforts by city government and BIDPA have just about made up all the job losses endured by the ISSI bankruptcy, certainly no small feat in anyone's book!!

One of the fastest growing business you've never heard about here in Berlin is Organic Fields of Heather, LLC. Set up in the former James River service garage on Perry Street, they manufacture very high quality organic body lotions and cremes. Look them up on the web and you will be amazed! Dalton Mountain Motorsports and Jericho Outdoors are also newly formed business that are very successful, right here in Berlin. Through a lot of hard work, North Country Growers, the multi-million dollar greenhouse business is progressing toward a late winter closing, and Deflex Innovations is making great progress ramping up to full production.

The voting public here in Berlin has long recognized the council's tireless efforts at improving the city, though there is still so much to be done. We must continue to invest in Berlin's infrastructure, streamline and reduce costs in our operations where we can. In a climate of reduced state aid to education, we must find common ground with our surrounding communities. There is no doubt that one SAU needs to provide administrative services to educate kids in the valley. Though the Town of Gorham opted not to follow through on their request to the Berlin Police Commission for law enforcement services, there remains fiscal pressure on all communities here to find solutions. We must keep an open mind and work together, but we must also be painstakingly prepared to go it alone on all fronts if efforts fail. Berlin no longer has the luxury of doing "business as usual".

Berlin is changing and with it brings some good and some challenges. We will shortly extend the compact line on Rt 110 to Jericho Mt. State Park. Local developers are positioning themselves to change the face of that area. In late spring, BIDPA should be in a much stronger position to play a bigger role in the downtown. We also need incubator space for small to medium sized entrepreneurs to start and expand their business.

Canadian businesses looking to take advantage of the Buy American Act need space to relocate. There are all items that are currently on the plates of city staff and Mayor & Council.

There are two people who have played a very direct role in trying to improve and revitalize Berlin that I would like to recognize. Steve Binette and Bob Chapman have taken great personal financial risks in investing and promoting business here in Berlin. Let's not forget the work of Roland Berthiaume and Mike Couch of Romik Developers who also are working to build a first class camping experience near Jericho Mountain State Park. They also volunteer hundreds of hours of their personal and heavy equipment time to promote Berlin in many different ways.

In closing, Berlin for the last ten years has made all the right moves necessary to position it for an even brighter future than ever thought possible. An economy truly diversified by action, not talk. A local government that works to make a difference by action, not just talk. And an undeniable momentum that has been built by action, not just talk. In the next ten years, Berlin will be envied statewide for its prosperous retention of its small city character.

Paul R. Grenier
Mayor of Berlin

Councilor Rozek moved, with a second from Councilor Higbee, to accept the State of City Address as presented by the Mayor. So moved, the motion carried.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS - There were none.

6. Council Comments

Councilor Nelson said that she received lots of complaints from the last storm and questioned why plowing had not been completed. Mr. Wheeler remembered having a conversation with Mr. Perreault, PW Director, regarding the storm and plowing. He recapped storms and their timing. In this case, it was decided that the crew would pick up snow. In hindsight, Public Works should have plowed, but a decision had been made. Councilor Nelson also mentioned that people had been complaining that the sand buckets are not being refilled. Mr. Wheeler said that with the conditions being as icy as they have been, people are taking sand out of the buckets and bringing it elsewhere. It takes approximately 4 hours per route to refill the sand.

Councilor Theberge asked what is being used to treat the roads during the cold snaps. Mr. Wheeler stated that during the extremely cold weather, sand is being used instead of salt.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business before the Mayor and Council, Councilor Rozek moved with a second by Councilor Theberge to adjourn the regular meeting. So moved, the motion carried and Mayor Grenier declared the regular meeting adjourned at approximately 8:03 P.M.

A True Record, Attest:

Elaine Riendeau
City Clerk

Note: Minutes are unofficial until they have been accepted by the Council by motion.