

CITY OF BERLIN
New Hampshire

Minutes of Council Outside Agencies 3/14/2018
Council Conference Room
6:30 pm

Members:

Mayor Grenier
Councilor Higbee
Councilor Gentilli
Councilor Remillard
Councilor Rozek

City Staff:

Pamela Laflamme, City Planner
Elaine Riendeau, City Clerk
Patricia Chase, Finance Director

At 6:30 p.m. Mayor Grenier brought the meeting to order.

Mayor Grenier invited Mr. Bronson Frizzell to discuss the Chamber of Commerce's request for City support in the FY19 Budget. Mr. Frizzell explained that City support is vital toward offsetting the marketing expenses incurred in promoting Berlin. Marketing involves various forms such as website development and professional videos which the Chamber has been pursuing and noting some success. There was some discussion around the budgeted amounts of \$793 for Chamber Dues and \$1,500 for a Chamber request. Mr. Frizzell also explained that the Chamber has noticed an increase in potential visitors and vendors seeking information. Mayor Grenier thanked Mr. Frizzell for all he and the Chamber have done and continue to do to promote Berlin.

Ms. Pauline Tibbets, Executive Director of A.V. Home Care Services, was invited by Mayor Grenier to speak to the Council on behalf of her agency. Ms. Tibbets explained that she is requesting \$16,000 to help with Home Care Services and TIIIB Personal Care services. The Personal Care Program provided services to 20 clients living in Berlin in 2017. The Personal Care Program provides clients with bath care services. This particular program saw a loss of \$6,800 last year. Mayor Grenier asked how many employees her agency employed with Ms. Tibbets responding that there are 41. Ms. Tibbets shared that they currently have 66 clients and that A.V. Home Care works to keep individuals in their home rather than in a nursing home. There was some discussion around challenges that nursing homes are facing and the stricter requirements imposed over the years.

Mayor Grenier then invited three representatives from Tri County Community Action to speak on behalf of their programs. Andrea Brochu, Director of Energy, Elder and Outreach Services, was the first to speak. Ms. Brochu briefly discussed the Energy Assistance programs under her direction. The Senior Meals program served Berlin residents 10,353 dining meals and 27,365 home delivered meals to just under 500 individuals. She also explained that drivers provide a "safety check in" for those individuals receiving meals at home. Ms. Broch also discussed the Service Link program which services all populations, not just the elderly. Service Link provided services through 2,486 contacts with Berlin residents. Residents are frequently assisted in understanding their Medicare and Medicaid options and helping them select the appropriate plan. Councilor Higbee inquired as to the status of the Weatherization Program. Ms. Brochu explained that funding has increased from previous years which will aid in servicing those individuals and homes in need.

Ms. Brenda Gagne, Director of Transportation, spoke next. Ms. Gagne discussed her request of \$3,500 which would be matched by federal funding. Approximately \$285,000 was spent in this area last year. She noted an increase in service requests, noticeably among the seniors in need of long distance travel. Often these long distance requests are for those in need of transportation for medical attention. Last year there were 502 long distance trips with 114 trips for Veterans.

Ms. Dawn Ferringo then spoke about her request for \$1,800 for the Tyler Blain Homeless Shelter in Lancaster, NH. Last year the shelter served 7 Berlin residents with a total of 291 shelter bed nights. Ms. Ferringo explained that the assistance provided by the shelter relieves the City Welfare Department from the expense of housing qualifying individuals. The shelter can house eight individuals but this was increased by four during the severe cold snap that occurred this winter. Mayor Grenier asked if any of the Berlin residents served were Veterans with which Ms. Ferringo replied that “she didn’t believe so”. Councilor Remillard asked if communities not supporting the shelter are contacted with a request to share in the expense when someone from their community is sheltered. Ms. Ferringo said that a new program has been started to request a donation of \$5 per night for those individuals. Communities donating to the shelter would not receive a request.

Councilor Higbee asked for clarification on the total amount requested of \$13,200 when the individuals department requests total more. Ms. Brochu said that they wanted to keep the request flat.

Ms. Pam Laflamme briefly discussed the Berlin Main Street Program’s \$17,000 request. The Main Street Program assists in developing the downtown, planning events and maintaining the downtown. They provide flowers for the many pots and plant flowers in various green spaces. There was discussion regarding the popularity of the Farmers Market.

Mayor Grenier then invited Mr. Michael Counter, President of North Country Home Health and Hospice, and Peter Garneau, R.N., to discuss their agencies needs and considerations. His agency is requesting \$10,000 to help offset the expenses incurred while serving area residents. Mr. Counter and Mr. Garneau discussed the services provided and challenges facing their agency with increased paperwork and lower reimbursements. They are a 24/7 agency providing 7,200 visits to 500 patients. They work to keep people in their homes as long as possible. Mayor Grenier asked if theirs was the only agency with Mr. Counter replying that there was one other privately owned agency in the area. Mr. Garneau explained that the other agency does not provide Hospice services where NCHHA does. Mayor Grenier explained that this is a new request and that a two-thirds majority would be needed to allocate any funds to their agency.

Councilor Remillard spoke on behalf of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and the need for assistance in the amount of \$500. CASA recruits, screens and trains volunteers to serve as advocates for abused children or children in jeopardy. Councilor Remillard explained that currently they have 22 – 24 volunteers. A CASA volunteer is the one person a child will see in a system that could have them moving from one foster home to another. Mayor Grenier explained that because it’s a new request there would have to be a two-thirds majority vote.

There was discussion around reallocating funding within the various requests.

Councilor Rozek made a motion to adjourn. Councilor Higbee seconded the motion.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Patricia A. Chase, Finance Director

