

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Tuesday, February 21, 2023

Public Hearing

Mayor Grenier opened the Public Hearing at 7:17 pm for Resolution 2023-03 NHDES Stormwater Asset Management Program Grant. There were no public comments. Mayor Grenier closed the Public Hearing at 7:18 pm.

Regular Meeting

Mayor Grenier called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 7:18 pm.

a. Pledge of Allegiance

b. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Remillard, Robert Theberge, Morency, and Morgan

Absent: Councilors Berthiaume, Eastman, Roland Theberge, and Higbee

Also present: City Manager Phillip Warren, Jr, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Lori Korzen, Robert Labrecque, Robert Nadeau, and Lisa Connell, Berlin Daily Sun.

c. Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to accept the minutes of the February 6, 2023 Regular Meeting and Work Session. So moved, the motion passed.

Disbursements:

Disbursement Summary Draft #1931 start date 02/07/2023 end date 02/21/2023 for a total cash disbursement of \$1,146,815.28. Councilor Remillard moved with a second by Councilor Morgan to accept the disbursement summary and pay all bills as recommended by the Committee on Accounts/Claims. So moved, the motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Robert Labrecque, of Wentworth Location, spoke concerning the assessment on the property he owns in Berlin. Mr. Labrecque noted that the majority of residents in Berlin earn less than \$40,000 per year, which is the median income, with some single residents earning less than \$25,000. Mr. Labrecque noted that the median income for the state is \$82,000. Mr. Labrecque stated that he does not believe the City is living within it's means. Mr. Labrecque shared concerns about his property valuation, and stated he does not believe the sale prices are a true comparison to the value of his property. Mayor Grenier advised Mr. Labrecque that if he was not happy with the current value, he could file an abatement with the City, and if denied he could appeal to the BTLA. Mayor Grenier noted that the assessors follow a strict set of legal guidelines to set values on properties.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Council Committee Reports

There were no Council committee reports.

2. Resolution 2023-03 NHDES Stormwater Asset Management Program Grant (tabled 2/6/2023)

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Three

A RESOLUTION authorizing an application to the NH Department of Environmental Services' Clean Water State Revolving Fund in the approximate amount of 30,000.00 for funds available to NHDES as part of their ARPA allocation to develop an Asset Management Plan for stormwater.

Resolved by the City Council of the City of Berlin as Follows:

WHEREAS, the NH Department of Environmental Services has funds that have come to NHDES under a

program in which Berlin qualifies for these funds and NHDES has Stormwater Grant funds through their Clean Water State Revolving Fund through an ARPA allocation; and

WHEREAS, these funds will allow the City to begin to develop and implement the inventory and mapping of the City's stormwater assets; and

WHEREAS, NHDES encouraged the City to apply for these funds and they are available with no match required. These funds should be available later this year but the project will be a multi-year project.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Berlin, NH, that the City Manager is authorized to apply for and receive all grant funds from the NH Department of Environmental Services' Clean Water State Revolving Fund in the approximate amount of \$30,000.00. Be it Further Resolved that the City Manager is authorized to do all things necessary to effectuate the grant and that, upon receipt of the grant, payment(s) shall be deposited with the City Treasurer.

This resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after passage.

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to remove this item from the table. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to read Resolution 2023-03 by short title for a second time. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to read Resolution 2023-03 by short title for a third time. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, that Resolution 2023-03 be passed. So moved, the motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

1. City Manager's Report

1. Attached please find the BWW – Municipal Water Usage from October 1, 2022 to January 3, 2023 (February 2023 Billing Quarter).
2. Attached is the Fire Chief's January report, the Monthly Incident Report and the EMS call volume report.
3. Attached is the January 2023 Property Transfer list.
4. Budget process is progressing. This office will be meeting with departments throughout the week.
5. 2 of our John Deere loaders will be in within the coming weeks. This will bring us back to having 8 loaders, once the damages machine is returned. This will allow for 2 loaders in each district, thereby reducing time to clear a district.

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to accept the City Manager's Report and place it on file.

Mayor Grenier noted the transactions on the list of property sales and stated that over half of the properties that sold were for more than the new assessed value. Mayor Grenier stated that this was in January, which is a month that is usually not active for real estate sales. Mayor Grenier noted that there is still a lot of outside money coming in to the area and paying a premium for property. Mayor Grenier stated that he understands Mr. Labrecque's concern, but they have to follow the law.

So moved, the motion passed.

2. Mayor's Report

a. Coös County Broadband Committee

To: Coös County City, Towns, and Unincorporated Places

The Office of Coös County Commissioners would like to announce that the county is committed to continuing the collaborative work of the Coös County Broadband Committee for the next two years by following the recommendations of the Coös County Mapping Study published in June 2022.

The committee will meet monthly, a combination of virtual and in-person, and turn its focus on broadband improvements through membership in the NH Broadband Investment and Planning Network managed by the National Collaborative for Digital Equity (NCDE), and partner with the NH Municipal Association (NHMA), and North County Council in support of economic opportunities.

We realize that municipalities must actively pursue new fiber infrastructure to secure our economies of scale for the next 50+ years. Although some communities will receive fiber through federal grant funding, others will be left to their own devices. NH Broadband Investment and Planning Network member communities will be assisted on an individual consulting basis on the ever-changing landscape of telecommunications and the specific needs of the community.

All will benefit from participation, whether sharing strategies or aggregating demand.

The majority of the Coös County municipalities have an individual(s) appointed to the committee already. What we are asking now is to have the select board from each town reconfirm your existing member or appoint a local person to serve on the committee and to be the liaison back to each municipality. We welcome all of our Coös communities to join.

If your town wishes to be a participant, please return the Letter of Commitment and a copy of your Board of Selectmen minutes, where this was discussed and approved by March 22, 2023 to Jennifer Fish at jennifer.fish@cooscountynh.us . If you have any questions or concerns please contact me at the email address above.

Mayor Grenier stated that he would like to re-nominate Pamela Laflamme to serve on the Committee as Berlin's representative.

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to approve the Mayor's nomination of Pamela Laflamme to the Coos County Broadband Committee with a term to expire on March 31, 2026. So moved, the motion passed.

3. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

4. Council Comments

There were no Council comments.

5. Adjournment

On a motion by Councilor Morgan, seconded by Councilor Morency, the Council voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 pm. So moved, the motion carried.

A True Record, Attest:

Shelli Fortin
City Clerk

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