

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Monday, March 6, 2023

Regular Meeting

Mayor Grenier called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 7:39 pm.

a. Pledge of Allegiance

b. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Remillard, Robert Theberge, Higbee, Berthiaume, Morency, Roland Theberge and Eastman

Absent: Councilor Morgan

Also present: City Manager Phillip Warren, Jr, Director of Strategic Initiatives Pamela Laflamme, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Lori Korzen, and Lisa Connell, Berlin Daily Sun.

c. Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Higbee, to accept the minutes of the February 21, 2023 Regular Meeting and Work Session. So moved, the motion passed.

Disbursements:

Disbursement Summary Draft #1932 start date 02/22/2023 end date 03/06/2023 for a total cash disbursement of \$822,836.87. Councilor Roland Theberge moved with a second by Councilor Berthiaume to accept the disbursement summary and pay all bills as recommended by the Committee on Accounts/Claims. So moved, the motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Council Committee Reports

There were no Council committee reports.

NEW BUSINESS

1. City Manager's Report

1. Last week was a very busy week for snow removal. There were storms for the majority of the week, ending with a 10" storm on Saturday. Staff was able to keep up with plowing and treatment – plowing times may have increased due to breakdowns and staffing. At present we have 6 loaders in service, the 7th will be back in service this week. We are down 2 laborer positions and one mechanic position, which makes repairs and snow removal take longer. We have also changed the way we apply cutting edges to the snowplows – in the past we fabricated and installed the cutting edge – now we order a heavy, hardened steel cutting edge that is fabricated and predrilled – the benefits being longevity of the cutting edge and labor to replace the edge. We are in the process of updating the edges, allowing all equipment to be in service and available for snow removal.
2. As stated earlier, we are down 2 laborers and 1 mechanic. Extensive advertising has taken place and it appears that the requirement to have a commercial driver's license is an issue with applicants. Options are being considered where the CDL requirement could be amended to allow applicants who would like to work on solid waste pickup but lack a CDL could be hired. As for the mechanic position we are not currently requiring a CDL. We are also considering some type of training program for CDL drivers – scheduling and cost are some concerns with this program.
3. It appears that the winter parking arrangement on Jericho Road is working at this time. This office has heard no complaints to date.

4. Information regarding the road condition analysis is being compiled and will be ready for presentation at the next meeting.

Mayor Grenier asked if there had been any applications for the heavy equipment mechanic position, and City Manager Warren advised there have not been. Although the City offers benefits such as health and dental insurance and retirement, younger people do not see the value in that, and prefer a larger salary in the private sector. Mr. Warren said he is hopeful that they may get someone this spring. Mr. Warren advised that they are looking at promoting within the department, if they are able to fill the solid waste positions with employees that do not have a CDL license. Mr. Warren advised that currently all BPW employees have their CDL license. It was noted that the CDL program is currently held in Littleton during the day. The diesel mechanic program is also in Littleton.

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

2. Mayor's Report

Mayor Grenier advised the Council that they are invited to the Destination Imagination presentation at Berlin Middle/High School on Thursday evening at 5:30 pm.

3. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

4. Council Comments

Councilor Robert Theberge noted that Mayor Grenier would be testifying tomorrow in Concord on the Burgess Biopower bill. Councilor Theberge noted that there is a lot at stake for the taxpayers of Berlin if it does not move forward, as the Biomass plant is important to the City. Mayor Grenier advised that they are expecting an amendment to the bill.

5. Adjournment

On a motion by Councilor Berthiaume, seconded by Councilor Higbee, the Council voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 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.