

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Monday, October 7, 2019

Mayor Grenier called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 7:56 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Public Hearing

Mayor Grenier opened the Public Hearing at 7:56 pm for the Operation of Sports Book Retail Locations Within the City. There were no public comments. Mayor Grenier closed the public hearing at 7:57 pm.

Regular Meeting

a. Pledge of Allegiance

b. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Remillard, Otis, Morgan, Gentili, Higbee, Rozek, Berthiaume, and Theberge

Absent: None

Also present: James Wheeler, Susan Tremblay, Julie King, Pamela Laflamme, Shelli Fortin, Jamie Welch, Gina Welch, Richard Laflamme, Henry Fortin, Peter Estabrooks, Esther Leiper, Walter Nadeau, Rene Morneau, and Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Daily Sun.

c. Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Otis, to accept the minutes of the September 16, 2019 Regular Meeting and Work Session, and the September 23, 2019 Work Session. So moved, the motion carried.

Disbursements:

Disbursement Summary Draft #1848 start date 09/17/2019 end date 10/07/2019 for a total cash disbursement of \$2,051,076.57. Councilor 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 carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS –

Richard Laflamme of 128 Jasper Street in Berlin stated that he appreciated what the Mayor and Council do. Mr. Laflamme suggested that the police station be moved to the old courthouse rather than the armory, as residents would be able to walk there. Mr. Laflamme also suggested that businesses such as Bass Pro Shops and Panera Bread be contacted to open stores in the city.

Henry Fortin of 522 Rockingham Street in Berlin asked why we couldn't use the airport for activities related to ATV's and snow machines. Mr. Fortin also suggested that the city look into purchasing government surplus at auction for the heavy equipment needed. Mr. Fortin also pointed out that many buildings in the city are dilapidated, especially the one by Serenity Steps. Mr. Fortin stated that the roads are a mess and stated that the Biomass plant should chip in for their repair.

Peter Estabrooks of 15 Potter Street in Gorham spoke to the Council about the history of the NH Poet Laureate and the current nomination by the Governor. Mr. Estabrooks passed out a packet of information to the Council members.

Richard Laflamme of 128 Jasper Street in Berlin spoke again, suggesting that the City send someone to Chicago to purchase equipment to save some money.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Council Committee Reports

Councilor Rozek advised that the Traffic Safety Committee met on Monday, September 23, 2019. At the meeting, the high ATV traffic use and speeding on Brown Street and Monty Road was discussed. The committee advised that the Police Department should be contacted when the violations occur. The request for a crosswalk at School and Mason Street was denied, as was a request for a 4-way stop at the Park and Willard Street intersection. A request for handicap parking was denied at 376 High Street, as the parking would be required to be ADA compliant. A request to replace a "Slow Children" sign on Derrah Street was denied, along with a request for a "Blind Driveway"

sign at 21 Grandview Drive. The traffic pattern at BHS was discussed, and the Police Chief advised that they are reviewing and making adjustments as needed, but the new pattern has improved the situation. A request for a streetlight on Strafford Street was reviewed and Councilor Rozek thanked Councilor Theberge for going out to review this. Councilor Rozek advised that there are dim areas between the lights, but this is the same all over the City.

Councilor Remillard moved with a second from Councilor Otis to accept the Traffic Safety Committee Report and place it on file.

Councilor Remillard asked if the trees by the blind driveway at 21 Grandview were looked at yet. City Manager Wheeler advised that Public Works will be looking into this.

Councilor Morgan asked about the lines painted on the road by School Street. City Manager Wheeler advised that the lines will be repainted and signs put up.

So moved, the motion carried

NEW BUSINESS

2. Resolution 2019-28 Master Planning Grant (first read)

Councilor Berthiaume moved, with a second by Councilor Higbee to table the Resolution and schedule a public hearing for October 21, 2019. So moved, the motion carried.

3. City Manager's Report

1. Burgess BioPower presented a Preliminary Design of their plans for an onsite greenhouse project to the Planning Board at their October meeting. They are expected to return to the Planning Board in the near future for a final site plan application.
2. The EPA has sent notice to the City to reapply for its NPDES Permit which will expire in July of 2020. We intend to have the application in by the January 31, 2020 deadline.
3. Eric Demers, formerly the Assistant Manager at the Berlin Airport has taken on the role of Laborer/Apprentice at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. We wish Eric well in his new career choice.
4. We are currently seeking bids for the Princess Theater acquisition/demolition project due October 10th and for the sale of 224 Madigan Street, due October 17th. We will report on the results of the bids at the next meeting.
5. There will be a joint meeting of the Berlin and Milan School Boards tomorrow evening at 6:30 at the Berlin High School Library.
6. The City of Berlin Fire Department was not selected to receive the American LaFrance Pumper. The apparatus was awarded to Temple, NH.
7. Center Rivers Power, NH LLC and Great Lakes Hydro America, LLC filed a pre-application for re-licensing with FERC. Scoping meetings have been scheduled by FERC for October 22nd, at the Town and Country Inn in Shelburne at 2:00 p.m. and at 6:00 p.m.
8. The City is working with HEB Engineers, Inc. who have prepared a Receptor Survey Plan showing water supply wells within 1,000 feet of the Cates Hill Landfill. Regular landfill monitoring detected PFAS at the Cates Hill site. As a result, abutters to the Cates Hill Landfill will have their well water tested as part of our program given that PFAS is highly transmittable in water. Eastern Analytical, Inc. will perform the sampling on October 22nd and results are expected approximately three weeks after that. A copy of the letter sent to abutters is attached.

9. City Department Heads are currently working on their respective components of the FY2021 – FY2026 Capital Improvement Plan. I expect that the plan will be ready for the Planning Board's review on December 3, 2019 and accordingly it will be brought to the City Council thereafter.
10. The Community Profile event, facilitated by the UNH Extension Service, held meetings this past Friday evening and Saturday morning. There were approximately 20 to 30 attendees/participants. The next meeting for this effort is scheduled for October 23rd. The work from this effort will be informative to the City's upcoming master planning effort.
11. On October 16, 2019 the Androscoggin Valley Education Collaborative, AVEC will be hosting a public event called, **Our Education, Our Future**. The doors open at 5:30 and light snacks will be provided. Please consider attending to hear about current efforts in education.
12. The Fall Evening Series continues at the White Mountain Community College Fortier Library on October 9, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. with "That Reminds Me of a Story" with Rebecca Rule. This event is sponsored by the College, Berlin and Gorham Public Libraries and NH Humanities.
13. We want to thank Aimee Bousquet, a freshman at Gorham Middle High School, who used her talents to renovate the library's outdoor sign. Aimee is the daughter of Debbie Bousquet who is one of our Library Attendants.
14. I am pleased to announce that I have been elected to the PRIMEX Board of Trustees. As you know, PRIMEX provides our workers compensation insurance as well as our property liability insurance. In addition, they host a tremendous amount of training for municipal employees. I view my participation on this board as very complimentary to my position and look forward to serving. The full board meets quarterly, with my term beginning in February.
15. Police Department Statistics and Public Works Statistics are attached.

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

Mayor Grenier asked about the well testing at the Cates Hill Landfill and if other towns would also be responsible to assist with any costs incurred. City Manager Wheeler advised that the contracts do contain language to distribute the costs among all of the communities.

So moved, the motion carried.

4. Mayor's Report

a. Letter from Mike Shaink

To the Mayor and Council Members

I would like to put forward for consideration a street light on Pinecrest Ave. A utility pole there would be the perfect location.

Sincerely,
Mike Shaink
5 Pinecrest Ave
Berlin

b. Letter from Lise Barrette

September 17, 2019

Dear Traffic & Safety Committee,

I am writing about the traffic situation at the Berlin Middle High School. I live at 530 Willard St, the barricades are right in front of our house. The first two days of school there were some policeman manning the barricades. On the third day we did not see anyone there, but the barricades were taken down for the weekend. Come the following Tuesday, the barricades went up in the morning and have remained there 24/7, seven days a week. As there is a lot of traffic going through that part of Willard St, it's becomes a little confusing when somebody travels from the school going East and has to stop at the barricades and go around them after the other cars from other directions let them go by.

This morning, Tuesday 17th, I watched a truck pull up in front of my residence, drop off a student and do a U-Turn right in front of my house. As I predicted, old habits will return and people will continue to do U-Turns in the road and/or use our driveways.

When the barricades have to be removed due to snow and plowing, people will resume their old habits and they will all travel down to the school and do a U-Turn somewhere along the way.

Now that the section of road from the upper parking lot to Jasper St is paved, I believe it would make lots of sense to let the cars come down Willard all the way to the school upper parking, drop off their kids, and turn up to Jasper St. The buses can go down their usual way. This would create an ongoing flow of traffic and should eliminate lots of issues. There could be two signs, 'Buses Straight', 'Vehicles Go Right'.

The only other issue is after school when everyone likes to park alongside Willard St waiting for students. The 'No Parking' signs should take care of that, but without a constant police presence they will still park along the road. I'm sure people will also now park alongside Jasper St above. There should be the same 'No Parking' signs along Jasper dead end. We can only hope 'No Parking' signs will deter people from parking on Willard and Jasper.

Thank you,

Lise Barrette
530 Willard St
Administrative Clerk, Public Works

Councilor Rozek moved, with a second by Councilor Berthiaume, to refer both letters to the Traffic Safety Committee, to send letters to Mike Shaink and Lise Barrette acknowledging receipt of their correspondence, to forward the letter to Public Works, the Police Department, and the Fire Chief.

So moved, the motion carried.

c. Letter from Berlin Historical Society

Dear Mayor Grenier & Esteemed City Councilors,

In 2002, the Berlin & Coos County Historical Society (BCCHS) acquired the Maynesboro Stud Arabian Horse Barn and the Thompson Barn, better known as the Brown Company Barns, on East Milan Road, from BIDPA. The goal of this acquisition was the restoration/preservation of the two structures, and the BCCHS is nearing the completion of the project. So far, BCCHS has invested \$198,000 on the Brown Company Barns, along with over 4000 hours of volunteer labor. In 2014 BGCCHS lifted the 125+ year old Thompson Barn and leveled it by replacing over 110 feet of 8" x 8" rotted sills and wooden support posts in the rear section, among other things.

Whenever it rains, water runs off the roadway toward the front and along the north side of the Thompson barn which is the more southerly of the two barns. Water and poor drainage were the likely culprits of damage to the barn in prior years. The BCCHS has done what it can to mitigate this problem and hopes to stop any continued damage from improper drainage resulting from excess water from the roadway and associated area.

The Brown Company Barns are the last (large) structures in the community paying homage to the bygone logging days and the former glory of Berlin's Arabian Horse History. The six barn sales held every summer season at these barns attract several hundred visitors from throughout the North Country and beyond. These visitors contribute to the local economy. Also, historical objects are exhibited in the two barns showing the history of Berlin, particularly logging and the Brown Company.

The Historical Society requests assistance from the City of Berlin to solve the storm drainage problem which continues to plague the area around the barn. As excess water continues to run alongside the barn, it undermines the site work which was done to preserve the barns. It is the Society's hope that if a catch basin were to be installed with proper drainage piping to veer the water away from the barn site, it would solve the problem and extend the life of this historic building for at least another 100 years. Thank you for giving this matter your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Walter J. Nadeau
Vice President, Berlin & Coos County Historical Society

Councilor Remillard moved with a second from Councilor Morgan to accept the communication from the Berlin & Coos County Historical Society and place it on file, and send copies of the letter to the Public Works Director and City Manager to see how it can be resolved. Councilor Theberge requested that Walter Nadeau be allowed to address the Council.

Walter Nadeau of 345 Madison Avenue in Berlin advised that he is the Vice President of the BCCHS. He advised that the State Prison has corrected the issue of water from their road coming across to the barns, and the only problem now is with water from East Milan Road. They have corrected the issue of water coming off of the roof. City Manager Wheeler noted that the urban compact is before the southern entrance to the Industrial Park, and the road in that location would be NHDOT. The City will not be able to do anything in the right of way of the road and DOT will need to be contacted about the issue. So moved, the motion carried.

d. Appointment to Cemetery Trustees – Kristia Davis

Dear Mayor Grenier and Council Members:

I am very interested in continuing as a Cemetery Trustee for another 3 year term. We have been working to improve conditions and records of the city's cemeteries.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to continuing to working with you and the City Council.

Sincerely,

Kristia L. Davis

Councilor Rozek moved, with a second by Councilor Higbee, to accept the Mayor's nomination of Kristia Davis to the Cemetery Trustees for a 3-year term to expire August 31, 2022.

Councilor Remillard asked about money in the budget for cemetery expenses and was advised that this appropriation was removed from the budget.

So moved, the motion passed.

Mayor Grenier advised the Council that the City lost two long-standing volunteers in the community. Louis Perreault served on the Police Commission and Thomas Pickford taught in the school system and served as Chairman on the Berlin Recreation Board.

Mayor Grenier also pointed out the helmet from the Berlin Gladiators, which he received in recognition of the City's efforts to maintain the field for the athletes to use and his personal contributions to the program. Mayor Grenier pointed out that the Gladiators team is just as important as academics and school sports. Mayor Grenier would like to find a place for the helmet to be displayed in Council Chambers in support of the program.

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

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS –

Walter Nadeau of 345 Madison Avenue in Berlin expressed his gratitude to the Council in taking the Historical Society's problem into consideration. Mr. Nadeau advised that the mission of the BCCHS is to preserve objects relating to the history of Berlin, and the barns are their biggest objects. Mr. Nadeau mentioned that progress on the preservation of the ski jump is due in part to the writings and objects saved by the Historical Society, and that documents, photographs, and blueprints preserved by the Society have been used by the Biomass plant, Georgia Pacific, and others for research. Mr. Nadeau pointed out the popularity of the barn sales, which bring hundreds of shoppers to the area, and that the Historical Society has an average of 750 visitors a year at the museum. Councilor Rozek asked about the data that is kept at Plymouth State University and Mr. Nadeau advised that the documents are being properly cared for and placed on the internet for the public to view.

6. Council Comments – There were no Council comments.

7. Adjournment

At approximately 8:51 p.m. Councilor Rozek moved with a second by Councilor Morgan to adjourn the regular meeting. 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.