

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Monday, October 2, 2023

Regular Meeting

Mayor Grenier called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 8:27 pm.

Mayor Grenier presented a plaque to Lucie Remillard and thanked her for her service to the City of Berlin.

a. Pledge of Allegiance

b. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Robert Theberge, Higbee, Berthiaume, Morency, Valerino, Morgan, Eastman, and Roland Theberge.

Absent: None

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

c. Councilor Roland Theberge moved, with a second by Councilor Robert Theberge, to accept the minutes of the September 18, 2023 Regular Meeting and Work Session, and the Work Session of September 26, 2023. So moved, the motion passed.

Disbursements:

Disbursement Summary Draft #1946 with a start date of 09/19/2023 and an end date of 10/02/2023 for a total cash disbursement of \$786,689.31. Councilor Roland Theberge 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

There were no public comments.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Council Committee Reports

Councilor Morency advised that the Traffic Safety Committee met earlier this evening and discussed Moreau Road. Councilor Morency stated that they would like to hold a public hearing on November 20, 2023, concerning the ownership of the road, as there is interest from the abutters in taking ownership and relieving the city of the responsibility of maintenance. Director of Strategic Initiatives Pamela Laflamme advised that she has done some research and cannot find any information on this road officially becoming a City street. Mayor Grenier asked if the city has maintained the road, and Ms. Laflamme advised that they have, so there is an assumption of ownership. The road is plowed with a pickup truck in the winter, as the regular plow will not fit. Ms. Laflamme advised that after the public hearing, she will bring a Resolution to the Council for a vote. Ms. Laflamme advised that this process was done about 10 years ago for a small connector street in the Bridge Street and Pershing Street area.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Resolution 2023-33 NLTF DASH Grant (1st read)

Councilor Berthiaume moved, with a second by Councilor Higbee, to table the Resolution and schedule a public hearing for October 16, 2023. So moved, the motion carried.

2. Resolution 2023-34 Voting Machines (1st read)

Councilor Berthiaume moved, with a second by Councilor Higbee, to table the Resolution and schedule a public hearing for October 16, 2023. So moved, the motion carried.

3. City Manager's Report

1. The airport sold \$17,825 in fuel in the month of September.
2. The salt shed location has been paved and the cement ballast blocks are being delivered and placed this week. The salt shed has a scheduled ship date of October 24th, construction should commence after its arrival.
3. New signs identifying the truck routes through the city have been installed at both ends of Main Street.
4. Preparations are occurring for the RiverFire event, staff will assist the Chamber staff in setting up for this well attended event.
5. Efforts continue city wide to address code compliance issues, specifically uninspected and unregistered vehicles and trailers improperly parked and stored on both public and private property.
6. There were 13 properties that were tax deeded this year. Of the 13, 2 have been repurchased and 2 are working with the Homeowner Assistance Fund to repurchase. Of the remaining properties 3 are vacant and secured, 1 is land only, 1 is a commercial entity and 4 are possibly occupied – we will be working to ascertain the occupied status of these 4 properties.

City Manager Warren also advised that there will be an update from CMA at the next meeting to discuss water and sewer on Route 110.

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

2. Mayor's Report

a. Letter from M. Guay re: Gill Park Sign

Many years ago before Berlin had green space on Main St there was a significant fire to several buildings adjoining my family's building at 52 Main St. Once the debris was cleared, the first Main St Park was born.

A few years passed and the then Rec Department Director Laura Viger decided that the park should be named Gill Park. A sign was erected and placed on the building at 52 Main St.

Fast forward and the sign has gone missing. When my Mother passed in 2022, I asked Sylvia Poulin and she had no idea what happened to the sign. A call to Public Works turned up nothing as well.

Although I no longer live here, my heart is still in Berlin and it's sad to see my family's legacy get lost in the shuffle. I believe that as of my writing this, Gills Flowers stands as the longest family owned and operated business in Berlin's history at 114 yrs.

If the City could find it in their budget to replace the sign, that would ensure that my family's legacy continues.

Thanks for your consideration,

Michael A Guay
603-915-7507

City Manager Warren advised that he will be ordering a sign for the park.

Mayor Grenier advised there were three committees that Lucie Remillard served on that will need to be filled. One is the ex-officio member of the Planning Board, one is on Traffic Safety, and one is on Accounts and Claims.

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to approve the Mayor's nomination of Councilor Morency as the ex-officio member of the Planning Board. So moved, the motion passed.

Councilor Morgan moved, with a second by Councilor Morency, to accept Councilor Berthiaume as a member of the Committee on Accounts and Claims, and Councilor Valerino as a member of the Traffic Safety Committee, to fill the unexpired term of Councilor Remillard until the third week of January, 2024. So moved, the motion passed.

Councilor Berthiaume moved, with a second by Councilor Higbee, to accept the communication from Michael Guay and place it on file, and to send a letter advising Mr. Guay that the sign would be replaced. So moved, the motion carried.

3. Public Comments

Lucie Remillard of 85 Hinchey Street congratulated Councilor Valerino on his new position and thanked the Council. Ms. Remillard stated that she would miss everyone.

4. Council Comments

Councilor Eastman mentioned that there was an application available for grants from the USDA for water projects in rural areas and asked if the City was aware. City Manager Warren advised that they are aware of it. Councilor Eastman congratulated Lucie Remillard.

Councilor Morency advised that he went to the Open House at Serenity Steps, which is now called North Country Peer Support Center, and was impressed by the services they provide to the community.

5. Adjournment

On a motion by Councilor Higbee, seconded by Councilor Morency, the Council voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 pm. So moved, the motion carried.

A True Record, Attest:

Shellie Fortin
City Clerk

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