

City Council Work Session
January 4, 2016

Present were: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Otis, Remillard, Gentili, Morgan Allain, Higbee; absent were Councilors Nelson and Rozek

Others present included City Manager James Wheeler, Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, Fire Chief Randall Trull, Assistant Chief Thaddeus Soltys, Fire Captain Roland Berthiaume, Barbara Tetreault from the *Berlin Daily Sun*

Mayor Grenier opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. He asked to add a resignation to the agenda. Councilor Higbee moved with a second from Councilor Otis to add the item. So moved, the motion carried.

CDBG Grant Administrator(s) Contracts

Ms. Laflamme reported that the City was awarded three CDBG grants: St. Joseph Feasibility, Holiday Center Feasibility and the Capone Economic Development grants. All three need an administrator and the City advertised for proposals. We received two proposals to our RFPs for Capone and the Holiday Center and three proposals for the St. Joseph's school project. Consultant Donna Lane had the lowest fees for the Capone and Holiday Center projects. All three of the proposed fees for the St Joseph School project were for \$1,000.

Ms. Laflamme noted that she recommends Donna Lane to administer all three CDBG grants.

Councilor Remillard questioned the Capone grant and Ms. Laflamme explained that the funds were sub granted to CEDC and then provided to Capone Iron as a low interest loan.

Councilor Theberge asked what Ms. Lane will do and Ms. Laflamme replied that each CDBG grant comes with reporting and oversight requirements that the grant administrator will take care of.

Councilor Remillard moved to hire Donna Lane to administer the Capone Iron North Woods/CEDC Economic Development Community Block Grant for a sum not to exceed \$12,250.00; Councilor Otis seconded and the motion carried.

Councilor Remillard moved to hire Donna Lane to administer the Holiday Center Planning Grant for a sum not to exceed \$1,200.00; Councilor Otis seconded and the motion carried.

Councilor Remillard moved to hire Donna Lane to administer the St. Joseph School Planning Grant for a sum not to exceed \$1,000.00; Councilor Otis seconded and the motion carried.

Mileage Rate Change

Mr. Wheeler reported that the IRS has lowered the standard mileage reimbursement from 57.5 cents to .54 in 2016. Councilor Remillard moved to approve the mileage reimbursement rate at .54; Councilor Otis seconded and the motion carried.

FD Overtime Analysis

In response to a request from Councilor Rozek, who asked for a cost comparison of hiring a firefighter vs. paying overtime to fill the position, Mr. Wheeler indicated that he put together a summation of costs.

Assuming a 2 person health plan, two firefighters cost approximately \$170,000. Filling the positions with overtime costs approximately \$175,100 derived from reviewing leave time coverage from 7/1/14 to 6/30/15.

Cost to the City is much the same; however filling positions with overtime results in burning out the work force.

Mayor Grenier asked if there was a spike in worker's comp injuries in the time the department was staffing with overtime. Chief Trull reported that there was a spike and there were two long term injuries; there was also more use of legitimate sick time. Mayor Grenier asked that the information be presented to the Council in a graph so that the changes can be viewed.

Proposed 2016 Budget Schedule

Discussing the proposed budget schedule, Mayor Grenier suggested combining Safety Services into one night to lessen the number of Wednesday meetings. Council will receive a revised schedule. Mayor Grenier noted that it is important to have a quorum for all the meetings.

Other-Resignation

Mr. Wheeler read Linda White's letter of resignation as of 1/29/2016.

Mayor Grenier noted that the City Manager will assume the HR duties for the foreseeable future.

He added that Linda was an asset to the City and she made a lasting impression in a good way. He asked that a plaque be made up for her.

Councilor Theberge moved to advertise and fill the position; Councilor Morgan Allain seconded and the motion carried. He suggested drafting a letter of appreciation for all to sign.

There being no further business in the work session, Mayor Grenier called for a five minute recess and continued to the Regular Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Tremblay

Administrative Assistant