

## **City Council Work Session**

**August 15, 2016**

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

Also present were City Manager James Wheeler, Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, Health & Welfare Director Angela Martin Giroux, Fire Chief Randall Trull, Superintendent of School Corinne Cascadden, City Clerk Elaine Riendeau, Head Start Director Betty Gilchrist, HEB Engineer Jay Poulin, and Barbara Tetreault from the *Berlin Daily Sun*

Mayor Grenier opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

### **Construction Projects**

Jay Poulin reported that Hutchins Street will be paved at the end of this week followed by final paving and line painting next week. Councilor Theberge asked about the road into Success and whether there would be paving to stop rocks and debris from being spread onto the pavement. Mr. Poulin stated that through the project, everything possible is being done with the apron going into Success being widened another six feet. The City may want to consider additional work at a later time.

With regard to Route 16 Mr. Poulin stated that Phase 1, milling and overlay north of 12<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge is done. The contractor hit ledge on every basin at the onset of digging by St. Anne's Church. They want to address the ledge with hammering and drilling and avoid blasting. Tomorrow Sargent will start another crew, followed by a third crew the following week. The plan is to detour the south bound traffic and move the north bound traffic. Councilor Rozek reminded the group that school will start in two or three weeks and Brown School is congested during school time and that should be considered. Ms. Cascadden added that it would be good to know the project schedule as bus routes are developed. Mr. Poulin stated that Norway Street will not be used as a detour; Sweden Street instead will be used. He promised to keep up with the communication to keep people informed.

### **Fire Alarm System Evaluation Agreement**

Mr. Wheeler explained that the City's existing fire alarm system is a wired system which is strung on utility poles throughout the City. The cost to have the wired system attached to the new poles in the Route 16 project area is \$105,000. Reviewing options for a wireless system, Chief Trull researched the cost of changing the major stakeholders such as AVH, nursing homes, and schools to the wireless system. The quote he received from a reputable firm was \$79,000.

The most prudent approach is to get a consultant on board that does this kind of work. Our engineering firm HEB will hire SFC Engineering Partnership to assess the current system and make a recommendation at a cost of \$15,000. We could keep a wired system, go to wireless or convert to a third party monitoring system which is the way that Portsmouth has chosen to provide fire alarm services. Councilor Remillard confirmed that the consultant will evaluate options and costs including the cost to the end user. Mr. Wheeler stated that we want to do this before we move any wires. Chief Trull added that maintenance is needed on the wired system; however the wireless will search until it finds a signal. Mayor Grenier confirmed that this is funded with the Route 16 construction budget.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to authorize the City Manager to enter into a contract with HEB who will subcontract the services of SFC for a sum not to exceed \$15,000 for an evaluation and possible conversion to a wireless fire alarm system with the consultant fees to be funded by the Route 16 project. So moved, the motion carried.

### **Partnership with Head Start**

Corrinne Cascadden and Betty Gilchrist presented a proposal for Head Start which is a federally funded preschool program for children, to rent space in Berlin's Elementary School. Ms. Gilchrist noted that Head Start has 9 locations, 12 classrooms with 241 children enrolled in three northern counties. Ms. Cascadden reported that the proposal is in the planning stages. The School Department does not want to get in the business of preschool programming. Hampton NH already does this and they have been contacted for guidance.

Head Start would rent space at the elementary school providing a revenue of about \$22,000 per year. Ms. Gilchrist indicated that they would be leaving one classroom in its current location to provide service to children that don't live in Berlin. Councilor Higbee noted that several communities in surrounding states have been doing this for 25 to 30 years with great success. Mayor Grenier asked about liability and Ms.

Cascadden reported that she contacted Primex and was advised that CAP would be asked to indemnify and list the city as additionally insured on a certificate of insurance.

Ms. Cascadden clarified that Head Start children would not be transported by the Berlin School buses. Ms. Gilchrist stated that this program would allow extending Head Start services to 170 days per year and there is funding to support ongoing rent. The intent would be to start in the fall of 2017 to get a full year of planning and then be ready to start from the first day. Mayor Grenier cautioned that not everyone qualifies for Head Start and we would have to be careful about using a public building and public services that not everyone qualifies for. This is more for the interaction of the students. He added that he would like to see the City Attorney review the plan before it goes forward.

Ms. Cascadden indicated that she and the School Board will continue to go forward, making sure the city is protected, and keep the City Manager informed. She acknowledged that there would be some shifting of grades possibly sending three second grades to Hillside. Councilor Higbee asked what percentage of Head Start students are coded and Ms. Gilchrist reported that about 20 to 25% are, which mirrors the population of the school system. Mayor Grenier asked about home visits and Ms. Gilchrist stated that all of their staff meet with families. She confirmed that if there is abuse or neglect, they would make DHHS aware. Ms. Cascadden concluded by saying that there is a whole year to plan and she will keep the Council informed.

#### **Health Department Assessment Agreement**

Mr. Wheeler explained that a request for proposals went out for an assessment of the health department to determine the viability and future needs of the Health Department. The cost range is from \$14,400 to \$16,200 plus expenses. The trustees of the Rumney Trust unanimously agreed that this is the most important thing for the health department and they will pay for the study. There is currently \$89,000 in the trust and there are no strings attached to how it is spent. The Council is asked to endorse the project. Ms. Giroux noted that she is excited by the project and looking forward to being viable into the future. Councilor Remillard agreed saying that the Department needs to be run like a business. Councilor Theberge asked if hospice would be reviewed as well and Ms. Giroux noted that existing services will be reviewed and hospice may be something to look at in the future.

Councilor Rozek moved to proceed with the Health Department assessment with Simone and for the fees to be paid out of the Rumney Trust; Councilor Remillard seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

#### **Vote on Proposed Settlement of a Welfare Lien**

Mr. Wheeler said that at the last meeting there was a welfare lien discussed in nonpublic session on August 1. The identity of the individual needs to be protected; however the agreement will be acknowledged in public. Ms. Martin Giroux stated that the check has been deposited and once it clears the bank, the lien will be released with approval of the Council. Councilor Rozek moved to approve that the City accept \$1,000 as settlement for an outstanding welfare lien with an approximate value including principal and interest of \$4,810 debt; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

#### **Notice of Resignation from Airport Manager**

Mayor Grenier informed the group that the resignation was rescinded and Mr. Kaminsky will stay on for another full season and look at it again next October.

#### **Part Time Position in Assessing and City Clerk's Office**

Mr. Wheeler indicated that the position has been in the budget for years. It was left vacant due to having new people in the department. The job description will be modified so that the person hired will work to assist with the City Clerk and Assessing Departments. Councilor Rozek asked if the need is there. Ms. Riendeau mentioned that elections are coming up and someone will be needed to stay in the office. That person will also be there if there is sick time or vacation. It makes sense to train someone who can work both City Clerk and Assessing since both are in the same office. Councilor Rozek moved to authorize hiring for the part time position in the City Clerk/Assessing Office; Councilor Nelson seconded and the motion carried.

#### **Other**

Mr. Wheeler explained that there is a resolution being introduced to appropriate \$30,000 to the Community Field project in the FY 16 budget. The project budget originally included money from Segregated Funds from the Police Department. The project moved forward under the premise that the money would be available; however the PD used the funds on the building renovations needed to transform the former Recreation garage to a police storage area. The proposed resolution takes the additional funds needed from year end surplus.

There being no further business in work session, Mayor Grenier move on to the regular meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Susan Tremblay

Administrative Assistant