

## **City Council Work Session**

**February 1, 2016**

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

Others present included City Manager James Wheeler, Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, Finance Director Patty Chase and Barbara Tetreault from the *Berlin Daily Sun*

Council confirmed that they would meet as scheduled on President's Day, February 15.

Mayor Grenier asked to add testimony re: House Bill 626 to the agenda. Councilor Rozek moved to add the item; Councilor Remillard seconded and the motion carried.

Mayor Grenier confirmed that Councilor Gentili is on the Accounts and Claims Committee.

### **Report on NRP**

Mr. Wheeler reported that Linda White prepared a memo to update the Council on the Neighborhood Revitalization Project. The goal for this grant was to repair 35 living units and there are 29 qualified homeowners with 38 living units in the program. There are 33 homeowners who completed the application; 33 homes received the home inspection. One homeowner dropped out and two homes were disqualified because the work required far exceeded the \$18,000 per unit allowed by the grant. There are 7 homes with 9 units that are complete and 14 homes with 19 units that are underway. Councilor Remillard confirmed that the buildings have to be owner occupied.

### **Investment Response**

Mr. Wheeler noted that the City's auditor replied to a question about investments that was asked at the last meeting. His response is that the city should not consider taking risk to earn a few more dollars.

### **Assessing Standards Board Update**

Mr. Wheeler explained that he has been working with the Assessing Standards Board and he volunteered to be on a subcommittee that has been charged with coming up with a way to value telecommunication poles to include in HB 547. The bill would take the process of assessing value out of the hands of local assessors and put it with the DRA. Mr. Wheeler indicated that he advocated for a process that would take local conditions into account when considering value. Berlin and some other communities are built on bedrock therefore making it more expensive to put in a pole. The Legislators on the committee want to use an average price per pole across the state.

### **Northern Pass**

Mayor Grenier introduced a letter opposing HB626 that would require all pipelines to be buried in the state highway right of ways. His hope was that the Council would support the contents of the letter and agree to send Mr. Wheeler to Concord to testify at the hearing Wednesday, February 3. Councilor Remillard moved to support the content of the letter stating the City's position in opposition of HB626; Councilor Rozek seconded and the motion carried. Councilor Nelson abstained.

### **Non-Public Session**

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Theberge to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (d) land matters and (e) consideration or negotiation of pending claims. So moved, the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Councilor Rozek moved to come out of non-public session; Councilor Nelson seconded and the motion carried.

Councilor Rozek moved to seal the minutes until the City Manager deems that they can be released as releasing them would render the proposed action ineffective; Councilor Morgan Allain seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Susan Tremblay  
Administrative Assistant