

**March 7, 2016**

**City Council Work Session**

Members present were: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Nelson, Higbee, Theberge, Gentili, Otis, Morgan Allain, Remillard, and Rozek

Others present included Police Chief Pete Morency, Assistant Chief Dan Buteau, Police Commission Chair Gerry Nault, Public Works Director Mike Perreault, Waste Water Treatment Superintendent Henry Noel, Recreation Director Terry Letarte, Fire Chief Randall Trull, and Barbara Tetreault from the Berlin Daily Sun

**Budget Presentation**

Mr. Wheeler presented the Council with the proposed 2017 budget. He stated the General Fund is up by 1.33%. The School Department has a combined operating and capital budget of \$850,787. Police and School Department budgets were carried as presented. The budget does not reduce the number of full time or part time positions. The budget as proposed, would increase the tax rate by \$3.19. In this budget \$100,000 results in .25 on the tax rate. Mr. Wheeler indicated that he would send information on the City's net value.

Mayor Grenier commented that, coming on the heels of the reval that caused the tax rate to go up, we need to come in with a zero increase. Councilor Higbee agreed that there cannot be an increase in the tax rate.

Councilor Nelson asked what happens with abatements and Mr. Wheeler did not think there would be a significant portion of abatements to cause major redistribution. Councilor Remillard asked for a report on how many have filed for abatements.

**Hiring Part Time Clerk for FD**

Chief Trull asked to fill the part time secretarial position of Bev Sanschagrin who retired in February. The clerk does billing, inspection mailings, reports on fees, does vouchers, schedules, and payroll; it is a necessary position. Councilor Rozek moved to hire a part time clerk; Councilor Higbee seconded.

In discussion Councilor Gentili made the point that this would be a good time to look at combining the building inspector position into the Fire Department. Perhaps a full time clerk could take care of the building inspector and fire department. Mr. Wheeler commented that everyone in that office will be new and they will need to learn the systems.

Mayor Grenier stated that he does not oppose having the building inspector in the Fire Department, just not now. He added that there was a time when code enforcement was much more cumbersome to the citizens. It is a difficult job to apply current building codes to a housing stock that is 80 to 120 years old.

Councilor Rozek asked to move the question all voted in favor of hiring a part time clerk for the fire department.

**Recreation Department Part Time Positions**

*Part time positions.* Ms. Letarte provided a description of the various part time positions at the Recreation Department. She reported that she is very short handed with part time people who work 5 to 10 hours per week and she would like to hire. Mr. Wheeler clarified that the Council made it clear that they wanted to review hiring. Councilor Rozek moved to hire part time positions as needed; Councilor Nelson seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

*Assistant & summer position.* Ms. Letarte also asked to replace Sylvia Ramsey's position as she will be retiring in July. She would like to hire an assistant who would learn the director job as well as a summer employee. Mr. Wheeler credited Ms. Letarte with putting together a great plan that would allow her to get someone on board and be budget neutral. Councilor Nelson moved to advertise for and hire two people to fill the duty roster at the Recreation Department; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried.

**Sunset Clause on Hours of Sales Ordinance**

Chief Morency reported that there was virtually no effect from having the sale of alcohol allowed between the hours of 1:00 a.m. and 2:00 a.m. He added that establishments are not open until 2:00 a.m. except on special occasions.

Chief Morency questioned the language in the ordinance that gives authority to reinstate a suspended license to the Police Commission. They have traditionally been the appeals board. Mr. Nault indicated that the Liquor Commission has the ultimate authority. If a license would be pulled, the Liquor Commission would be the reinstating authority. He suggested removing the reference to the Police Commission. Chief Morency added that the establishment has to come to the city to get permitted to sell between 1:00 and 2:00. He said that the entertainment permit falls under the authority of the police chief and he could also manage the review in this ordinance. Mayor Grenier suggested having the ordinance read and tabled for this evening, with amendments to be made March 21. Councilor Otis voiced his support for eliminating the sunset clause. Based on the data, there is no need to bring it up every year.

#### **PD Outside Overtime**

Chief Morency stated that the Outside Overtime account is used to pay for officers to work on revenue generating projects. There is not enough money on the expense side and the account can either be overspent or the PD can seek an additional appropriation. Council conceded to over expending the account with the understanding that revenue would be generated.

#### **Community Bible Church**

Mayor Grenier reported that he received a letter concerning the polling location on the east side. The building is the school for the Community Bible Church and there is a concern for the safety of the students. This is the result of moving polling locations away from schools. Council conceded to having the City Manager meet with Mr. Santy to discuss.

#### **Chopper Pump Purchase**

Mr. Perreault explained that new pumps are needed at the treatment plant and the plan is to replace pumps with the same manufacturer so that the existing base can be used. The Council is being asked to waive the bidding process to go with single source Wemco pumps. Funding for the project is in the budget.

The Council is also being asked to accept an amendment to the Wright Pierce contract for \$12,600 to engineer the installation of the pumps. Councilor Theberge asked why the project needs engineering when Mr. Perreault has experience with this kind of work. Mr. Perreault replied that a professional who will carry the liability is needed for the job. Mr. Noel confirmed that the pumps are original to the building of the plant in 1976.

Councilor Rozek moved to waive the bidding process for the purchase of single source Wemco Pumps; and to authorize a contract amendment to Wright Pierce for \$12,600 to engineer the installation of the two chopper pumps. Councilor Nelson seconded and the motion carried.

#### **March 16, BHS Hockey Playoff**

Mr. Wheeler informed the Council that the high school's hockey semifinal game will be on March 16 and he asked if the Council was open to moving the budget hearing from the 16<sup>th</sup>. The budget schedule was changed to include Police and Housing on March 14 and Fire on March 21.

There being no further business in the work session, Mayor Grenier moved the meeting to the Regular Council Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Susan Tremblay  
Administrative Assistant