

## **City Council Work Session May 16, 2016**

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

Others present included City Manager James Wheeler, Public Works Director Michael Perreault, Finance Director Patty Chase, Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Daily Sun

Mayor Grenier opened the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

### **Review Proposed Sewer Rate**

Mr. Wheeler explained that flows came in strong with the federal prison up by 8% and residential flows remaining stable. A spreadsheet was provided that shows the operating budget, debt service and capital improvements. There are various revenues that come into the Sewer Fund other than the sewer user fees. For FY 16 the recommendation is to use \$615,000 of unappropriated fund balance to keep the rate the same at 7.99 per 100 cubic feet.

Mayor Grenier confirmed that there have been no combined sewer overflows (cso's) since doing the upgrade at the treatment plant. Mr. Wheeler added that we need to continue to remove I & I to have capacity in the system so that we are ready for development.

Councilor Rozek moved to set the sewer rate at 7.99 per 100 cubic foot, which is no increase over last year's rate; Councilor Nelson seconded and the motion carried.

### **Review Proposed Tax Deeds**

Ms. Chase reported that she is set to issue tax deeds May 26 at 4:30 p.m. There are 66 properties on the list; however it is expected that a lot of property owners will pay by next Thursday. Councilor Rozek commented that this is triple the number from last year and Ms. Chase noted that a number of the properties will be paid. Responding to Councilor Morgan Allain, Ms. Chase explained that any time before the deed is issued, a property owner can pay one year of back taxes, and interest to get the property back; however once tax deeded, they have to pay back all the years, plus interest and penalties. Interest after a lien is established is accruing at 18%.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Remillard to accept the impending tax deed list and to issue tax deeds on properties that remain on the list after Thursday, May 26 at 4:30 p.m.; Councilor Remillard seconded and the motion carried. Councilor Remillard asked about properties in bankruptcy and Ms. Chase stated that the City eventually gets paid, though the process is slow.

### **Bond Update**

Mr. Wheeler indicated that in addition to seeking a bond from the NH Municipal Bond Bank, the City looked for proposals from private banks. Northway Bank made an offer of 2.65% on 5.5 million with no fees, and no prepayment penalties. The Bond Bank's best projection is for 2.78% but they cannot be certain of the rate until the day of issue. Mr. Wheeler recommended accepting Northway's offer.

Councilor Rozek moved to accept the recommendation of the City Manager and accept Northway Bank's offer of a rate of 2.65% for \$5.5 million over 20 years; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried.

### **Other**

Mayor Grenier stated that former Police Chief Ray Nolin passed away and in lieu of flowers, the family is asking for a donation to Cal Ripkin Baseball. Councilor Nelson moved to spend \$100 in memory of Ray Nolin from Council Contingency; Councilor Rozek seconded and the motion carried.

### **REGULAR MEETING – May 16, 2016**

Mayor Grenier called the regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 7:05 in the Council Chambers of City Hall. Councilor Remillard lead the Council in the pledge of allegiance to the flag which preceded roll call. Present: Councilors Remillard, Otis, Rozek, Gentili, Morgan-Allain, Th  berge, Higbee and Nelson. Also present: James A Wheeler, Barbara Tetreault and public.

### **Minutes, Previous Meeting**

Councilor Remillard moved with a second by Councilor Morgan Allain to accept the minutes of the May 2 Work Session and Regular Meeting; May 9, Work Session. So moved, the motion carried.

**Disbursements:** It was recommended by the Committee on Accounts/Claims to pay all bills dated May 3, 2016 to May 16, 2016 for a total cash disbursement of \$774,007.07 Manifest #1765. Councilor Theberge moved with a second by Councilor Nelson to accept the disbursement summary and pay all bills as recommended by the Committee on Accounts/Claims. So moved, the motion carried.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mildred Arinella, 256 Main Street, addressed the Council regarding a bullying issue on and off school grounds. She reported not being taken seriously by the School Department. Her youngest daughter is being bullied and she's been told that nothing can be done when the incident occurs off school grounds. She referred to papers (RSA193-F:4 ) that say bullying has to be addressed if it interferes with school work. Ms. Arinella stated that she's been to the Police Department and School Board. She went on to say that there are parents that are afraid to come forth. Their children have been bullied as well. She asked for the Council to support her and to take the issue seriously. She added that her step son was expelled from school for defending her daughter from bullies. She feels safer knowing that the Council will come in and help before a child gets hurt. There should be punishment for bullying. She would like to see children safe going to school and coming from school.

Mayor Grenier asked for Ms. Arinella's phone number and promised to contact her after reviewing the issue with the School and Police Departments.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. Council Committee Reports – there were no reports

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

2. Resolution 2016-11 Re-Appropriating \$15,000 from Airport Beacon Clearing to Airport Beacon Project (1st read)

Councilor Theberge moved to table the resolution and schedule a public hearing for June 6, 2016; Councilor Morgan Allain seconded and the motion carried.

3. City Manager's Report

- 1) On Wednesday May 18th, beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Berlin High School Cafeteria, the Stand Up Androscoggin Valley Coalition, will host a free event inviting residents of the Androscoggin Valley to help identify all the activities and assets that already exist in our region. An activity expo will follow in the Berlin High School gymnasium to conclude the event.
- 2) Chief Trull reported that the new Fire Dept. UTV vehicle was used to respond and fight a forest fire on Mt. Jasper on 4/30/16. The removable pump was used to pump water from a nearby pond and the fire was contained to less than 1 acre. See attached report from Chief Trull.
- 3) WREN has approached the Berlin Public Library with an offer of a partnership. The maker studio on Main Street will be available for Library patrons on Saturdays. Anyone with a Berlin Library card will be allowed to use the studio for free on Saturdays.
- 4) Alison Kelsey was hired as the new Recreation Assistant and Randy Fauteux will soon start in the Public Works Department as a laborer. We wish them well as they join us in public service.
- 5) Bids for # 2 Fuel Oil will be received tomorrow and awarded by the next day. We are hoping that favorable pricing will alleviate some of the budget stress.
- 6) We received the Wetlands and non-site specific permit for the Route 16 Project on May 9, 2016.
- 7) Given that there is an estimated cost of \$120,000 to remove old fire alarm line and install new fire alarm line on the Rte. 16 project we are currently looking at converting the system, in the Rte. 16 zone, to a modern wireless system. We hope that this will save us on capital cost and we fully expect that it will save us on long term maintenance cost. The Council will be provided more information when it is available.
- 8) City employees participated in a safety training conducted by Lieutenant Timothy Godin of the Berlin PD. The training was staggered over two days to allow as many employees to attend as possible. Lt. Godin trained employees on ways to react in threatening situations. Thanks to Debbie Patrick for organizing the training and to Tim Godin for conducting such a professional presentation.
- 9) The annual Day of Caring was held on Friday May 13th. Thanks to the many organizations and volunteers who contributed. Attached is a message of thanks from Local 1088 President Roland Berthiaume noting the significant contributions made by many participants who worked at Heritage Park. His message truly captures the spirit of cooperation and caring that the day is all about.
- 10) The Proposed Budget was published in Saturday's Berlin Daily Sun; it will also appear in tomorrow's Daily Sun. A copy of the proposed budget is attached.
- 11) The Police Department's statistics as reported to the Police Commission at their May meeting is attached.

Councilor Rozek moved to accept the Manager's Report and place on file; Councilor Nelson seconded and the motion carried.

Councilor Theberge asked if the Hutchins Street project would be complete by August 1 and Mr. Wheeler replied that it should be sooner. Councilor Rozek asked if training has been done with Water Works so that the street sweeper and hydraulic sewer jet could use water from a hydrant. Mr. Wheeler indicated that he would check on the issue.

Councilor Theberge confirmed that the modification of wetlands permit mentioned in the City Manager's Report is for the Twelfth Street Bridge.

#### **4. Mayor's Report**

Mayor Grenier nominated Richard Huot, David Poirier, Richard Eastman, and Andre Duchesne to the BIDPA board for three year terms from July 2016 to July 31, 2019.

Councilor Rozek moved to accept the Mayor's nominations of Richard Huot, David Poirier, Richard Eastman, and Andre Duchesne to the BIDPA board for three year terms from July 2016 to July 31, 2019. Councilor Nelson seconded and the motion carried.

Mayor Grenier confirmed that there is no meeting Monday 5/23. The public hearing of the proposed budget will be on Wednesday, 5/25 at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall

The Mayor encouraged all to go to the high school event on Wednesday evening that will outline what there is to do in Berlin

Councilor Higbee affirmed that there would be no meeting Monday 5/30 because of Memorial Day. The next meeting will be June 6th.

Councilor Rozek confirmed with Mayor Grenier that the Council's summer schedule will begin after the June 20th meeting.

Councilor Rozek moved to accept the Mayor's report and place on file; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried.

#### **5. Public Comments – there were no comments**

#### **6. Council Comments**

Councilor Theberge stated that he will be out four to six weeks for surgery.

Councilor Otis indicated that constituents have talked with him about the ATV trails opening on a Monday. The communities are missing out on a weekend where there would be potential for business.

Councilor Otis moved with a second from Councilor Theberge to write a letter to DRED strongly recommending that they consider opening the ATV trails the weekend before Memorial Day or the weekend before the fourth Monday of the month subject to trail conditions. So moved, the motion carried unanimously.

Councilor Gentili reported that there will be a 15 mile run from Milan to Gorham on Saturday morning for Special Olympics.

#### **7. Adjournment**

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Theberge to adjourn. The meeting ended at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Susan Tremblay  
Administrative Assistant