

**City Council Work Session**  
**December 19, 2016**

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

Others present included City Manager James Wheeler, City Clerk Elaine Riendeau, Health & Welfare Director Angela Martin Giroux, Finance Director Patty Chase, Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, Doris Fortier, RN, Kathleen VanBlarcom, Kelley Corcoran, RN, and Barbara Tetreault *Berlin Daily Sun*.

Mayor Grenier opened the meeting at 6:31 p.m.

**Welfare Guidelines**

Angela Martin Giroux reported that the Welfare Guidelines have not been updated in some time and what is allowed for rent needs to keep up with increasing costs. The goal is to get people looking for housing on HUD as soon as possible. Councilor Remillard confirmed that the average wait time for HUD is six months. Ms. Giroux noted that a new application that combines several documents has been created. The applicant gets a list of everything they need to bring in order to get assistance. Some people are put off by the requirements and find other avenues for assistance.

Mayor Grenier asked, if someone is on welfare and their children are truant, can they lose their assistance. Ms. Giroux replied that a child over 16 years old can be made to do a job search. A client would not lose their welfare aid; however the school department would be contacted about truancy.

Councilor Higbee moved with a second from Councilor Remillard to adopt the welfare guidelines for general assistance as presented. Councilor Theberge asked if the changes need to go into an ordinance and Mr. Wheeler replied that the guidelines exist as rules for the department. All voted in favor of the motion.

**Tax Incentive Ordinance**

Ms. Laflamme explained that the City's commercial tax exemption law on new construction has a sunset clause because the clause was in the original statute. The statute has since been amended to remove the sunset. The ordinance being read for the first time this evening will remove the City's sunset clause.

**Rural Business Development Grant Feasibility Funding for Heated Streets**

Ms. Laflamme informed the Council that she will be bringing a resolution in late January for an application to the USDA for a heated streets feasibility money. We have provided a letter of intent to a grant program that will allow us to apply for an additional \$30,000.

Councilor Rozek commented that the project is far reaching. He asked if all energy would now be focused on this one project. Mr. Wheeler reasoned that the feasibility money will be used to hire the right consultant who will do an economic analysis of the project. From that information, we can consider whether to go forward. We should look at this because there is a power plant near the

downtown and the owner of the plant is supportive. From the information gathered, we can make a smart decision on whether to go forward.

#### **Eversource Easement**

Ms. Laflamme asked the Council for a formal vote to grant an easement to PSNH (Eversource) over land at Community Field to accommodate one pole. The issue with wire over the stairs has been resolved by Eversource. Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Nelson to grant the easement as presented. So moved, the motion carried unanimously.

#### **Seeking a North Country Council Representative**

Ms. Laflamme explained that North Country Council reached out for representatives from Berlin. The City is allowed to have three representatives. Tom McCue has agreed to continue to serve; however Councilor Higbee would like someone else to consider being on the committee in his place. Mayor Grenier suggested tabling the issue to the next meeting and Council conceded.

#### **Other**

Given that the New Year's Day Holiday will be celebrated January 2, Mr. Wheeler asked if the Council would consider meeting January 3. Council members conceded to a January 3 meeting.

#### **Non-Public Session**

Councilor Theberge moved to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (d) Land Matters; seconded by Councilor Higbee and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Council discussed the status of a property.

Councilor Higbee moved to come out of non-public session; Councilor Rozek seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Councilor Rozek moved to seal the minutes until the matter is resolved as releasing them would render the decision made ineffective; Councilor Theberge seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

There being no further business in work session, Mayor Grenier called a recess until the start of the Regular Meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Susan Tremblay  
Administrative Assistant