

**City Council Work Session**  
**May 2, 2022**

Present were: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Robert Theberge, Remillard, Roland Theberge, Morency, Higbee and Morgan. Councilors Berthiaume and Eastman were absent.

Others present: Interim City Manager Pamela Laflamme, Finance Director Holly Larsen, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Chief of Police Dan Buteau, Lori Korzen, Micah Bachner, Amber Bachner, David Connelley, John Sullivan and William Carroll, Berlin Daily Sun.

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

Mayor Grenier requested to add an item to the agenda under other to discuss legislative items SB401, SB438 and SB400. Councilor Morgan moved with a second from Councilor Remillard to add the items to the agenda under other. So moved, the motion carried by roll call with all in favor.

**North Woods Learning Center & AHEAD – Childcare Project**

Ms. Laflamme advised she contacted them and asked to present their project to Council as requested. She was informed that the original building they were planning to use was far greater in costs than anticipated. They found another location for their childcare project which is outside Berlin. They will no longer require assistance from the City.

**Speed Limit Change Discussion – West Milan Road/NH Route 110**

Ms. Laflamme advised Council there will be a resolution tonight, during the regular Council meeting, to reduce the speed limit from 50mph to 40mph on Route 110. This will allow OHRV traffic to travel directly to Jericho Mountain State Park. She commented she contacted NHDOT and they have not yet acknowledged their plan. She commented she also included the OHRV Ordinance which allows to change the speed limit by Resolution.

Councilor Roland Theberge expressed concerns in regards to the use of the road by ATVs during winter months. He also had concerns in regards to the ATV's using the snow machine trails. These items were referred to the Traffic Safety Committee and will be discussed at the next meeting.

**Riverwalk – Award for Construction & Construction Engineering**

Ms. Laflamme advised NHDOT issued a notice to proceed allowing Council to award the construction engineering contract to CMA Engineers, Inc. for the Riverwalk project. There will still be a small contract with HEB as they will continue to provide services as the design engineer in the project to CMA. The notice to proceed also stated we can move forward with awarding the actual construction contract to Ray's Electric. Councilor Higbee moved with a second from Councilor Roland Theberge to award the construction engineering to CMA Engineers, Inc. with a small addendum engineering contract to HEB for finishing the design. So moved, the motion carried by roll call with majority in favor with one abstention from Mayor Grenier due to HEB being his son's employer. Councilor Remillard moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to award the construction contract to Ray's Electric and General Contracting, Inc. So moved, the motion carried by roll call with all in favor. Mayor Grenier asked the amount of the award to Ray's Electric. Ms. Laflamme responded the construction cost is \$1,362,565.

**Timber Tax Warrant**

Mayor Grenier advised this is a timber tax warrant for Mr. Mark Leclerc of 21 Hitchcock drive, Berlin. Ms. Laflamme commented his address is Gorham not Berlin. This is for timber cut at Map & Lot 135-206, 148, 207 and is in the amount of \$494.55. Councilor Remillard moved to approve the timber tax warrant to Mark Leclerc in the amount of \$494.55. Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried by all in favor.

**Land Use Change Tax**

Ms. Laflamme advised the first one is for Kristopher Blais in the amount of \$3,030 for the property located at 168 Cates Hill Road where he will be building a home. Councilor Remillard moved to assess a land use change tax to Mr. Kristopher Blais in the amount of \$3,030. Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried by all in favor.

The second one is for Timothy Bruns in the amount of \$890 for a small lot (Map 127 Lot 275) he purchased that is located next to his property of 41 Whittemore Avenue. Councilor Remillard moved to assess a land use change tax to Mr. Timothy Bruns in the amount of \$890. Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried by all in favor.

**Prorated Tax Assessment Abatement**

Ms. Laflamme advised this is for Richard and Janet Chevarie of 1545 Main Street. They're appealing for property year 2021. They suffered from a major fire and total loss of their home. Corcoran Consulting Associates, Inc. is recommending approving the abatement application for tax year 2021 and reducing the assessment from \$85,300 to \$77,623. Councilor Higbee moved to approve reducing the assessment from \$85,300 to \$77,623. Councilor Morency seconded and the motion carried by all in favor.

**2021 Abatement Recommendations**

Ms. Laflamme advised the first one is for Lawrence & Marguerite Garon of 52 Maynesboro Street. They are requesting an abatement as the back decking is not affixed to the land and therefore should not be assessed. Corcoran Consulting Associates, Inc. is recommending approving the abatement application for tax year 2021 and reducing the assessment from \$135,500 to \$132,100. Councilor Remillard moved to approve reducing the assessment from \$135,500 to \$132,100. Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried by all in favor.

The second one is for Michael and Jo-Ann Therriault of 21 Smyth Street. They are requesting an abatement as the overall condition of the home was changed from "good" to "very good" in 2021. After review, there was no evidence that the condition should have changed in 2021. Corcoran Consulting Associates, Inc. is recommending approving the abatement application for tax year 2021 and reducing the assessment from \$76,400 to \$66,300. Councilor Higbee moved to approve reducing the assessment from \$76,400 to \$66,300. Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried by all in favor.

The third one is for Steven Bolduc and Betty Lemelin-Dube for the property located at 97 Sweden Street. They are requesting an abatement as they are renovating the property over the next three years. Corcoran Consulting Associates, Inc. reviewed the property and adjusted the building's overall condition to reflect the on-going construction. They are recommending approving the abatement application for tax year 2021 and reducing the assessment from \$48,800 to \$38,600. Councilor Higbee moved to approve reducing the assessment from \$48,800 to \$38,600. Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried by all in favor.

The fourth one is for Donald Lanteigne of 181 Collins Street. He is requesting an abatement as the property suffered fire damage back in 2020 on the second floor and he does not have immediate plans to repair that part of the home. Corcoran Consulting Associates, Inc. reviewed the property and confirmed no work had been done. They are recommending approving the abatement application for tax year 2021 and reducing the assessment from \$61,900 to \$44,300. Councilor Remillard moved to approve reducing the assessment from \$61,900 to \$44,300. Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried by all in favor.

The fifth one is for Howard Manegold of 272 Church Street. He is requesting an abatement as the home is still in need of major repairs and is unable to get insurance on the property until repairs are made. Corcoran Consulting Associates, Inc. advised that based on the listing and no repairs made to date, they are reducing the overall condition of the property from "average" to "poor". They are recommending approving the abatement application for tax year 2021 and reducing the assessment from \$209,200 to \$179,900. Councilor

Morgan moved to approve reducing the assessment from \$209,200 to \$179,900. Councilor Roland Theberge seconded and the motion carried by all in favor.

The sixth one is for Robert Labrecque of 34 Peavey Lane. He is requesting an abatement and stated his property should be compared to other homes on Peavey Lane which have lower assessments and also compares to 328 School Street which has 63 units. Corcoran Consulting Associates, Inc. advised that based on past qualified sales similar to this property and the taxpayer not able to demonstrate the market value of the property, they are recommending denying the abatement application for tax year 2021. Councilor Remillard moved to deny the abatement request. Councilor Morency seconded and the motion carried by all in favor.

The seventh one is for George and Gloria Beals of 665 Fourth Avenue. They are requesting an abatement as the property needs updating. They stated an opinion value of \$38,000. Corcoran Consulting Associates, Inc. advised that based on information and considerations the City has already applied to the property and the taxpayer not demonstrating the market value of the property, they are recommending denying the abatement application for tax year 2021. Councilor Higbee moved to deny the abatement request. Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried by all in favor.

The last one is for Carolyn Ingerson of 175 Norway Street. She is requesting an abatement as the basement is unfinished and there is no flooring in the basement as it was removed due to mold. Corcoran Consulting Associates, Inc. inspected the property and noted the basement had finished walls, drop ceiling and heat. These three elements identify the basement as finished. They have not found any justification for a reduction and are recommending denying the abatement application for tax year 2021. Councilor Remillard moved to deny the abatement request. Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried by all in favor.

### **Other**

Councilor Robert Theberge discussed SB401 and explained this bill allows for funds to be distributed to the City for Bridge repairs and eliminates the 20% City share. He commented the bill passed and will be on the floor of the House this coming Wednesday. He is suggesting the Council send a letter of support for SB401 to the House Finance Committee. Councilor Roland Theberge moved, seconded by Councilor Morency to send a letter in support of SB401 to the House Finance Committee. So moved, the motion carried by all in favor.

Councilor Robert Theberge discussed SB438 which promotes the use of American materials. He commented the bill is going to the floor of the House and is highly supported by the Senate. He advised he doesn't anticipate any problems with this bill moving forward. Mayor Grenier commented Council has already sent communication in support of this bill.

Mayor Grenier distributed a communication from NHMA suggesting local officials oppose to SB400 as amended. In other words, reject the committee recommendation. The floor amendment would remove the provision in SB400 relative to inclusionary zoning, remove the entire housing champion program, and remove all of the committee amendment language. Councilor Remillard moved, seconded by Councilor Morency to send a letter in opposition to SB400 to the House Municipal and County Government Committee. So moved, the motion carried by all in favor.

Councilor Robert Theberge discussed SB418 which as written, would allow opening of ballots which would compromise the confidentiality of voters. City Clerk Shelli Fortin commented the Clerk's Association is opposed to this bill. Councilor Remillard moved, seconded by Councilor Morgan to send a letter in opposition to SB418 to the House Finance Committee. So moved, the motion carried by all in favor.

At 7:20p.m., Councilor Roland Theberge moved with a second from Councilor Morgan to enter into Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3 II; (d) Consideration of the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community. So, moved, the motion carried by roll call with all in favor.

Two items were discussed in non-public. The first being consideration of the acquisition of property discussed during non-public session April 25, 2022. The second being consideration of sale of a City owned property. No votes were taken.

At 7:37p.m., Mayor, Council and Staff came out of Non-Public Session. There being no further business in Work Session, Mayor Grenier recessed before moving on to the Regular Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Danielle Rioux  
Executive Assistant

\*Minutes are unofficial until they have been accepted by the City Council by motion.