

City Council Work Session May 9, 2022

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

Others present: City Manager Phillip L. Warren Jr., Community Development Director Pamela E. Laflamme, Finance Director Holly Larsen, Chief of Police Dan Buteau, Lori Korzen, Steven Korzen, Ralph Collins and William Carroll, Berlin Daily Sun.

Mayor Grenier opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Decision for publishing the FY23 Budget

Mayor Grenier commented the FY23 Budget is still a work in progress and there's still seven weeks to go till the budget is finalized. He stated he met with the Superintendent of Schools and Police Chief Buteau to fine tune their budgets as those budgets are operated by commissions. He also met with the City Manager, Community Development Director and Finance Director last Friday and they adjusted line items that are affected by higher energy costs. The oil and propane bids were received and accepted. The adjustments increased the overall City budget by approximately \$300,000. He commented the proposed budget presented this evening reflects all adjustments. He advised that when the Police Department presented their budget it was noted that some capital items had been removed which needed to be added. The items have been reinstated and are reflected in this proposed budget. The School Department is anticipating \$1,000,000 in surplus and the Police Department \$100,000 in surplus. These amounts are reflected in this proposed budget.

City Manager Phil Warren presented a [summary of the proposed budget along with a worksheet](#) including the UFB amount of \$2,000,000 (this reflects \$1,000,000 from the City and \$1,000,000 from the Schools). The amounts produced an estimated/projected tax rate of \$39.85 compared to the current rate of \$36.54, reflecting a \$3.31 increase. Mayor Grenier commented there is a reduction to the Public Works equipment line item as they will put off buying a recycle truck another year and will add a regular and sidewalk plow in FY23. Mayor Grenier advised that Senator Hennessey introduced a bill that passed the Senate in regards to catastrophic aid for struggling school districts. This would be approximately \$400,000. Councilor Eastman questioned what the funds can be used for. Mayor Grenier responded that because Berlin is a dependent school districts, the funds can be used throughout in the City. He commented he would like to work a way to put \$400,000-\$500,000 into the streets. Mr. Warren commented he is considering starting an in-house road surface management system which would not incur extra expenses. Councilor Berthiaume commented with the high cost of gas if we could ask City Departments to be more conservative with the gas usage. Mr. Warren commented he would discuss this with Department Heads. Councilor Higbee moved to proceed with publicizing the proposed FY23 budget for the public hearing on May 25, as presented. Councilor Roland Theberge seconded and the motion carried by roll call with all in favor.

Other

Councilor Robert Theberge gave an update on four pieces of Legislation including SB400, SB401, SB418 and SB438. He stated SB400 as amended relating to Zoning and Planning Board procedures and which Council voted to send a letter in opposition to during their May 2, 2022 work session was tabled. SB401 which includes an amendment related to the Balsams project passed. SB418 which relates to the verification of voter affidavits and which Council voted to send a letter in opposition to during their May 2, 2022 work session passed by roll call vote. SB438 which relates to State procurement policies intended to promote the use of American materials was amended adding Beauticians licensing requirements, it was approved as amended and out to pass. He commented Senate didn't agree with the amendment and is not sure if this will affect passage of the bill.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Councilor Roland Theberge moved to adjourn; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried by all in favor. The meeting ended at 7:11p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Danielle Rioux
Executive Assistant

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