

City Council Work Session September 6, 2022

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

Others present: City Manager Phillip L. Warren Jr., Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Chief of Police Dan Buteau, Micah Bachner, Tom McCue, Paul Martineau, Jan Zicha, Rebecca Sky, Christopher Dugan and Lisa Connell, Berlin Daily Sun.

Mayor Grenier opened the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

He invited Ms. Laflamme to speak as she had an announcement. Ms. Laflamme advised she had nominated Councilor Peter Higbee for the *2022 Older Adult Volunteer Award* and is happy to announce he was selected for the award. Mr. Christopher Dugan and Ms. Rebecca Sky of the NH State Commission on Aging were in attendance and presented the award to Councilor Higbee. Ms. Sky commented awards are presented annually by the New Hampshire State Commission on Aging and EngAGING NH to one or two individuals over the age of 60 in each county who has made a significant contribution to their community as a volunteer. She advised Ms. Laflamme had included a few items in the nomination of Councilor Higbee that are worth noting including; 10 years on the Berlin City Council, his work on several other city boards and committees including the Berlin Economic Development Authority, Master Plan Committee, his work with the Nansen Ski Club and his passion for good quality food options as a founding member of the Androscoggin food Coop and his current role as Board Chair and his involvement in the Farmer's Market. She commented it is civic minded individuals like Councilor Higbee who make our communities the welcoming places we want them to be. Mr. Dugan thanked Council for allowing them to present the award today.

NHMA Legislative Update

Mayor Grenier introduced Tom McCue who's been the City's Representative for the NHMA for many years. He is a very active community participant and is a voting member on the Coos County Planning Board. He brings valuable experience to both the City of Berlin and Coos County.

Mr. McCue advised NHMA is an organization that represents nearly all Cities and Towns in NH. He presented to Council NHMA's 2023-2024 Proposed Legislative Policy Positions which were reviewed over the summer 2022. The Policy Positions will be discussed at the State Conference being held on Friday September 23, 2022 in Concord. The Proposed Legislative Policy Positions were broken down in three subcommittees including; General Administration and Governance, Finance and Revenue and Infrastructure, Development, and Land Use. He discussed what NHMA supports and opposes within each subcommittee. Mr. McCue advised the Town of Grafton proposed a legislation that would allow Public Employees to opt out of contributing to the New Hampshire Retirement System. Mayor Grenier commented he is not in favor of this as it cost the City of Berlin a significant amount back in the 90's.

Councilor Remillard moved to authorize Tom McCue to vote on the City of Berlin's behalf for the NHMA recommendations absent of the New Hampshire Retirement System bullet item, Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

Geese Feeding Ordinance – Correction of Clerical Error

Mr. Warren advised when he put Resolution 2022-27R1 together the substance is correct but listed the numbering wrong. It should have been section 7-33 not 7-25. He recommends a motion be made to correct the clerical error instead of rehearing it. Councilor Higbee moved to correct the clerical error

made in Resolution 2022-27R1 specifically to note that the new section should be 7-33 not 7-25. Councilor Roland Theberge seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

Brown School Update

Ms. Laflamme advised TKB is in the development stages of their project and it's taking longer than anticipated mostly due to some work on environmental as they had to do a NEPA study. In doing that, it was discovered that a section of the property is in a flood zone which interferes with the grant process with the Community Development Block Grant through CDFA and HUD. This will be resolved by a boundary adjustment going to the Planning Board at their October meeting. They will also bring their Site Plan to the Planning Board October meeting. They are looking to access other funds. They've submitted to the Invest603 Grant funding for housing as their project qualifies. If they are successful, the City will then be eligible to apply for funds that unlock per unit pricing that is a rebate to the City as we made it easy and accessible for them to do this type of housing in the Community. They are still very committed to the project.

Other

Mr. Warren advised he received an email today from Angela Martin-Giroux, the City's Health and Welfare Officer requesting permission to contact the Joint Fiscal Legislative Committee Members and ask them to support FIS 22-313 which is a funding request to spend \$5,000,000 of ARPA funds to assist DHHS with winter emergency shelter services. He commented he wasn't comfortable moving forward prior to discussion with Council. This is at no cost to the City and if funding is made available to the North Country, we would be able to access it. Council is in support of the request.

Non-Public Session

At 7:35 p.m., Councilor Remillard moved with a second from Councilor Higbee 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. The motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Two items were discussed during the Non-Public Session in regards to the sale of City Owned properties. No action was taken during the discussion of the second item with no votes taken.

At 7:53p.m., Council and Staff came out of Non-Public Session. Councilor Higbee moved to seal the minutes of the first Non-Public Session item until the matter is resolved; Councilor Remillard seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

At 7:55 p.m., there being no further business in Work Session, Council moved 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.