

City Council Work Session October 3, 2022

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

Others present: City Manager Phillip L. Warren Jr., Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Finance Director Holly Larsen, Library Director Ann Brungot, Library Trustee Denise Bergeron, Lori Korzen, Dylan Bridge, Richard Laflamme, Deborah Laflamme, Roderick Forsman, Lionel Turgeon, Tony Dube, Pete McGillen, Floyd Burlock and Lisa Connell, Berlin Daily Sun.

Mayor Grenier opened the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Marine Corps League re: Light at Vietnam Veteran's Park

Mayor Grenier introduced four VFW members present this evening; Lionel Turgeon, Tony Dube, Pete McGillen and Floyd Burlock. He invited Mr. Turgeon to present their request. Mr. Turgeon discussed the monument that was placed at the Veteran's Park and is asking if there could be a light installed to shine on the monument. He also requested a light to shine on the flag that is up 24hrs per day. He advised he has been in contact with Jason Berry from Vaillancourt Electric to discuss what it would take to run power for lighting. Mayor Grenier advised he is in full support of adding lighting as it will help vandalism and it provides respect for the Vietnam Veterans who have served. He requested a quote be obtained and presented to Council. Council is in full support of adding lighting. Mr. Dube discussed the condition of the flags at the Veteran's Park. He stated they're in rough shape and is requesting they'd be replaced. Mr. Warren advised the City would obtain the flags and replace them.

RiverFire 5K Walk/Race request

Mr. Warren advised this item was reviewed at the RiverFire planning meeting and what is presented in the request letter is what was discussed. He is recommending approval of this request as presented. Councilor Berthiaume moved to approve the RiverFire 5K Walk/Race request. Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

Set Polling Times/Locations

Mayor Grenier requested that the Council set by motion the polling hours of 8:00 am to 7:00 pm for the State General Election and the polling locations of Berlin Recreation Center – Precinct 1, St Anne's Hall – Precinct 2 and 3, and Community Bible Church – Precinct 4. Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to approve the polling hours and locations for the November 8, 2022 State General Election. So moved, the motion carried with all in favor.

469 Hillsboro Street

Ms. Laflamme distributed a handout to Council. She explained that this is a property that has been an issue in terms of code and health for the City. The City did obtain an order from the court to tear down and remove the property which was done this summer. This property is owned by Loveland Lineage LLC and she is aware there is a for sale sign on the property. The City has put in a fair amount of funds into the clean up and tear down of the property including legal fees to the tune of about \$85,000 which the court granted the judgement that we were seeking those funds back to the City. Knowing it's unlikely we will see that amount in cash, DTC Lawyers is suggesting our next step be to have Council sign the Commitment of Expense Account document. The document essentially indicates that through this process we went through Code and Zoning, the actions, the enforcement, we have our ruling, here's our

expenses. It's following a process very similar, but very accelerated to tax deeding. Attorney Hilson is asking Council to sign the document tonight so that Ms. Larsen can start this process which coincides with her regular tax deeding process tomorrow. This will give the owner two sets of 30 days that he'll have to pay. If he doesn't pay, we start the tax deeding, take the property and that's how we'll recoup a portion of the expenses. She is asking Council to vote tonight so the process can be started. Councilor Berthiaume moved to begin the process of the Municipality acquiring this property by an accelerated tax deed process by signing the Commitment of Expense Account document tonight. Councilor Roland Theberge seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

Other

Mayor Grenier advised the City advertised for a library trustee to replace Steve Griffin. Two letters of interest were received and he would like to interview both this evening. Ms. Fortin advised only Mr. Forsman is present. Mayor Grenier advised Council would interview Mr. Forsman tonight and the other candidate at the next meeting on October 17th. Mr. Forsman expressed his interest in the Library Trustee position. He recently moved to Berlin and is a retired professor and former school psychiatrist. In conclusion he stated he believes Public Libraries are essential in every community. Council thanked Mr. Forsman for his time.

Tax Deeding

Ms. Larsen distributed an updated list of tax lien properties to Council. She directed Council to two highlighted properties on the list. She received partial payment on the first one and a call from AHEAD as the owner requested the Home Owner Assistance Fund. AHEAD is requesting Council to give them a grace period of 30 or 45 days to allow them to work through the process and get the remaining amount paid. Same situation for the other property highlighted. Councilor Remillard moved to waive tax deeding for the two properties; Howland Street (Map132 Lot116) and York Street (Map119 Lot 306) for 45 days. Councilor Morency seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

Ms. Laflamme advised the two properties on Hutchins Street (Map136 Lots39&40) were legally permitted junkyards. She spoke with NHDES about the properties and they don't have a lot of information in their files about the properties. After discussing with the City Attorney, he is recommending leaving the properties in lien status and have NHDES do an environmental assessment or audit before moving forward with tax deeding. Councilor Remillard moved to waive tax deeding on the two properties on Hutchins Street (Map136 Lots39&40) and proceed with the environmental assessment from NHDES. Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

Ms. Larsen advised all property owners on the list have been sent notices (certified mail receipt) and none except for the ones mentioned above have communicated with her. She stated they have until tomorrow October 4th until 4:30pm to pay. If any show up by that date/time, they will be removed from the list. Councilor Remillard moved to instruct the Finance Director to begin the process of tax deeding for the properties on the list presented today. Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

Non-Public Session

At 7:11 p.m., Councilor Roland Theberge moved with a second from Councilor Berthiaume to enter into Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3 II; (a) The dismissal, promotion or compensation of any public employee. The motion carried unanimously by roll call.

The promotion/compensation of a public employee was discussed. No votes were taken.

At 7:27 p.m., Councilor Berthiaume moved with a second from Councilor Roland Theberge to come out of Non-Public Session. The motion carried unanimously by roll call.

At 7:28 p.m., 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.