

**City Council Work Session**  
**January 28, 2019**

Present were: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Theberge, Berthiaume, Rozek, Otis, Morgan Allain, Remillard, Higbee and Gentili.

Others present: City Manager Jim Wheeler, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, Finance Director Patty Chase, Ralph Collins, Barbara Tetreault, *Berlin Daily Sun* and public

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

**Proposed FMLA Policy**

Mayor Grenier noted that this item was tabled from last week. Mr. Wheeler stated that the old policy goes back to 1995. We have been working through the old policy booklet and FMLA is the most important to get updated and in place. There was a last minute question from one of the unions about including comp time when sick leave is exhausted. We contacted the Primex labor attorney and will make the change, pending her recommendation. Councilor Higbee questioned comp time, saying that in the private sector, it is not allowed. Mr. Wheeler and Councilor Berthiaume confirmed that it applies to City and State government workers.

Councilor Berthiaume moved to accept the updated FMLA policy subject to the potential change to be made regarding comp time; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**Public Works Capital Equipment**

Mr. Eric Grenier stated that Public Works has four sidewalk tractors in its fleet. One is 30 years old with a blown engine and is used for parts; there is a 1996 with a blown transmission; a 2007 with stripped wheel studs and out of service; and a 2010 Holder with blown four wheel drive. We can get by with two and can generally maintain two to be in service. Mr. Grenier indicated that he has reviewed the maintenance costs and found that for every 4 hours of operation, the units require an hour of maintenance. He added that ten to twelve years is the life of the equipment and after that, it requires expensive fixes.

Councilor Rozek asked if Gorham has these problems and Mr. Grenier replied that their plowing conditions are much different. We have significantly more hills to plow. The wheeled Holders we have now may not be strong enough for the job. PWD had a demo on hand for the last storm and they put it to the test by plowing deep snow and doing Hillside Avenue going uphill. The unit is a new Prinoth, formerly Bombadier with tracks. It has a CAT engine, and parts can be obtained locally. The other sidewalk plows are Holders and their parts come from Germany through Canada. There are several attachments available for the Prinoth including a sander and cold planer that could be used in the summer.

Mr. Grenier stated that he would like to get onto a plan where the city could get a new sidewalk tractor every five years on a lease purchase. A leased tractor is fully warrantied. On this plan, we would keep and repair the 2010 Holder because it has a snowblower attachment at a cost of \$12,000. The plan

could be achieved with funding currently in the budget. It is not worth putting more money in the 2007.

Mr. Grenier reported that there are only two manufacturers that make tractors with tracks. RPM makes one that has had one sale to Tewksbury, MA. It is also a Tier 4 piece of equipment and more expensive than the Prinoth.

Other equipment to be purchased in this budget includes a F550 pick up with dump body, 9 ft plow and salt sand spreader. A ¾ ton pickup truck F250 with plow will also be purchased. Councilor Morgan Allain confirmed that this is for Public Works to supplement plowing operations. These will be purchased through the State bid.

Mr. Wheeler noted that we put purchases out to bid assuming that there are multiple manufacturers. In this case, it may not necessarily be in the best interest of the city. He recommended waiving the bidding process in favor of obtaining the Prinoth. Mr. Grenier reported that the Prinoth can be leased at \$6,000 per month and if the City buys the equipment, that amount would apply to the purchase price. He added that we are committed to fixing the 2010 Holder as well.

Mayor Grenier suggested trading the 07 for the down payment. Councilor Gentili moved to waive the bid process for purchasing a sidewalk tractor as it is in the best interest of the city; Councilor Morgan Allain seconded and the motion carried. Mr. Grenier left the room to get additional pricing information.

#### **TAP funding**

Hutchins St. Sidewalks. Ms. Laflamme reported that DOT made choices for TAP Funding. There were 38 applications and nine were funded. The North Country grant is for sidewalks in Northumberland. Berlin was not selected.

Riverwalk. She went on to say that we submitted an engineering study for the Riverwalk project and it was reviewed by DOT. HEB came in at \$90,000 more than predicted; however DOT has agreed to participate and pay 80% that will result in an additional \$18,000 for the city. Our total commitment is \$190,000 of local share. Once this piece is done, it will go to preliminary design, final design, then construction in 2020. Mayor Grenier confirmed that there are two budget cycles to fund this. Councilor Remillard moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to approve the additional municipal match of 20% of \$90,000 or \$18,000 for the Riverwalk. So moved, the motion carried.

#### **Public Works Capital Equipment (Continued)**

Mr. Grenier indicated that a 5 year lease with \$30,000 down would cost \$27,613.82 per year for 5 years; with \$40,000 down, it would be \$25,317.39 for 5 years; 7 years would be \$25,278, however that does not fit with the anticipated schedule we would like to be on for changing out sidewalk tractors. Councilor Rozek confirmed that the money is budgeted already, the Prinoth is a CAT engine and the warranty would be through CAT.

Mayor Grenier asked for cost information on the cold planer as well. Councilor Theberge asked what the cold planer does and Mr. Grenier explained that it allows us to create proper pavement joints as well as grinding to improve on ponding.

Mayor Grenier suggested a motion that would make a commitment for the equipment and next Monday, the funding could be determined as long as the payment is as proposed. Councilor Rozek moved to make a commitment to purchase the Prinoth sidewalk tractor with the understanding that the \$6,000 fee for renting the equipment will come off of the purchase price; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried.

#### **Other**

Councilor Rozek reported on the Traffic Committee findings. With regard to feeding deer, the Committee wants to reply to Mrs. Oleson that she should contact Fish and Game. The request for a handicap parking space was tabled so that the Committee can get a diagram of the area; have legal issues reviewed, and a matrix to define the criteria for handicap parking that the Council will follow. The request for a street light on Hampshire Street was tabled due to a technical question related to lighting.

Councilor Rozek commented that he was very impressed with the thorough explanation of the equipment request. He added Kudos relating to the Public Works Director being seen opening manholes and storm drains during the recent rain storm.

#### **Non Public Session**

Councilor Berthiaume moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 (d) land matters and (e) pending claims. So moved, the motion carried unanimously by roll call. Mr. Grenier and Ms. Laflamme remained for the non public.

Land matters were discussed.

Councilor Higbee moved to come out of non-public session; Councilor Otis seconded and the motion carried. Mr. Grenier left the meeting at this time.

Councilor Berthiaume moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 (e) pending claims

Pending claims were discussed.

Councilor Higbee moved to come out of non-public session; Councilor Otis seconded and the motion carried.

Councilor Rozek moved to seal the minutes as releasing them would render the action taken ineffective; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

#### **Adjournment**

Councilor Rozek moved to adjourn; Councilor Berthiaume seconded and the motion carried. The meeting ended at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Susan Tremblay  
Administrative Assistant

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