

City Council Work Session

Pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, Section 8 and Emergency Order #12, Section 3

April 6, 2020

Present were: Mayor Grenier at City Hall; via Zoom Councilors Remillard, Otis, Higbee, Eastman, Theberge, and Morgan were present; Councilors Rozek and Berthiaume were absent.

Others present: At City Hall City Manager Jim Wheeler; via Zoom Fire Chief James Watkins, Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Public Works Director Ben Hall, Finance Director Patty Chase, Barbara Tetreault, *Berlin Daily Sun*.

At 6:30 p.m. Mayor Grenier opened by stating: as Mayor of the City Council, due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04 City Council is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to the meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, this is to confirm that we are:

- a) *Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means;*

We are utilizing the Zoom platform for this electronic meeting. All members of the Council have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through the Zoom platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone # 1-646-558-8656, meeting ID 492 041 282, or by clicking on the City Council agenda on the City's website.

- b) *Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting:*

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom or telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the website of the Council at www.berlinnh.gov

- c) *Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access:*

If anybody has a problem, please call Pam Laflamme at 603-752-8587 or e-mail plaflamme@berlinnh.gov

- d) *Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting*

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, we will adjourn the meeting and have it rescheduled at that time.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by Roll Call vote. Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room during this meeting, which is required under the Right to Know law.

Councilors Remillard, Otis, Higbee, Eastman, Theberge, and Morgan were present and stated that there was no one else in the room; Mayor Grenier was present at City Hall and in the room with Jim Wheeler.

Downtown Tax Incentive Proposed Revision

Mayor Grenier reported that this item will be delayed. Ms. Laflamme noted that Mr. Hamill has been working on the new restaurant and has found that his expenses will be significantly more than he expected. She estimated that he will be ready in a few weeks to ask for a revision to his downtown tax incentive application.

Private Road Name Approval

Ms. Laflamme stated that there is a property on Cates Hill that has been subdivided to include a four acre parcel which will have a common driveway. The owner of the parcel is eager to build and to do so, he will need an address. The proposed name for the private drive is Hallowed View Drive which will also need to be approved by 911.

Councilor Theberge so moved; Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call votes of Councilor Otis, Theberge, Remillard, Higbee, Morgan, Eastman and Mayor Grenier.

Watson Street Pump Station

Mr. Wheeler reported that last Thursday the frequency drives failed at the Watson Street pump station. That pump station handles all the sewage in the City and sends it to the treatment plant. A drive was found and was installed at a cost of about \$15,000. Councilor Theberge suggested having a spare on the shelf so that we are ready if this happens again.

Fire Department Resolution

Mr. Wheeler explained that there is a resolution for 1st reading for \$44,220.92 from Fund 51 which is bond money that has yet to be appropriated. The intent of the resolution is to get the Fire Department floor designed and ready to be put out to bid. We can look to Rural Development for funding once the design is complete.

Mason Street Bridge

Mr. Wheeler noted that engineer's estimates were higher than expected. He added that putting the project out to bid will give solid pricing that the Council can then decide on. Councilor Eastman confirmed that a funding source for the bridge repair has not been located yet. There used to be State Bridge Aid with an 80/21 split; however the State is now considering a project such as ours "bridge maintenance". Mayor Grenier noted that to get the bridge aid, the bridge would need to be fully reconstructed. Councilor Remillard asked if Mason St Bridge is on the State's Red Listed Bridges. Mr. Wheeler indicated that he was not sure and he would get the information.

Assistant Fire Chief Position

Mr. Wheeler reported that there is a captain on special assignment who is doing fire inspections. His pay is \$71,826.77 per year and that is about what an assistant fire chief would be making. An assistant chief would be available to the Fire Chief for other administrative duties. As of July 1, the position would be in the budget.

Councilor Remillard confirmed that there will not be another hire because of filling this position. Chief Watkins stated that operational changes need to come from administration and without an assistant chief, there is no one to help out. Councilor Eastman confirmed that there is no additional cost because there would not be a new hire. To Councilor's Eastman's question about changing job description for the future, Mr. Wheeler indicated that would be discussed in collective bargaining. Chief Watkins added that the assistant chief is also in charge of formalized training.

Councilor Higbee moved with a second from Councilor Morgan to reinstate the assistant chief position and for the Fire Chief and City Manager to go forward with hiring. The motion carried unanimously by roll call votes of Councilor Otis, Theberge, Remillard, Higbee, Morgan, Eastman and Mayor Grenier.

COVID-19 Update

Mayor Grenier noted that he participated in a teleconference with Governor Sununu along with the City Manager. Mr. Wheeler stated that Berlin is working with health care and there was a virtual meeting with AVH to overview plans and a surge location. Mayor Grenier reported that FEMA is releasing 15 rapid test machines that will report a negative test results in 3-4 minutes and a positive test in 6 minutes. He's asked the Governor to have a machine in Berlin. Mayor Grenier added that we are doing our best to prepare for the worse case.

There being no further business in Work Session, at 7:20 Mayor Grenier moved on to the Regular Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Tremblay
Administrative Assistant

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