

City Council Work Session
April 7, 2021

At 6:30 p.m. Mayor Grenier opened the meeting. Due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04 this public body 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 854 5165 2835; Passcode 313224, or by clicking on the City Council agenda on the City's website, www.berlinnh.gov.

- 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 been provided on the City of Berlin's website of the Council at City Council-agendas

- 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 at: 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. By roll call, each member is to state their presence, and whether there is anyone in the room during this meeting, which is required under the Right to Know law.

Present at roll call were: Councilors Remillard, Eastman, Theberge, Berthiaume, Morgan, and Otis who acknowledged that they were alone in their respective rooms; Mayor Grenier was at City Hall. Councilors Higbee and Rozek were absent.

Others present: Community Development Director Pam Laflamme, Finance Director Holly Larsen, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Deputy Chief Dan Buteau, City Manager James Wheeler, Members of the Public including Jan Zicha.

Mayor Grenier requested to add an item to the work session agenda. The item is in regards to possible funding for capital projects that Congresswoman Kuster has brought to our attention. Councilor Remillard moved to add the item to the agenda; Councilor Otis seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Proposed Legislation discussion with Delegation Members

Mayor Grenier commented that he had a small discussion with Legislative Members Monday April 5, 2021 as they weren't able to attend tonight due to meetings in Concord today, tomorrow and Friday. Nothing further to report.

Letter re: Maine LD 676

Mayor Grenier informed Council that White Mountain Paper Company brought to his attention the negative impact the proposed LD 676 would have on their operations and asked if he could write a letter to the Maine Legislature. Mayor Grenier is asking Council to authorize the City Manager to send the letter to the Maine Legislature on City letterhead. Councilor Remillard moved to authorize City Manager, James Wheeler to send the letter to the Maine Legislature on City letterhead; Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

I&I Project Award

Mr. Wheeler advised there was only one bid received from Cross Excavation and it came under budget at \$1,275,500. Mr. Wheeler is asking Council to support the project and award the project to Cross Excavation. Councilor Remillard inquired if this project would be completed this summer and Mr. Wheeler explained this is a 3 month project and would be completed this summer. Councilor Theberge moved to award the project to Cross Excavation; Councilor Otis seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Excavation Warrant

Mr. Wheeler asked Council for authorization to execute the Gravel Tax Levy for excavated material to Arnold Drouin in the amount of \$60. Councilor Theberge moved to authorize City Manager, James Wheeler to execute the Gravel Tax Levy; Councilor Remillard seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

DRA Request

Mr. Wheeler explained to Council that the DRA is recommending that all 2018 denied abatements should be reviewed by the City's contracted assessor. Mr. Wheeler informed Council the cost for review will be \$1,500-\$2,000 max. Councilor Remillard question that if the DRA is only recommending, why are we pursuing this and why should we have to incur extra cost. Mr. Wheeler explained that if we do not follow the DRA's recommendation, they will ask the BTLA to have us review. Mayor Grenier commented that he doesn't like this, but wants this situation resolved and not linger. Councilor Remillard moved to have the City Manager, James Wheeler contact the DRA and have denials reviewed by our contracted assessor; Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Capital Project Improvement Request

Mr. Wheeler informed Council that we received a request from Congresswoman Kuster's office in regards to our Capital Improvement Projects as there is funding available, but time is of essence as the application must be sent by Monday April 12, 2021. The funding would be related to transportation projects that are ready to go. Mr. Wheeler informed two projects that might qualify for this funding would be the Riverwalk and Mason Street Bridge projects. The Riverwalk project is going out to bid this year and the Mason Street Bridge Project is already out to bid. Mrs. Laflamme did advise that there is a 25% match for the project that gets awarded funding. All agreed that the Mason Street Bridge project, which is over a two year process should be priority as this needs to be done.

Councilor Eastman asked if only transportation projects qualify for this funding. Mrs. Laflamme informed that this is the area they are interested in supporting. Councilor Eastman stated the Mason Street Bridge project should be prioritized and the Riverwalk project remain in the budget. Councilor Remillard questioned if the Mason Street Bridge project is awarded, will they fund over the two years or is the funding restricted to only one year. Mrs. Laflamme stated she is still waiting on specifications and has been in contact with Congresswoman Kuster's office for more information. Councilor Remillard asked if only the two projects mentioned might qualify or are there other possibilities. Mr. Wheeler advised the I&I construction demolition project might be a qualifying project. Councilor Remillard agreed if the Mason Street Bridge project doesn't get awarded, we should try the I&I construction project. Mrs. Laflamme stated that she is looking for Council to agree with the 25% match if awarded the funds. All were in agreement.

Recess

At 7:00 p.m. there being no further business in Work Session, Mayor Grenier recessed for a few minutes 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