

**City Council Work Session**  
**January 9, 2017**

Present were: Councilors Otis, Remillard, Gentili, Higbee, Nelson, Rozek and Morgan Allain; absent were Mayor Grenier and Councilor Theberge

Others present included City Manager James Wheeler, City Clerk Elaine Riendeau, Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, Finance Director Patty Chase, Health & Welfare Director Angela Martin Giroux, Police Chief Peter Morency, Assistant Police Chief Dan Buteau, US Forest Service District Ranger Jen Barnhart and Barbara Tetreault *Berlin Daily Sun*.

In the absence of Mayor Grenier, Councilor Remillard opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Ms. Laflamme informed the Council that a grant she wrote for the Riverwalk Project has been funded and the City will receive the money to go forward.

Councilor Remillard asked to add a letter opposing HB 145 to the agenda. Councilor Rozek so moved; Councilor Otis seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**US Forest Service**

Jennifer Barnhart introduced herself as the new District Ranger stationed in Gorham and managing the Androscoggin District. She stated that she is eager to engage and meet people in the community. Her last post was in South Carolina and her background is in recreation management with forestry. Ms. Barnhart reported that there is a proposal out to increase National Forest fees, which have not been increased since 1997, at service areas that have amenities. Fees are collected for 32 out of the 190 Forest Service sites and go toward improving the sites and offering high quality recreation.

An annual recreation pass would go from \$20 to \$30; the day fee would go from \$3 to \$5. It was proposed to eliminate the household pass which covers two vehicles for \$40 but people have commented that it should remain so that will be taken into consideration.

The Forest Service is a multipurpose agency which would authorize the harvest of approximately 12.5 million board feet of timber on about 3,800 acres in the Kilkenny Forest to include wildlife and timber management. The objective is to implement the plan this coming year. Ms. Barnhart indicated that she would send the link to the project to add to the city's web site.

Ms. Barnhart also noted that Bog Dam Loop Road (Kilkenny Loop) is having bridge maintenance done. The goal was to have the work done by December but there were obstacles and the plan is to have the bridges fixed by spring. There were no questions from the Council; however Councilor Rozek did note that this is the first Ranger that has come to a Council meeting. Councilor Remillard thanked Ms. Barnhart and she left the meeting at this time. (6:50 p.m.)

**Health Department Transition Plan**

Council members moved into the outer chambers. Additional people present included: Health & Welfare Secretary Helen Poirier, Peter Garneau RN, Kelley Corcoran RN, Robert Corcoran, Sharon Pelletier, Bob Pelletier, and public.

Mr. Wheeler presented a transition plan in a memo that was distributed to the Council. It lists tasks that need to be completed to transition out of providing home health services. North Country Health Care System has offered a proposal to add the Berlin Health Department nursing services to a plan that is in motion that will consolidate home health, hospice and long term care services in the North Country.

North Country Healthcare has offered three options:

1. Continue to operate a Medicare certified health department with health promotion activities on a contract basis at a cost of \$8,000 to \$10,000 per month to the city.
2. Option two is that the city exits Medicare certified service activities but continues with health promotion activities. In this option, the city ceases home health and North Country Health would pick up the patients. They would put together as much of the clinic services as we care to provide.
3. The third option is to exit both Medicare certified service and health promotion activities.

Mr. Wheeler's recommendation is Option 3 which moves everything out of the city to a health care agency. The details will still need to be worked out. They may provide the people and we provide the space.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Otis to direct the City Manager to move ahead with Option 3 and to file CMS Form 855a indicating that the City of Berlin is voluntarily terminating its Medicare enrollment. In a roll call vote, Councilors Otis, Gentili, Higbee, Rozek and Remillard voted for the motion; Councilors Nelson and Morgan Allain voted against. The motion carried.

#### **Mileage Reimbursement Rate**

Councilor Otis moved to approve the IRS rate of 53.5 cents per mile for 2017; Councilor Morgan Allain seconded. In discussion Councilor Higbee said that sometimes it can be difficult to make this change yearly and an idea for the future may be to level off and leave as is for a few years. In the vote that followed, the motion carried unanimously.

#### **Request to Add Outside Overtime to the Agenda**

Councilor Rozek moved to add item 5b Police Department Outside Overtime; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried.

#### **January 16 Holiday**

Councilor Nelson indicated that she will not be at the January 16 meeting and Councilor Higbee was not sure he would be present; however the consensus was to meet January 16 on the Civil Rights Day holiday.

#### **Opposition to HB 145**

Mr. Wheeler explained that HB 145 has the potential of holding back development. If there is a project that requires power lines to traverse over several communities, each of those communities would have the right to say they don't want the lines in the community. A letter opposing the legislation is proposed. Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Otis to send the letter opposing HB 145. So moved, the motion carried.

#### **Police Department Outside Overtime**

Chief Morency reported that funding for outside details such as traffic control on construction projects is budgeted yearly and then reimbursed with a payment from the contractor. At this time, the department is out of money for providing the service. He asked if the account should be run in the red or the Council could pass a resolution to appropriate additional funds. Chief Morency noted that he returns a 30% profit. Every effort is made to keep the costs down for local events

#### **Other**

Councilor Rozek reported that the Traffic Safety Committee agreed to recommend drafting a letter supporting extending the use of Jericho Road as an OHRV trail for an additional 3/10 of a mile west which is still within the 40 mile per hour speed limit.

Councilor Nelson questioned whether the urban compact line could be moved so that the City was in control of the road. Mr. Wheeler indicated that the State is usually in favor of giving up control; however that would also mean that the City would have to assume the cost of maintenance. Councilor Nelson pointed out that there is development potential and it would be important for the City to control the road.

Councilor Rozek moved to send a letter to the DOT supporting the extension of OHRV usage on Jericho Road for 3/10 of a mile west on its current route; Councilor Nelson seconded and the motion carried with all in favor. Councilor Higbee confirmed that the ordinance does not have to be revised.

#### **Adjournment**

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Nelson to adjourn them meeting. So moved, the motion carried. The meeting ended at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Susan Tremblay  
Administrative Assistant