

**City Council Work Session  
May 13, 2019**

Present were: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Gentili, Berthiaume, Otis, Rozek, Higbee, Morgan Allain, Remillard; Councilor Theberge was absent.

Others present: City Manager Jim Wheeler, Fire Chief John Lacasse, Finance Director Patty Chase, Public Works Director Eric Grenier, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Daily Sun and public

Mayor Grenier called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. He asked to add a Letter in Support of a Coos County Family Health grant proposal for additional dental care. Councilor Rozek moved to add the item to the agenda; Councilor Morgan Allain seconded and the motion carried.

Mayor Grenier also asked to add a letter of Support for signing a letter from Mayors in support of HB 365; and adding a request from Councilor Otis for National League Field electrical. Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Morgan Allain to add the two items to the agenda. So moved, the motion carried.

**Proposed 155-B Order 758 Second Avenue**

Chief Lacasse explained that 758 Second Avenue is deteriorating rapidly and he has been approached by the neighbors who are tired of it. There are rodents, smell, and he is here to ask the Council to move forward with the 155-B. The owner has other properties in the state. The owner claims the property was sold; however it did not change hands according to the Registry of Deeds. Councilor Rozek moved to authorize the City Manager to sign the 155-B order on the Council's behalf for 758 Second Avenue; Councilor Berthiaume seconded and the motion carried.

Chief Lacasse announced that Jericho Wind Farm will be donating \$5,000 to the Fire Department. The plan is to use the money for a new antennae for communications for \$2,189; the remaining would be for the first payment of a lease purchase for radios. A resolution will come to the Council soon. Chief Lacasse and the City Manager will accept the check for the city.

Councilor Rozek asked if there are other buildings that could be dealt with under 155-B? Chief Lacasse replied that there are likely others and he will look into it. Mr. Wheeler reported that we are looking into buildings with flat roofs as well as those with cellar drains connected to the sewer system. Those could be eligible for tear down with SRF money.

**Request for Letter of Support**

Coos County Family Health is looking to apply for funding through Health Resources Services Administration to expand their dental services in the North Country. Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to send a letter of support. So moved, the motion carried.

**HB365**

Mayor Grenier indicated that he received a request from the Conservation Law Foundation to send a letter in support of HB 365 that would be signed by Mayors of all 13 cities in NH. The Bill was passed by Legislature last year, and vetoed by the Governor. It missed passage to overturn the veto by one vote. There are a lot of benefits to the communities. The major argument against is that Eversource does not like being the measure of power for solar energy. Councilor Rozek moved with a second from

Councilor Higbee to approve sending the letter of support; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried.

### **National League Field**

Councilor Otis reported that there is no power to the scoreboard at the National League field. At this time a long extension cord is run from the concession stand. It would cost \$600. to fix by adding a connection. Mr. Grenier added that the PWD could dig the trench and the city electrician will run the conduit. Councilor Berthiaume asked if there is a sponsor that would provide and Councilor Otis noted that sponsors have already put in \$12,000 for the scoreboard. Councilor Gentili moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to authorize the expense of \$600 from contingency for providing power to the National League Field scoreboard. The motion carried; Councilor Otis abstained.

### **Proposed 2020 Budget**

Mr. Wheeler distributed a [Budget Summary](#) and a [Line Item Budget](#) noting that the budget discussed last week has a zero tax increase. The proposed budget would be published on the web site tomorrow, and Thursday 5/16, it will be in the paper. Mayor Grenier noted that when the budget is being finalized, any increase will require 2/3 majority of the City Council. He said that if the State comes through with school funding, it won't be perfect but we can't keep losing aid and continue to survive. The Senate Finance Committee listened intently and they know our plight.

If the Council and School Board do not feel the Legislature has made an effort, we should consider going forward with other communities in a law suit. At a minimum, we need full restoration of State Aid to Education and we won't know until the end of July. Schools may be generating a \$250,000 surplus that should go back to them. The outside agencies need the local money to maximize grant funding. There are two police officers, two firefighters, and one public works employee cut in this proposal. Councilor Berthiaume asked if the funding is restored, will the employees be put back in. Mayor Grenier reported that will be at the discretion of the Council. Councilor Rozek moved to proceed with publicizing the budget summary for the public hearing on May 22, as presented, Councilor Berthiaume seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to go into non meeting per RSA 91-A:2 1A collective bargaining.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to come out of non-meeting. So moved, the motion carried

There being no further business Councilor Rozek moved to adjourn; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried. The meeting ended at 7:25.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Susan Tremblay  
Administrative Assistant

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