

City Council Work Session May 20, 2019

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

Others present: City Manager Jim Wheeler, Police Chief Pete Morency, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Daily Sun and public

Agenda Changes

Mayor Grenier asked for the following changes to the agenda: remove L-Chip discussion in Work Session; add CDBG Code of Ethics/Financial Management Plan; Discussion of Finance Resolutions; Request from NHMA for SB 36 Support; MSP Correspondence; Review of Burgess BioPower grant; and non-public session for Land Matters and Pending Claims. Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to make the changes to the agenda. So moved, the motion carried with all in favor.

CDBG Coos County Family Health Services

Ms. Laflamme reported that we put the need for a CDBG administrator out for proposals and we received only one from Donna Lane for the amount of administration money in the grant, \$17,000. Ms. Laflamme recommend that we hire her to administer the grant. Councilor Rozek asked how the proposal is advertised and Ms. Laflamme noted that it goes in the Union Leader and goes out to a list of consultants. It also goes to a list of women owned businesses. Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to hire Donna Lane to administer the Coos County Family Health Services CDBG for a sum not to exceed \$17,000. So moved, the motion carried.

Letter for Abenaki Nation

Ms. Laflamme presented the Council with a letter of cultural commitment as requested at a previous meeting. The letter would accompany the ordinance and it acknowledges that the Abenaki Nation would receive notice prior to the start of site work at the base of Mt. Jasper. Councilor Rozek noted that for safety reasons, the high school should have had a road around it from the beginning. He questioned whether the Abenaki Nation would use that information to stop a project and Ms. Laflamme noted that, according to what they have told us, the notification is for cultural purposes and; they were clear that they don't want to interfere. Ms. Laflamme stated that we are not promising anything other than the notification. We are solidifying into an ordinance so that we are able to look up in the future. Mayor Grenier suggested that the Abenaki be asked to sign acknowledging their commitment not to interfere if we've given them notification. Ms. Laflamme will rework the letter into a mutual agreement.

Zoning Map

Ms. Laflamme explained that properties along Highland Park Avenue and Cates Hill have a zoning line that runs through the property and not along a property line. A change is being proposed to change the zoning from Residential Single Family to Rural Residential. The change will affect the Goddard property, Tremblay/Shadow Ridge; Theberge property and Bryant property. Property values do not change. Property owners will be notified prior to the next reading of the ordinance. They will know that the public hearing is June 3.

CDBG Code of Ethics/Financial Management Plan

Ms. Laflamme reported that it has been five years since the Council last signed the Finance Administration Plan and Code of Ethics. She distributed a copy for each and all members present signed an original document.

Finance Resolutions

Mr. Wheeler reported that there are three Resolutions for first reading regarding transportation projects that were done over years. There is one resolution to accept up to \$802,000 of FEMA money and to pay the east side work done through a change order for the Route 16 project. There is a resolution to accept \$650,000 of funding for the Hillside Ave Bridge. The final resolution completes the last of the bond money and appropriates \$43,000 for street improvements.

Senate Bill 36 Request from NHMA

NHMA asked for support of an amendment to SB36 which is legislation that allows someone to take action that might deprive them of their rights and make them liable for damages. A one sentence amendment that stipulates “this section shall not apply to any case in which the plaintiff has a separate statutory remedy” is recommended. Councilor Remillard moved to support NHMA’s position on SB36; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried.

Drive in the 50’s

The Main Street Program asked to shut down Main Street on June 6 for Drive in the 50’s. Councilor Berthiaume moved to allow the Main Street Program to hold Drive in the 50’s on Main Street on June 6 noting that Main Street will be closed for that period of time; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried.

Hire Request

Mr. Wheeler reported that we received a letter of resignation from PWD director, Eric Grenier. He has come to the conclusion that engineering design is where he wants to work. Mr. Wheeler asked to advertise for the position. Councilor Remillard said that Mr. Grenier was doing a good job and she especially liked and understood his presentations. Councilor Higbee moved to allow the City Manager to advertise for a Public Works Director; Councilor Theberge seconded and the motion carried. Councilor Berthiaume asked if an engineering degree is necessary for the position and Mr. Wheeler said that it would be preferable but not necessary. He added that Primex will be involved with the hire.

Burgess Biopower Grant

Mr. Wheeler explained that Burgess has made the city aware of a greenhouse project on their property. They applied for a \$500,000 grant from the PUC that allows for base infrastructure work that will heat the greenhouse. The greenhouse is 190,000 sf and will have 30 employees. Councilor Remillard asked if they will be coming to the Planning Board and Mr. Wheeler noted that they have Wilson Engineering who will prepare the application. Councilor Higbee asked if this project will create capacity for the heated sidewalk project and Mr. Wheeler confirmed that it will.

Non-Public Session

Councilor Higbee moved with a second from Councilor Remillard to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (d) Land Matters and (e) Consideration of pending claims. The motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Land matters were discussed.

A pending claim was discussed.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to come out of nonpublic session. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Rozek moved to seal the minutes of the non-public session as releasing them would make the action taken ineffective; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business 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.