

City Council Work Session
March 9, 2020

Present were: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Rozek, Remillard, Higbee, Eastman, Otis, and Theberge. Councilors Berthiaume and Morgan were absent.

Others present: City Manager Jim Wheeler, Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, Public Works Director Ben Hall, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Finance Director Patty Chase, Barbara Tetreault, *Berlin Daily Sun*.

Mayor Grenier opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Solid Waste Ordinance Compliance

Public Works Director Ben Hall explained the effort of the Public Works Department to become more compliant to the existing solid waste ordinance. Definitions specify that any dwelling unit can have one pick up per week of no more than 2 cubic yards or 140 lbs of refuse. The ordinance clearly defines a property of 3 units or more as commercial. If the city changes to a “pay as you throw” pick up, each property will pay for the refuse they generate. Mayor Grenier did not want to make further changes until we know whether “pay as you throw” will be implemented.

Proposed Solid Waste Ordinance Changes

Mr. Hall proposed changes in the solid waste ordinance. In the future we may want to address making sorting recycling a requirement to shorten the collection time so that the employees would be open for other work. It could be done with 3 receptacles. A pay as you throw program would increase recycling.

Councilor Theberge questioned the ordinance’s reference to using blue or green containers. He asked if other colors were acceptable. Mr. Hall noted that there is a pamphlet that indicates the standards and he kept with the standard. Bins can be purchased at City Hall for \$10 each and they are green. Councilor Remillard reasoned that people will recycle more if they have to pay per bag. Mr. Hall added that as we generate more recycling, it would be more time sorting.

Councilor Rozek stated that it may be time to leave the realm of free trash pickup in favor of contracted service. The City continues to lose money with this service as it is labor intensive. Councilor Higbee commented that there needs to be a study before going forward. Mr. Wheeler noted that the \$800,000 in the municipal budget set aside for solid waste would go back to the people. The majority of communities in the state are pay as you throw. Privatizing garbage pickup would make sense; however the people who pick up garbage are on the roster for snow pick up as well. Councilor Eastman asked for a report of what other communities do and how they pay for it. Mayor Grenier noted that this is at least a year out.

Councilor Theberge feared that there would be more litter in Success. Councilor Remillard asked if a study has been started on “pay as you throw”. Mr. Hall indicated that he’s spoken with Waste Zero and they specialize in helping communities get going with the program. They could come and do a presentation to the Council. Councilor Higbee confirmed that Waste Zero is an organization that helps

develop a pay as you throw system; they then handle bags, and vendors. Mayor Grenier confirmed that we could do pay as you throw and still have the City pick up.

Mr. Wheeler reported that solid waste could become an enterprise fund where the money generated from the sale of bags would pay for the service. He said that staff could research the scenarios and come back to the Council in the near future. Mayor Grenier agreed saying that the Council needs more information on using municipal workers to implement a pay as you throw program and they need to know what would be involved to completely get out of the refuse business.

Councilor Remillard stated that she would like to hear from Net Zero and Mayor Grenier thought we could schedule in May.

Public Works Position Hire

Mr. Hall informed the Council that there is a retirement on April 15 and he would like to advertise the position. Councilor Rozek moved to replace the public works position created by the retirement; Councilor Theberge seconded and the motion carried with all voting in favor.

Councilor Rozek moved to change the order of the agenda, discussing Items 4 and 5 ahead of 3; Councilor Remillard seconded and the motion carried.

HB1165 - Prohibiting ATV's on a rail trail in Gorham

Mayor Grenier reported that the Recreation Committee heard a plan for an amendment that was promoted as a compromise. The amendment actually cuts 570 feet from the rail trail leaving no access from Gorham to Berlin. He encouraged the Council to take an official position by sending a letter to all house members to vote no on this bill. Councilor Remillard so moved; Councilor Otis seconded and the motion carried.

HB 1319 – Prohibiting the siting of new landfills or expansions of existing landfills near state parks, national parks, or United States Department of Agriculture forest land.

Mayor Grenier explained that this bill passed the committee on 11/9 vote. It would put a moratorium on permitting new landfills because of issues going on in Dalton where Casella is trying to position a landfill near Forest Lake. It would also put a moratorium on landfills within 2 miles of state parks, national parks or forest land. This would put an end to phase III permitting going on at Mt. Carberry. It also affects the transfer station, limiting any expansion due to its proximity to Jericho Park. Councilor Remillard moved to send a letter to kill the bill; Councilor Rozek seconded and the motion carried. The Council wanted to send the letter to all 400 members of the House.

FY2020 Budget - Administration

Mr. Wheeler reviewed the administration budget including City Manager, Finance, City Clerk, Assessing, Planning and Legal Services. The City's Reval is budgeted in Capital. Mayor Grenier asked if the assessment contract is still needed if it is a reval year. Mr. Wheeler noted that he would check.

IT – 416

Ms. Laflamme stated that it is the fifth year of our contract with SNS and we will put out an rfp for our IT contract. There are capital needs due to computer software support ending for the data base under

Vision. Vision has quoted \$20,000 and \$5000 yearly to host on a cloud based server. We will also need to move to office 365 for outlook which is going to cloud based e-mail and there will be a monthly fee for all email users in the city.

Ms. Laflamme stated that we are still finishing the upgrade from Windows 7 to Windows 10. The Finance software, Munismart, is still being supported but is being phased out. Munismart costs \$27000 per year. There is a project for cabling that would improve cabling from category 5 to Category 6 which would allow voice over IP phone system for City Hall, Library, Fire Department and Public Works.

Mayor Grenier made it clear that we can't afford to do all of it in one year. He asked for a five year package, spending \$75,000 per year. Councilor Eastman asked who does our day to day IT and Ms. Lalamme replied that it is Secure Network Services from Littleton. They offer 24 hour support and back up on the cloud which is monitored. All department with the exception of schools are with SNS.

BIDPA

Ms. Laflamme stated that the expenses for 121 Main Street are taken out and there is an increase in park improvements in case BIDPA is called upon to do demo. If the land sale goes through, there will be money for a new project. Mayor Grenier clarified that BIDPA is an enterprise fund and its revenue and expenses don't affect the tax rate.

There being no further business in work session, Councilor Rozek moved to adjourn; Councilor Remillard seconded and the motion carried. The meeting ended at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Tremblay
Administrative Assistant

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