

City Council Work Session

Pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, Section 8 and Emergency Order #12, Section 3

January 4, 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 **850 2646 1384**; Passcode **481847**, 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: Mayor Grenier at City Hall and in the room with James Wheeler; via Zoom, Councilors Theberge, Rozek, Morgan, Berthiaume, Otis, Higbee, Remillard, and Eastman who noted they were alone in their respective rooms.

Others present: City Manager James Wheeler, Fire Chief James Watkins, Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Russ Smith, Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Daily Sun.

Mayor Grenier asked to add Resolution 2021-02 authorizing a grant application to the FAA. Councilor Theberge moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to add the item as 2a under New Business. The motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Fire Department Ladder Truck

Chief Watkins reported that an accident occurred as the ladder truck was leaving the firehouse, hitting the building and damaging the truck. It was found that the walking beam hangars on the ladder truck failed causing it to veer in the opposite direction. The ladder truck has been taken out of service. It was limped to the courthouse to allow access should it need to be towed.

The truck has been looked at for repair and it is estimated to cost \$15,000 to repair the rear axles. One quote to haul the truck in a low bed to Barre, Vt was \$5,000. Damage to the rear steps of the truck will also need to be fixed. The truck is 25 years old and should be replaced soon. The FD will be looking at demo trucks.

Mayor Grenier asked if \$40,000 of repair could buy a year or two until we figure out what is needed. Chief Watkins replied that the truck has seen a lot of service and he is not sure if we can get more years out of it.

Councilor Eastman confirmed that a new ladder truck will cost somewhere between \$800,000 and \$1.2 million. Councilor Rozek voiced that he would like for more than one person to look at the truck and Chief Watkins assured him that other companies will be contacted. He's not sure if any of the repair shops will give a true quote because, due to the condition of the truck, there is too much that could go wrong.

Councilors conceded that the truck has to be repaired. Councilor Higbee suggested that it would be worth paying for a few companies to come to Berlin to look at the truck. He asked about the Assistance to Firefighters grant and Chief Watkins affirmed that the new round is now open. He added that his intent is to replace engine one first since the grant was 1/10th of a point from being funded. There is a resolution in place for the engine grant; however if the Council would prefer, we could apply for the ladder truck. Mr. Wheeler added that both pieces of equipment need to be replaced. Councilor Rozek confirmed that the engine would be \$700,000. Mayor Grenier suggested and the Council conceded to staying on course with the grant for the pumper, repair the ladder truck and find a solution to replacing the ladder truck. Chief Watkins stated that the grants will be awarded by April.

SCBA Compressor

Chief Watkins expressed his intent to apply for funding for a SCBA compressor that costs about \$70,000. The City's match would be \$3,700 and more than that has been spent on repairing the existing compressor. Chief Watkins noted that he will come back with a resolution. Councilor Higbee moved to authorize an application for funding a SCBA compressor; Councilor Berthiaume seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Mayor Grenier asked if we are expecting the ladder truck to be out of service, is there an emergency plan to cover? Chief Watkins said that we will count on Lancaster's truck for now.

758 Second Avenue

Mr. Wheeler explained that when we budgeted for the demolition of the Princess Theater, we were hoping there would be enough money to also take down 758 Second Avenue which is a hazardous building. There is about \$150,000 left, and the high estimate for 758 is \$183,537. Cross estimated the demolition to be about \$46,920 and we could have them do the work by change order. Councilor Remillard agreed that it is in critical state and needs to come down.

Councilor Eastman asked if it would go out for bid. Mr. Wheeler replied that we could add by change order to the contract that is already here or we could do a bid. We are paying tipping fees and the contractor will arrange for the environmental work. Councilor Remillard moved to proceed with the demolition of 758 Second Avenue by change order with Cross Excavating and Acadia; Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

EMS Rule Changes

Chief Watkins informed the Council that the State Department of Safety has made some rule changes to make getting licensed as an EMT easier. The State is willing to forgo the requirement that an EMT be associated with a licensed emergency management department. The number of ems providers during transport was two and during the pandemic, it has been reduced to 1. Councilor Berthiaume moved with a second from Councilor Remillard, to send a letter to the Department of Safety in support of the rule change. So moved, the motion carried with all voting in favor by roll call.

PD Admin Clerk Position

Mr. Wheeler reported that the Public Works clerk will leave Berlin to take a position in Gorham at the end of this week. Councilor Berthiaume moved with a second from Councilor Morgan to fill the position. The motion carried unanimously by roll call.

There being no further business in work session, 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.