

MAYOR'S REPORT

FEBRUARY 25, 2011

In the last 4 to 5 weeks, things have been fairly quiet within the city. The PUC is moving toward a hopeful resolution to the Laidlaw/PSNH power purchase agreement (PPA). There are hopeful signs that a public announcement of a sale and start up of the Cascade Mill are forthcoming very soon. Those are the two big reasons I was elected as your Mayor, and when we have ribbon cutting ceremonies, I might be able to catch my breath.

The city is approaching the budget season, and we all know how difficult and stressful this process can be for everyone involved. There will be passthrough cost from the state to the county and from the county to Berlin. Coos County will raise taxes to the City of Berlin in excess of \$160,000 as currently presented. Most emanate from the continued downshift in nursing home costs. There are no increases in employee compensation in the county budget, but the essential services that we provide to the elderly are needed desperately. What kind of a society would we be if we turned our backs on those who raised us, built our communities, and coached us in Little League and hockey.

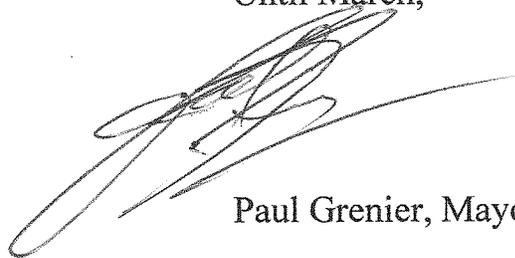
Councillor Bob Danderson recently asked for a print out of the gross pay of all of our full time employees. This information won't be used, and shouldn't be used as fodder against our dedicated employees. The info does serve a useful purpose, however. No one likes to work a year or two without a raise, particularly when asked to pony up more for health coverage. When I look at our median wages earned in the city as a whole, we will need help from every direction. I worked very hard last year NOT to lay anyone off from our payrolls, but this year that effort will be even more difficult. Berlin is not the only government body under extreme pressure. What is happening in Wisconsin can certainly happen in New Hampshire, given the legislature's make up. It is time for all public employee unions in Berlin to recognize that we pay you well, you have good benefits and working conditions. We need to stop the runaway train of spiraling costs together, one to preserve your public jobs, and two, to avoid what I feel is unnecessarily happening in Wisconsin. Only calm and focused people will solve our problem here and I reach out to all of the bargaining units in Berlin to join in.

The winter sports season is winding down, but my tip of the hat goes to Berlin High School Boy's basketball team. A successful season isn't only measured by wins and losses, but by character. The boys showed true class. Both

girls teams, hockey and basketball, also demonstrated hard work and team spirit. You showed the NH sports scene you can compete and be classy. Berlin High School Boys Hockey endured a difficult season in the wins and losses ledger, but except for two or three games, played well enough to win. They hung in there, night after night, playing their hearts out. It would have been easy to quit, walk away, or give a poor effort. They didn't do any of those things, and that tenacity is the life lesson that will serve them well when they become men.

Finally, I shared some of the difficulties that we face. We have a marvelous city where we all still know most of our neighbors by their first names, where serious crime is not tolerated by any of us, where we have the exciting prospects of scores of new jobs, and a way of life for one hundred years being rekindled after 2 uneasy years of bankruptcy operations. Yes, we have a difficult pathway ahead, but isn't Berlin's glass really over half full? If everyone pitches in, we will all be the best for it. And yes, Barbara Tetreault is finally back to work at the Berlin Daily Sun...

Until March,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Grenier', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Paul Grenier, Mayor