

# MAYOR'S REPORT

## MAY 11, 2020

It has been about 8 weeks now that we've all been sequestered in our homes due to Governor Sununu's Executive Orders to limit to public contact. Governor Sununu, who has earned high marks statewide for his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic so far, has begun to ever so slightly ease the restrictions. This will be a work in progress as many parts of New Hampshire have been affected differently. During our weekly state mayor's conference calls, he has moved quite cautiously to allow for an economic restart and is treating the state as a whole, rather than by regions. Though Coos County at this writing has two confirmed cases, we have had numerous scares in our county facilities and jail. There has been increased testing capacity county wide and now have the ability to test anyone who gets pre-approval from their primary care provider. As restrictions ease, it is important for all of us to strictly adhere to the six foot distancing protocols as recommended by the CDC.

On Monday evening the City Council will take up the issue of reopening our rights of ways to ATV and OHRV traffic to coincide with the Jericho Mt. State Park trail opening. Since all the connector trails will remain closed for some time longer, this activity will be basically for locals to access the park. I will support the continued closure of ALL the municipal parking lots to ATV trailers city wide except for the Rt. 110 lot near Jericho State Park. Berlin people need and want to recreate at the park and it will basically be an island for locals to use. If the council agrees, we will closely monitor what is happening. Our local restaurants and related business community need the added activity and we must support them during their time of greatest need. Please, order take out from our businesses!!

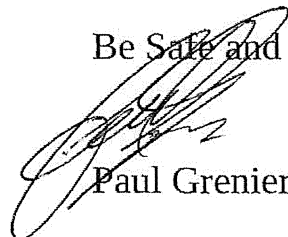
Also Monday, the City Council will develop a budget for the annual public hearing. There is significant extra one time funds from the previous state budget earmarked for Berlin, and the Governor has told mayors and municipal managers that those funds will remain in place. There will be many capital projects and one time purchases proposed that are desperately needed. I will also propose a tax decrease to help citizens during this difficult time. It is also imperative that we build up our reserves for next year when one time monies won't exist. City Manager Wheeler and I are developing a sound financial strategy to minimize any disruption to city operations. We will propose funding the complete substructure

repair to the Mason Street bridge over the canal, new roof, windows and concrete floors at the Berlin Fire Station. With talk of stimulus funding from Washington, we have a host of projects and street work ready to go. Remember, Monday's proposal is only the "first pass", additional revisions will assuredly be made before final passage. When you see a City Council member, please thank them for the hard work they put forth for our community at a time when things have been turned upside down.

I know there has been a lot of discussion on the Pay-As-You-Throw solid waste pick up concept. I want to strongly remind folks that we have NOT made any decision of any substance as to solid waste pick up. We as a group are exploring ALL avenues for dealing with this. We understand the pros and cons to any decision we make, including doing nothing while Carberry tonnages increase while our population ages. We will make revisions, however. It is not very fair when an elderly couple produce one bag of refuse a week while multi tenement buildings produce mounds of trash, without even attempting to at least recycle.

Finally, I want to congratulate BHS Class of 2020. Certainly through no circumstances of your own, your graduation ceremony will be much different, though nowhere near traditional. Nonetheless, you should be very proud of yourselves. I know many of you personally as well as your families and you will wildly be successful. Many of you will come back here to live, work and play. Many others will head off to a very different world. Remember, Berlin is still a very special place and if you want to roll up your sleeves, look at a glass as half full, be willing to work hard and give back, you will find success of the heart, right here!!

Be Safe and God Bless,



Paul Grenier, Mayor