

**Proposed FY 2021 City of Berlin Budget
Public Hearing – May 27, 2020**

Mayor Grenier opened the duly scheduled and advertised public hearing via Zoom at approximately 6:30 p.m. Present were Mayor Grenier, Councilors Otis, Morgan, Eastman, Remillard, Rozek, Higbee, and Theberge. Also present: City Manager James Wheeler, Finance Director Patty Chase, Assistant Police Chief Daniel Buteau, Superintendent Julie King, Marion Moore, Fire Chief James Watkins, Public Works Director Ben Hall, Library Director Ann Brungot, Recreation Director Terry Letarte, Tara MacKillop, Amy Huter, Gary Croteau, Richard Laflamme, and Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Daily Sun.

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 824 4496 7345, 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.

Mayor Grenier read the Proposed FY2021 Budget into the record:

Account	FY 20 BUDGET	FY21 COUNCIL
01-401 MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL	\$ 71,658.00	\$ 71,408.00
01-402 ADMINISTRATION	\$ 996,483.00	\$ 1,048,494.32
01-403 ELECTIONS	\$ 16,385.50	\$ 16,385.50
01-404 CITY HALL AND OTHER BUILDINGS	\$ 55,474.00	\$ 56,986.00
01-405 SPECIAL FUNDS	\$ 275.00	\$ 310.00
01-406 PROPERTY AND LIABILITY INS	\$ 79,605.00	\$ 76,573.00
01-408 CENTRAL SERVICES	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
01-409 DISCOUNTS/ ABATEMENTS/DEEDED	\$ -	\$ -
01-410 PERSONNEL BENEFITS	\$ 355,452.00	\$ 419,446.77
01-411 CONTINGENCY	\$ 9,600.00	\$ 9,600.00
01-412 OUTSIDE AGENCIES	\$ 78,029.00	\$ 76,179.00
01-413 CEMETERY	\$ 18,415.00	\$ 21,814.00
01-416 IT DEPARTMENT	\$ 147,900.00	\$ 186,900.00
TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT	\$ 1,854,276.50	\$ 2,009,096.59
01-420 POLICE DEPARTMENT	\$ 3,285,302.00	\$ 3,344,940.00
01-421 FIRE DEPARTMENT	\$ 2,234,530.95	\$ 2,382,868.97
01-422 STREET LIGHTING	\$ 99,000.00	\$ 118,500.00
01-423 AMBULANCE SERVICE	\$ 359,004.00	\$ 359,004.00
01-424 SPECIAL PUBLIC SAFETY	\$ 172,410.00	\$ 167,430.00
TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY	\$ 6,150,246.95	\$ 6,372,742.97
01-425 HOUSING DIVISION	\$ 87,036.08	\$ 64,211.37
TOTAL HOUSING DIVISION	\$ 87,036.08	\$ 64,211.37
01-426 CODE ENFORCEMENT	\$ 117,700.19	\$ 127,018.65
TOTAL CODE DIVISION	\$ 117,700.19	\$ 127,018.65
01-430 PUBLIC WORKS	\$ 2,158,813.73	\$ 2,196,676.65
01-436 SOLID /PW	\$ 874,732.00	\$ 829,475.36
TOTAL PUBLIC WORKS	\$ 3,033,545.73	\$ 3,026,152.01
01-441 WELFARE	\$ 105,178.50	\$ 116,041.75
01-449 PARKS	\$ 272,162.47	\$ 281,944.21
01-450 RECREATION DEPARTMENT	\$ 166,960.00	\$ 167,681.00
01-451 LIBRARY	\$ 203,501.13	\$ 201,764.08
TOTAL COMMUNITY SERVICES	\$ 747,802.10	\$ 767,431.04

01-470 DEBT SERVICE	\$ 768,085.61	\$ 765,076.46
01-480 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS	\$ 1,097,306.44	\$ 1,316,730.09
TOTAL CITY DEBT AND CIP	\$ 1,865,392.05	\$ 2,081,806.55
01-460 SCHOOL OPERATING BUDGET	\$ 18,216,967.14	\$ 18,850,507.14
01-461 SCHOOL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS	\$ 74,198.44	\$ 475,500.00
TOTAL SCHOOL GENERAL FUND	\$ 18,291,165.58	\$ 19,326,007.14
01-407 COUNTY TAX	\$ 1,960,607.00	\$ 2,065,000.00
01-414 TRANSFER OUT	\$ 39,753.67	\$ 34,171.00
TOTAL CITY GENERAL FUND	\$ 33,892,720.41	\$ 35,873,637.32

OTHER CITY FUNDS

FUND 10 SCHOOL EDUCATION GRANTS	\$ 3,363,418.98	\$ 2,515,716.00
11-464 SCHOOL FOOD SERVICES	\$ 680,000.00	\$ 647,243.99
19-438 RECREATION ACTIVITY FUND	\$ 43,700.00	\$ 40,000.00
21-402 BERLIN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT	\$ 241,184.00	\$ 370,184.00
FUND 30 GRANT FUND	\$ 1,631,481.16.00	\$ 325,100.00
60-432 SEWER FUND TOTAL	\$ 3,458,196.45	\$ 3,432,442.23
63-437 CATES HILL LANDFILL	\$ 6,075.00	\$ 6,075.00
65-490 BERLIN AIRPORT Total w/ Capital	\$ 210,636.67	\$ 190,971.00

Mayor Grenier advised that they are still waiting on year-end fund balances and unspent appropriations before the budget is finalized. There will be no vote on the budget tonight. Mayor Grenier requested that comments this evening be about budget matters and that other items will be addressed at the regular meeting on Monday.

An email comment was received from Tiffany Hale of 214 Collins Street:

I would first of all like to commend the various departments which stepped up and found ways to adjust their budgets in a more fiscally responsible direction. I appreciate the City Council's efforts to bring the tax rate down, it's a welcome change. This is exactly what needs to happen in order for Berlin to attract investors, businesses, property owners, ultimately to thrive again.

I understand there are Council members who have additional proposals to potentially reduce the tax rate even more. I want to encourage our elected representatives to thoroughly explore these options in the best interest of the residents and businesses of this community.

I see there was some grant money calculated into this year's budget, money which may or may not be a one-time deal so I want to encourage City Council and the beneficiary departments to keep in mind moving forward that though grant money is available presently it is imperative to uphold their obligations to the City taxpayers by creating a budget which is likely to be sustainable without that additional assistance in the years to come.

Thank you again to those departments which proactively took steps to prioritize the growth and greater good of our community by streamlining their budgets.

Richard Laflamme of 128 Jasper Street commented that the City Council along with the refuse department has been looking at charging \$5 per bag for trash. Laflamme recommended that everyone in Berlin put their trash on the City Hall steps. Laflamme stated this is a rip-off to the taxpayers of the City of Berlin and he believes the Council is not serving the public of Berlin.

Mayor Grenier advised Mr. Laflamme that the Council has made no decision regarding pay-as-you-throw trash pickup and that they are looking at all options. It is not included in this budget and the Council is not ready to make a decision. There will be public hearings in the future when they decide on how to handle trash disposal. Mayor Grenier responded to Mr. Laflamme's comment that the cost would be \$5 per bag and everyone would be limited to two bags, by advising that this is not true.

Mayor Grenier commented that the Council is very careful with public money and commended all members of the City Council for the hard work which is done in the best interest of the community. Mayor Grenier also thanked City Manager Wheeler for the amount of time he gives to the job.

Mayor Grenier thanked the public for taking part in the budget process, and reminded everyone that this is not the final document.

Councilor Higbee thanked the Council and the City Manager for the budget. Councilor Higbee stated that the tax rate in 2005 when he bought his house was \$29.13. The proposed tax rate this year is \$39.54. Councilor Higbee advised there is inflation, and after doing some math and checking the Consumer Price Index, the proposed tax rate of \$39.54 this year, in 2005 dollars, would be \$29.96. Councilor Higbee noted that it is impressive that the City Council has managed to keep the tax rate essentially flat for our citizens.

Councilor Remillard thanked the Mayor and City Manager for the hours they have worked on the budget. Councilor Remillard stated that these are difficult times, but the City has had a pretty good year and she would like to see \$1 off the tax rate to encourage businesses and investors to come. Councilor Remillard stated that there are still people purchasing second homes in the area to visit for the weekend for ATV use.

Councilor Morgan thanked everyone for their hard work and effort, and stated that she liked the budget that we have now. Councilor Morgan stated that if a little more could be saved, everyone would be appreciative.

Mayor Grenier thanked the Berlin Police Department and NHSP for their work this weekend on the case of a Berlin citizen who had been missing for some time. Mayor Grenier stated it was important to bring closure to the family.

Councilor Eastman thanked the department heads for sharpening their pencils to help with the budget. Councilor Eastman noted that every million dollars the City spends equals 200 \$125,000 houses in tax revenue. Councilor Eastman stated that they are doing a good job in bringing the tax rate down, and investors will see that. Councilor Eastman noted that we are being more efficient, as we do not want to hire more people when we don't know what next year will look like.

City Manager Wheeler thanked the Mayor and Council for recognizing the department heads, who presented budgets that made sense without increasing much. City Manager Wheeler also thanked Patty Chase for her hard work on this budget, which will be her last.

There being no further comments, Mayor Grenier declared the public hearing closed at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shelli Fortin
City Clerk