

CITY OF BERLIN
New Hampshire

Minutes of Council School Budget Session of 3/21/2018
Council Conference Room
6:30 pm

Members:

Mayor Grenier
Councilor Theberge
Councilor Rozek
Councilor Gentili

City Staff:

James Wheeler, City Manager
Terry Letarte, Recreation Director
Michael Perreault, Public Works Director
Henry Noel, Pollution Control Director
Jonathan Goudreau, Pollution Control Operator
Jonathan Girard, Public Works Laborer
Patricia Chase, Finance Director

Mayor Grenier called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

Mayor Grenier opened the meeting by inviting Ms. Terry Letarte to present her Fiscal Year 2019 Budget requests. Mayor Grenier noted that the current year budget is \$150,085 and the Fiscal Year 2019 combined budget requests stand at \$155,693. Ms. Letarte explained that a portion of the increase is due to contractual increases in wages and benefits.

A new account was requested this year for purchased services which would cover costs for services such as plumbing and electrical. The amount requested is \$500.00.

Ms. Letarte also requested a new line item to cover costs for special events. Some of these special events include the Summer Kick Off and Easter Extravaganza. The Easter Eggstravaganza is quite popular and this year 200 participants are expected.

Mayor Grenier inquired about the status of the Babe Ruth program. A discussion around potential donations to reinstate the program ensued. Ms. Letarte was encouraged to redevelop program.

Mr. Perreault was invited to present his budget requests. The first department he proposed to discuss was Pollution Control. Mr. Perreault shared that Pollution Control recently completed a two year upgrade and that future projects and expenses include: Pump Station Upgrades, Vehicle Replacement, Phase II of the Inflow and Infiltration Project, Bass Shoe Pump Station Repairs and Watson Street Pump Station Upgrades.

The Fiscal Year 2019 City Manager's budget which includes Operating, Debt and Capital stands at \$3,412,985. Mayor Grenier asked Mr. Perreault if the increase in sewer rates positively impacted the cost of operating the facility. Mr. Perreault responded that the increases in the rate and usage made a difference.

Mr. Perreault stated that the plant is forty years old. Mayor Grenier asked what the average treatment per day is and Mr. Noel explained that it is approximately 1.6 million gallons per day but with the upgrade the plant can handle 3.0 million gallons per day.

Mayor Grenier asked why there is an increase of approximately \$160,000 in the operating budget. Mr. Noel explained that he's noted an increase in sludge produced which increases costs for electricity, chemicals and disposal. Councilor Theberge asked where chemicals are purchased and Mr. Noel explained that he uses various vendors.

There was discussion around the cost of staffing the facility. The requested budget includes a Chief Operator, Chemist, Maintenance, Instrumentation and four Operators for a total of eight employees.

Mr. Wheeler explained that the sewer rates will be established within the next few weeks which will provide important data in finalizing the FY19 budget.

Mayor Grenier asked Mr. Perreault if the additional supervisor has improved operations. Mr. Perreault replied that the move has been positive. Discussion then continued around time sheets and punch cards. Mr. Wheeler agreed to obtain quotes for time clocks. Councilor Rozek and Mayor Grenier expressed the importance for accurate time keeping and accountability.

Mayor Grenier asked how many full time employees are under Mr. Perreault's supervision. Mr. Perreault explained that there are 26 in Public Works/Garbage and Recycling, six on the Sewer Crew and three in Parks. Those numbers include four supervisors. Mr. Perreault also shared that the increase in his budget is partially due to the loss of help from the prison inmate program, welfare recipients and Northern Human Services.

Councilor Theberge inquired about the replacement of equipment with Mr. Wheeler suggesting that the Capital Improvement budget be reviewed. Initially Mr. Perreault had requested \$190,000 for Equipment Replacement but Mr. Wheeler reduced it to \$80,000. Mr. Wheeler suggested that an increase of \$10,000 might be necessary. There was discussion around the types of trucks that might be purchased with Mayor Grenier suggesting the purchase of a one ton truck and a 550 truck. Discussion followed regarding refurbishing loaders. Mr. Perreault explained that he was waiting for a quote from John Deere to refurbish a loader. Mr. Perreault agreed to present Council with the quote information once he receives it.

Mayor Grenier suggested increasing the Equipment Replacement line item from \$80,000 to \$90,000.

Included in the Capital Improvement Budget is a request for Infrared Equipment. Councilor Rozek asked if the cost of the equipment would be shared with the Pollution Control and Berlin Water Works. Mr. Perreault confirmed that the cost would be shared.

Mayor Grenier asked about the use of sand and the impact on the collection system. Mr. Wheeler explained that the Vac Truck cleans catch basins throughout the warmer months and this has aided in reducing the accumulation of debris within the lines. Mr. Noel noted that the plant finds it problematic when sand, bricks and rocks do enter through the lines to the plant. Further work on the Inflow and Infiltration Project might reduce the issues currently being experienced. Mr. Perreault also explained that the use of a camera helps to identify those pipes that may have been damaged over time.

Mayor Grenier requested that Mr. Perreault make changes to the schedule for street clean up. Discussion followed and Mr. Perreault agreed to try and have the clean-up completed by June 1.

Councilor Gentili asked Mr. Perreault if could offer the services his department renders with less than is being requested. Mr. Perreault replied that he could not reduce it without cutting services.

Mr. Perreault then discussed the Parks budget. The majority of any increases is due to contractual increases in wages and benefits. There was some discussion around the maintenance of the City's fields.

Mayor Grenier asked if the school track would be rubberized with Mr. Perreault explaining that project was under the School Administrator's budget.

Mr. Perreault reviewed historical data such as fuel usage, weather trends and sand/salt usage.

Councilor Rozek asked about solid waste pick up for commercial properties. Mr. Wheeler explained that he is still in the data collection stage and will be reporting back to Council once the information has been analyzed.

The overall total budget increase is 2.3% as stated by Mr. Perreault.

Motion to adjourn made by Councilor Rozek. Not able to second due to lack of a quorum.

Adjourned at 8:10.

Respectfully Submitted by Patricia A. Chase