

CITY OF BERLIN
New Hampshire

Minutes of Council School Budget Session of 3/12/2020
Council Conference Room
6:30 pm

Members:

Mayor Grenier
Councilor Theberge
Councilor Morgan
Councilor Eastman

City Staff:

James Wheeler, City Manager
Patricia Chase, Finance Director/Tax Collector
Angela Martin-Giroux, Health and Welfare Director
Marcel Leveille, Airport Manager

Mayor Grenier opened the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Mayor Grenier invited Mr. Bronson Frizzell to speak on behalf of the Androscoggin Valley Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Frizzell explained that the City's support through membership dues and its contribution toward marketing has been needed and appreciated. There was some discussion regarding marketing and the promotion of the ATV Festival.

Barbara Patry spoke on behalf of AV Home Care Services. Ms. Patry explained that most of their clients live strictly on Social Security Benefits and the City's contribution has aided the agency's ability to provide services. AV Home Care serves all of Coos County and last year served 168 Berlin citizens.

Community Action Chief Executive Officer, Jeanne Robillard, was invited to speak on behalf of Tri-County Community Action. Ms. Robillard shared that they rely heavily on federal grants and often those grants require a match. The match cannot be made via federal funding so Tri-County relies on donations from the county and other municipalities. Mayor Grenier inquired as to the difficulty in obtaining those grants with Ms. Robillard explaining that the formulas used for distribution of funding often changes. There was further discussion around the use of grants and the formulas used.

Kristy Letendre, Director of Prevention Services, explained that Homeless Intervention and Prevention programs are funded in part by federal and state grants. Ms. Letendre explained that they have devised a formula to fairly request funding by charging .05 per resident based on the 2010 census.

A discussion ensued regarding the need for affordable housing. Ms. Robillard explained the importance of moving individuals from a homeless shelter into their own housing. Tri-County works with other agencies to obtain that goal. Councilor Eastman asked about those with mental health issues and Ms. Robillard explained that they work with Northern NH Mental Health, Coos County Family Health, VA Administration and other agencies in an effort to provide services for those in need.

Ms. Sara Wight, Director of Energy Assistance Services, shared information about the services her programs provide. Last year they provided fuel assistance to 803 households. Councilor Theberge asked about the Weatherization Program. Ms. Wight explained that families automatically qualify for assistance if they've been approved for fuel assistance and that priority is given to the elderly and those with small children. Ms. Wight also explained that funding for fuel assistance reduces the City's potential costs for rent by paying the landlord directly if the rent includes heat. Councilor Theberge asked if the Weatherization Program installs carbon monoxide detectors with Ms. Robillard responding that they do.

Councilor Eastman asked about Weypoint with Mr. Wheeler explaining that it was formerly known as Child and Family Services.

Mayor Grenier invited Mr. John Tholl from the Civil Air Patrol to discuss his organization. Mr. Tholl explained that they are a civilian auxiliary for the air force. They perform forest fire patrols and are the primary photo recognition for FEMA during emergencies. They have a cadet program that draws youth from all over Coos County and any funding would help offset the costs for the recruits.

Angela Martin-Giroux reviewed the welfare budget and noted that a part-time position is being requested. Ms. Martin-Giroux is also the Health Officer and is responsible for health related issues and performs various inspections.

Mr. Marcel Leveille reviewed the Airport budget. There was discussion around the fuel tank truck that needs to be replaced. There are two major projects that may be forthcoming. One is for a taxi way to better serve larger aircraft and paving for hangar alley. Mr. Leveille also noted that there were \$8,000 in sand sales last year and that rental are increasing.

Meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Patricia A. Chase

