

**CITY OF BERLIN**  
New Hampshire

**Minutes of Council Work Session of 3/16/2022**  
**City Council Chambers**  
**6:30 pm**

**Members:**

Mayor Grenier  
Councilor Remillard  
Councilor Morgan  
Councilor Higbee  
Councilor Eastman  
Councilor Morency

**City Staff:**

Pamela Laflamme, Interim City Manager  
Holly Larsen, Finance Director/Tax Collector  
Rodney Bartlett, Public Works  
Mark Lapointe, Assistant Director of Public Works  
Roland Langlois, BPW Supervisor  
Ronald Lemoine, BPW Supervisor  
Jon Goudreau, Superintendent of Pollution Control  
Duane Johnson, Recreation Director  
JD Girard

**Public:** William Carroll, Berlin Daily Sun  
Janet Tremblay

At 6:31 p.m. Mayor Grenier opened the meeting. Mayor Grenier thanked the Public Works foremen for their hard work this winter, as they have gone above the call of duty to make things work without a Director. Mayor Grenier noted their self-motivation, and stated they do not get enough recognition for the work they do.

**Pollution Control**

Mr. Jon Goodreau, Pollution Control Superintendent, discussed his FY23 budget requests. Mr. Goodreau noted that he has kept the budget flat the last two years, but needed to increase the budget this year to continue to run the plant as they should. Mr. Goodreau stated that the price of chemicals has gone up and they are not sure what the cost of petroleum products will be in the coming year. The cost of shipping for parts and supplies has already increased, as fuel charges are being added. Mr. Goodreau advised that the budget has a 1.6% increase, or about \$33,000 across the entire budget. The budget has about \$2 million in expenses, and an estimated revenue of \$2.4 million, so they are still in the black and will be adding money to the sewer fund.

Mayor Grenier asked about the cost of fuel, and Mr. Goodreau advised that they usually use 8,000-9,000 gallons a year, which are ordered in 5,000-gallon tanker loads. Some years they get two loads delivered, and some years just one, which makes it hard to budget. Mr. Goodreau advised they are hoping to top off the tank with the city's contracted allotment for this year, so that only one delivery will be needed next year.

Councilor Remillard asked about the amount budgeted for sewer pipes, which doubled. Mr. Goodreau advised that this was a number that Ben Hall had budgeted before he left, and he is not sure what was being planned, as this is handled by the public works director. When asked about the sewer equipment, Mr. Goodreau advised that this has historically been budgeted at \$12,000, however last year was increased to assist with the cost of sewer cleaning equipment needed by public works to keep the sand out of catch basins.

Mayor Grenier noted that the approved 2022 budget was \$1,990,945, and the 2023 proposed budget is \$2,029,878, which is a very responsible budget.

### Recreation Department

Duane Johnson provided a handout for the Council listing some of the projects and activities they have planned for the Recreation Department. Mr. Johnson also thanked the public works department for their help. They have begun renovations on the building, as they are hoping to update the appearance and also the culture of the department. They have completed the batting cage with help from public works, are resurfacing the gym floor, and are hoping to provide a weight room. They are also hoping to increase after school activities and summer programs. They have received three donations, from ReMax, Anarchy Sports, and Wildcat which will help with their plans. They are also hoping to increase activities for parents and seniors. Mr. Johnson advised that he pretty much kept the same budget that Ms. Letarte had before him, except for a few areas that needed to be increased. The increase in the budget is about \$10,000.

Mayor Grenier commented that he has noticed the increased activity with youth at the department. Mayor Grenier also noted that one of the things people did not want to lose with the sale of Brown School was the gym, however the Recreation Department can offer this, and it makes sense to focus our resources on the one location. Mayor Grenier also noted the increased participation in baseball since Mr. Johnson has started helping with the program.

Councilor Morency also noted that the department looks great and he sees lots of smiling faces. Councilor Morency suggested insulating the ceiling, and Mr. Johnson advised they are looking into that. Mark Lapointe advised that they are hoping to re-shingle the First Avenue side of the roof, and they will also look into the cost of spray foam insulation.

Councilor Eastman stated that he loves the enthusiasm and can see the Recreation Department moving forward, giving kids a place to go. Councilor Eastman also noted that the budget was very responsible.

Mayor Grenier asked about Capital Improvement items, and Mr. Johnson advised the ceiling is on the list, and he would also like to get a van for transportation to programs. Ms. Laflamme advised the van was not included in this year's budget.

### Street Lighting

Interim City Manager Pamela Laflamme advised they are spending less on street lighting due to the LED upgrade.

Mayor Grenier asked about traffic lights that need to be replaced, and Ms. Laflamme stated that the timer is off at the Cleveland Bridge intersection and that the cycling is also problematic at the Twelfth Street intersection. These are being looked at by a company that specializes in this, and it may need to be included in the budgeting for next year. Rodney Bartlett advised that the cabinets for the lights usually do not need to be replaced, but the computers inside them get old and need to be replaced to meet the requirements for the intersection. Mr. Bartlett also advised that when the loops in the pavement break, the lights revert to the standard preset timing in the box.

Councilor Morency asked about moving the school lights from Brown School to Hillside Avenue and Ms. Laflamme advised this is planned for this summer.

### Public Works Department

Rodney Bartlett advised the Council that they took a level of service approach to the budget this year, with no new programs, people, or equipment. There is an increase in salaries and insurance, and they are hoping to increase pay for seasonal help from \$10 per hour to \$15, so that they can be competitive. Many of the numbers in the budget remained the same, and any changes were for specific purposes.

Mayor Grenier noted that the need for the department is greater than the resources available. Mr. Bartlett noted that the roads are the largest asset the City has, and that spending money to maintain them is critical in the long run. Mayor Grenier also asked about the lease payment for the sidewalk tractor. Mr. Bartlett advised that FY2023 will be the last payment, and there is no buyout. Mayor Grenier noted that considering the current market, it may be in the City's best interest to buy the loaders at the end of their leases. It was also suggested that they re-use the plows to reduce the price, as the price of plows has risen \$30,000.

Mayor Grenier asked about the \$280,000 budgeted for equipment, and Ms. Laflamme advised that this money is obligated for two trucks, one 6-wheel salt truck, and one 10-wheel dump truck. They will also need to replace the recycling truck. One was delivered last week, and the other will not be built until August. Mayor Grenier asked if they will still honor pricing and was advised they will, but not the delivery fees.

Ms. Laflamme advised money was added to the budget for the salt shed.

Mark Lapointe advised that to be efficient for snow removal, they need 2 loaders in each ward. Also, they only have one sidewalk plow that is operating, and they need two. Mr. Lapointe advised that the reason they get complaints is that they do not have all the equipment they need.

#### Solid Waste

The only change in the solid waste budget was in tipping fees. It was originally increased in the budget, however Mr. Bartlett advised they did receive a letter from AVRRDD with an estimated cost, which will reduce that line item. With the revised amount, the budget will end up with a 3.5% increase, for a total of \$875,631.

#### Other

There was no other business.

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Higbee and seconded by Councilor Morgan. So moved, the motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Shelli Fortin