

City Council Work Session November 6, 2017

Present were: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Higbee, Nelson, Otis, Remillard, Rozek and Theberge, Morgan Allain, and Gentili.

Others present: City Manager Jim Wheeler, Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, Superintendent of Schools Corinne Cascadden, Barbara Tetreault *Berlin Daily Sun*.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to add a land matter under non-public session to the agenda. The motion carried.

School Grants

Corinne Cascadden reported that there are three grants for the Council to consider with the first being legislative funding for robotics at the Middle and High School levels. The funds are available to begin a robotics club. The Middle School was awarded \$2,250 and the high school team was awarded \$6,500. Councilor Remillard confirmed that there is no match and Ms. Cascadden clarified that there is no money in the grant for travel so the school will provide transportation and there are sponsorships and private funding for team t-shirts.

Ms. Cascadden explained that Berlin was eligible for a Nellie Mae Foundation grant that will study how education will be achieved in the future. In partnership with SAU 20 and North Country Listens, Berlin wrote the grant to see how education in the valley can be delivered in different ways. Ms. Cascadden received confirmation of receipt of the grant today.

Ms. Cascadden added that the legislature has decided not to reinstitute building aid but instead to offer infrastructure money for schools from surplus funds. The schools are aiming to apply for two capital projects with the first being for security through Homeland Security at \$99,000. The second is for life safety to build an access road around the high school building where there is currently no access. Once estimates are received, an application will be submitted.

Proposed Certificate for Eastern Bank

Mr. Wheeler stated that Eastern Bank is the firm that is handling investment for the Jericho Wind decommissioning agreement. We have been asked to produce authorization for the city manager and finance director to act on the city's behalf. Mayor Grenier confirmed that the trustees are aware of contract with Eastern Bank. Mr. Wheeler noted that the trustees made the decision to contract with Eastern Bank.

Councilor Rozek moved to authorize the City Manager and Finance Director to sign on behalf of the City subject to the approval of the Trustees; Councilor Higbee seconded. In discussion Mayor Grenier noted that the trustees are aware since they voted to approve Eastern Bank. Councilor Rozek amended his motion. Councilor Rozek moved to authorize the City Manager and Finance Director to sign on behalf of the City subject to the notification of the trustees; Councilor Higbee seconded the amended motion and it carried, as amended.

Councilor Remillard said she would like to see two signatures required. Councilor Higbee confirmed that there are already funds at Eastern Bank and that the City Manager and Finance Director get direction from the trustees.

Mayor Grenier noted that the majority of funds come from decommissioning; however, over time we want to bring all trust funds to the trustees.

Waste Water Grant Sources

Mr. Wheeler presented a brief memo based on his conversation with Bill Hounsell. There is a \$276 million fund created by the Exxon MTBE groundwater contamination settlement. There is a commission being formed to create support for a program that would use that money for certain wastewater projects. It would be a potential source of money for the Dead River Pumping Station. Another concept being considered for the money is to put it in a trust to support the State's 20% aid program. It is likely that we will hear more definitive plans within the next six months. Councilor Rozek commented that if there is no funding by the spring, we could move forward on our own.

Beth Israel Cemetery

Mr. Wheeler stated that the City was presented with a letter that turns the Beth Israel Cemetery over to the city due to lack of funds effective immediately. There is established case law on abandonment of cemeteries. As stated the Beth Israel Cemetery would be turned over with the condition that only people of the Jewish faith could be buried in the upper section where there are four plots available and anyone could be buried in the remaining 40 plots. The City Attorney was consulted and he asked that the City not accept the cemetery until he has had the chance to do more research on the legality of honoring the restrictions.

Storm Damage Update

Mr. Wheeler reported that the most significant damage from the October 30 wind storm is Howland Street which was washed out by Coos St Brook. There is also damage on Haskell Street, Grafton Street and on Coos. Homeland Security has asked for a survey to provide a preliminary number so they can understand the magnitude of damage. Coos County needed \$121,000 for an emergency declaration and the damage in Berlin alone is estimated at approximately \$500,000.

The State is coming tomorrow to view the damage. With the paving plant due to close November 17, we are working to restore Howland Street as soon as possible. We have the benefit of having Sargent under contract for the Route 16 project and they are open to helping us. AB Excavating is due to start work on Howland under the bonds and protection of the Route 16 contract.

Other than Howland Street, the Watson St pump station was flooded. Water 28 feet deep, went to the top floor to the electrical panels. Once the water receded and the panels were dried, the plant started up like nothing had happened. Mayor Grenier added that he saw the municipal employees in action and their work saved the city hundreds of thousands of dollars. The Fire Department was going from house to house pumping out cellars. Councilor Rozek added that huge fir trees that fell onto Route 16 were cleared by PWD employees.

Councilor Higbee asked if there is an adjustment that could be made to the brook on east side to prevent this from happening again. Mr. Wheeler noted that there was some infrastructure

damage that will need to be repaired; there is also a need to do an evaluation of the entire length of the brook.

Non-Public Session

Councilor Nelson moved to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3II (d) land matters; Councilor Rozek seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Councilors considered a letter sent by Suzanne Eafrazi offering to buy 650 Blais Street. Mr. Wheeler noted that the property appears to be decent but has been neglected. Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to put 650 Blais Street out to bid for a minimum bid of \$20,000. All voted in favor of the motion.

Councilor Rozek moved to come out of non-public session; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried.

At 7:30 p.m. Mayor Grenier called for a five minute recess prior to starting the regular meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Tremblay
Administrative Assistant

PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Grenier opened the duly scheduled and advertised Public Hearing at approximately 7:38 p.m. to hear comments on the following subject matters:

Resolution 2017-20 Appropriating \$35,000 from the NH Charitable Foundation to the School Study of an independent School Administrative Unit

Mayor Grenier asked for comments from the public; with none presented, the public hearing on the subject matter above closed at 7:39 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Monday, November 6, 2017

Mayor Grenier called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 7:40 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers. The pledge of allegiance to the flag preceded roll call. Present: Councilors Remillard, Otis, Gentili, Higbee, Rozek, Nelson Morgan Allain, and Theberge. Also present: Corinne Cascadden, Pam Laflamme, and Barbara Tetreault

Minutes, Previous Meeting

The minutes were inadvertently left out of the agenda packet and they will be considered at the next meeting.

Disbursements:

Disbursement Summary Draft #1801 start date 10/17/2017 end date 11/6/2017 for a total cash disbursement of \$1,707,663.08. Councilor Theberge moved with a second by Councilor Nelson to accept the disbursement summary and pay all bills as recommended by the Committee on Accounts/Claims. So moved, the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS there were no comments

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Council Committee Reports there were no reports
2. Resolution 2017-20 Appropriating \$35,000 from the NH Charitable Foundation to the School Study of an Independent School Administrative Unit (tabled 10/16/2017)

A RESOLUTION accepting and appropriating Thirty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$35,000.00) from the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund of the NH Charitable Foundation to hire a consultant to study the development of an independent school administrative unit to include an analysis of the legal and other process steps required to do so.

Resolved by the City Council of the City of Berlin as Follows:

Whereas, the Berlin City Council passed Resolution 2017-16 recognizing the need to study, evaluate and consider potential changes to the current School Administrative Unit governance as a direct dependent department of the City along with considerations for broader regionalization of the school systems of the area for the purpose of maintaining, improving and creating a sustainable education system for the youth of the area; and

Whereas, the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund has made \$35,000 available to fund the study.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council accepts Thirty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$35,000.00) from the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund of the NH Charitable Foundation to hire a consultant to study the development of an independent school administrative unit to include an analysis of the legal and other process steps required to do so and appropriates such funds for the purpose of the grant.

Be it further resolved that the City Manager is authorized to do all things necessary to effectuate the grant.

This resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after passage.

Councilor Remillard moved with a second by Councilor Otis to remove the resolution from the table at this time. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Remillard moved with a second by Councilor Otis to have the resolution read a second time by title only. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Remillard moved with a second by Councilor Otis to have the resolution read a third time by title only. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Remillard moved with a second by Councilor Otis to pass the resolution. So moved, the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

3. Resolution 2017-21 Accepting & Appropriating \$94,155 from Nellie Mae Foundation

Councilor Nelson moved with a second by Councilor Theberge, to table this resolution and schedule a public hearing for November 20, 2017. So moved, the motion carried.

4. Resolution 2017-22 Accepting & Appropriating \$8,750 from NH Robotics Program

Councilor Remillard moved with a second by Councilor Otis, to table this resolution and schedule a public hearing for November 20, 2017. So moved, the motion carried.

5. Communication Robbi Miller Request for Autistic Child Sign on Marble Street

Issue: I've seen them in other cities and towns. I own my house here on Marble Street, and I was wondering if there is any way I could get an autism child street sign on my street? My child has autism and tends to have meltdowns and it would be nice if the neighborhood was more aware and I also believe it would help the safety of my child. I have seen them in our town for people that are deaf but autism is a very broad spectrum now and it would be nice if my street could have a sign. I thank you for your time in this matter. Robbi Miller, 733 Marble Street.

Councilor Rozek moved to accept the letter and to forward copies to the Public Works Department, Police Department and to the Traffic Safety Committee. Also, send a letter to Robbi Miller acknowledging the request; Councilor Nelson seconded and the motion carried.

6. Communication re: Parade of Lights

Date: October 19, 2017

To: City Clerk

From: Sylvia M. Poulin,
Main Street Program

The Berlin Main Street Program is once again gearing up for the annual Christmas Parade of Lights scheduled for Friday, November 24, 2017 at 7 pm. In conjunction with the Berlin Main Street Program, this year's parade is being coordinated with the Androscoggin Valley Chamber of Commerce with the TITLE SPONSOR being SERVICE CREDIT UNION.

We also will have horse wagon rides in downtown Berlin on SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY, November 25th, from 11 am to 2 pm. Same as last year, we will have the ride start at the bus stop on Main Street, go up Main Street, then down Pleasant Street and return up Main. The company doing the rides is Meadow Creek Farm and they will be forwarding their insurance document to us.

We will be coordinating our efforts with Public Works, Parks and Rec, Police and Fire Departments for road closures and safety issues to make this event run smoothly.

Thanks for your continued support. If you have any questions, please call at 752-6246.

Cc: Mike Perreault
Paul Blais
Dan Buteau
Asst Chief Soltys

Councilor Remillard moved to approve the request and place the letter on file; Councilor Otis seconded and the motion carried.

7. City Manager's Report

1. Interviews with each of the four responding design/build firms on the skate park project were held on Friday November 3rd. We plan to make a final selection within the next week.
2. The Airport Manager had an incident at the airport on Sunday, October 29th when an ultralight aircraft lost control. The aircraft collided with and damaged a sign. DOT and the FAA were contacted. There were no injuries and the damage at the airport is minimal. The private pilot will be responsible for the repairs.
3. The NH Bureau of Trails reports that Jericho Park was closed due to downed trees and wash outs last week. Some trails were opened by the weekend and others require further clearing and/or restoration.
4. As part of the damage that occurred during the storm last week the Watson St. Screening Building was inundated with flow causing the CSO to operate. Flow also entered the pumping station and flooded the ground floor threatening control and electrical panels. Amazingly, once levels receded, the station was put back on line around 4 pm on Monday. It has continued to operate since then. We really dodged a bullet.
5. The NHDES and a representative from Nobis Engineering performed an initial site walk of the Lavoie property at 640 Hillside Ave. earlier today to assess possible environmental contamination. The work is being funded through a State grant and is with the goal of putting the property back into beneficial re-use.
6. 635 Hillsboro Street is out again for sealed bid due December 7, 2017. The bid can be accessed through the web site at <https://www.berlinnh.gov/bids>. Upon signing in, access is granted. If any addendums are issued, those who have signed in will be notified automatically by the system. We will also put the link on the City's Facebook page.
7. Registration is now open for 3rd grade through 6th grade Ski and Snowboard program. This Recreation program is in collaboration with Wildcat and the Berlin Public Schools so students must be in good standing to be allowed to participate. The program will go for six weeks at a cost of \$100.00 per person by November 15.
8. We would like to thank Lise and George Sanschagrin and Doris MacDonald for handing out treats at City Hall for the annual Trick or Treat Downtown. They are volunteers from RSVP and we very much appreciate the time they give to the community.
9. There has been a lot of activity on HB 324 both at the legislative level as well as at the Assessing Standards Board. At the moment, it appears that an amendment submitted by Rep. Howard Moffett may be passed (see attached). The amendment calls for a multi-stakeholder commission to study valuation methods and the potential adoption of a standardized method. If this amendment is adopted it is likely that the ASB will continue its work to attempt to inform the commission on possible valuation methods. It seems clear that there is a strong desire by the legislature to regulate utility valuations.
10. PD Statistics

Councilor Rozek moved to accept the Manager's Report and place it on file; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried.

8. Mayor's Report

Mayor Grenier stated that he is active with the Notre Dame Arena and he is very impressed with the Recreational Hockey Program run by Mike and Missy Wedge. They have registered 63 participants in the program from Learn to Skate to age 15.

Mayor Grenier wished everyone the best of luck tomorrow, Election Day adding that he hopes to see everyone back.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Theberge to accept the Mayor's Report and place on file. The motion carried.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS there were no public comments

10. Council Comments

Councilor Rozek commented that there are areas on Route 16 where there are dips and rain water is collecting. He asked if there is a punch list of items that need to be taken care of on the project. Mr. Wheeler noted that there are several areas with ponding and it is planned to be corrected with infrared. He added that the day the final top course of pavement was completed on Route 16, Brown School reported a broken sewer service. Directional drilling was tried to no avail. The repair will be done tomorrow and the patch will be treated with infrared so that it does not show. Councilor Nelson asked if the information could be put on Facebook so that everyone knows.

Mayor Grenier asked if the Council could get a report on how infrared works.

11. Adjournment

There being no further business before the Mayor and Council, Councilor Rozek moved with a second by Councilor Higbee to adjourn the regular meeting. So moved, the motion carried and Mayor Grenier declared the regular meeting adjourned at approximately 8:15 P.M.

A True Record, Attest:

Susan Tremblay
Administrative Assistant

Note: Minutes are unofficial until they have been accepted by the Council by motion.