

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Monday, June 7, 2021

Public Hearing

Mayor Grenier opened the Public Hearing at 7:28 pm for Resolution 2021-15 BPD Distracted Driving Patrols. There were no public comments. Mayor Grenier closed the Public Hearing at 7:29 pm.

Regular Meeting

Mayor Grenier called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 7:29 p.m.

a. Pledge of Allegiance

b. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Remillard, Morgan, Eastman, Higbee, Rozek, and Theberge

Absent: Councilors Berthiaume and Otis

Also present: James Wheeler, Pamela Laflamme, Holly Larsen, William Carroll and Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Daily Sun.

c. Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to accept the minutes of the May 17, 2021 Regular Meeting and Work Session, May 24, 2021 Work Session, and May 26, 2021 Budget Hearing. So moved, the motion passed.

Disbursements:

Disbursement Summary Draft #1888 start date 05/18/2021 end date 06/07/2021 for a total cash disbursement of \$1,273,562.80. Councilor Theberge moved with a second by Councilor Higbee to accept the disbursement summary and pay all bills as recommended by the Committee on Accounts/Claims. So moved, the motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Council Committee Reports

There were no Council Committee Reports.

2. Resolution 2021-15R BPD Distracted Driving Patrols (tabled 5/17/2021)

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-One

A RESOLUTION authorizing the Berlin Police Commission to accept a donation from the NH Charitable Foundation and Tillotson in the sum of Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00) for the purpose of effectuating "Distracted Driving Compliance" for Fiscal Year 2021.

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

WHEREAS Berlin High School 9th grade student, Aspen Langlois, is an active member of Empower Coos Youth, a program of the NH Charitable Foundation and Tillotson; and

WHEREAS As an active member, Ms Langlois is required to do something positive for her community and has chosen the Berlin Police Department to be her recipient; and

WHEREAS Ms Langlois has chosen as her project to bring awareness to the dangers of texting and driving.

WHEREAS driver inattention/distraction remains a primary contributing factor of crashes; and

WHEREAS instead of focusing their attention on safely operating their vehicles, drivers are frequently distracted by other activities such as illegally texting and/or using handheld cell phones while driving, often in combination with speeding and following too close, and this combination of tasks leads to crashes, injuries, property damage, and loss of life; and

WHEREAS the City of Berlin – Police Department recognizes the need to address distracted driving and provides grant funding specifically for that purpose,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Berlin, NH, that the sum of Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00) is hereby appropriated to the Berlin Police Department Fiscal Year 2021 budget, in addition to all previously-appropriated funds, for the purpose of effectuating said Distracted Driving Compliance for Equipment & Education.

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

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to remove this item from the table. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan to amend Resolution 2021-15 to read “Distracted Driving Compliance for Equipment & Education” instead of “patrols”. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to read Resolution 2021-15R by short title as amended for a second time. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to read Resolution 2021-15R by short title as amended for a third time. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan that Resolution 2021-15R be passed as amended. So moved, the motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

3. Resolution 2021-16 Adopting 2022 Budget (1st read)

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to table the Resolution and schedule a public hearing for June 21, 2021.

Councilor Rozek asked what the tax rate increase would be for the proposed budget and was advised \$1.87

Councilor Eastman asked about the increase in other funds listed at the end of the budget resolution, and Mayor Grenier advised that much of the increase was the CARES Act funds for the school.

So moved, the motion carried.

4. Resolution 2021-17 Re-appropriating Loan Funds Mason Street Bridge (1st read)

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second by Councilor Theberge, to table the Resolution and schedule a public hearing for June 21, 2021. So moved, the motion carried.

4a. Letter from David and Donna Fortier

Dear Sirs,

We are corresponding to you today regarding a property located at 218 Blanchard Street. This property abuts our backyard and was originally part of this property. Said property has been abandoned for several years, now that it

has been tax deeded to the City of Berlin. We wanted it known and on record that we are interested in obtaining this property. Our proposal would be to give us the property for a \$1.00 and we would demo, and improve the land.

Our record of demolitions that we have done around the city as Fortier & Associates affords us the capability to do such demolition and to improve the property. Which would include removing the blighted building and making a addition to our backyard. Contrary to what we have heard we do not park junk vehicles on our property, we run older vehicles because that is our choice and because I am the mechanic also.

Win win for the City you have now paid for the lawn mowing for I believe this is the fourth summer.

PLEASE READ AT CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Sincerely,

David Fortier
Donna Fortier

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to accept the offer from David and Donna Fortier to purchase the property at 218 Blanchard Street for \$1.00, with conditions to include the removal of the building, the property merged with his after demolition, and the property properly landscaped within 1 year.

Councilor Eastman asked if the property was going to be put out to bid or offered to abutters and was advised it is not.

So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Remillard noted that this property has been put out to bid before, with no bids being received.

5. City Manager's Report

1. Attached, please find a very thoughtful Thank You Note from Kathy Walker regarding the James C. Cleveland Bridge sign which was replaced by PWD.
2. Eversource reports that the June 4th power outage affected approximately 9,000 people in the Berlin area. The outage was due to a substation equipment failure. All customers were restored power within 15 minutes through emergency switching procedures. Eversource has dispatched mobile substation equipment to East Milan Road and has set it up on property managed by BWW. The outage affected the City Hall phone system through the day today. All lines were restored this afternoon.
3. The Finance Director has initiated the year-end process of capturing items such as Payables, Receivables, Segregated Funds, New Grants and Fixed Asset updates. Department Heads will be reporting this information into the Finance Dept. over the next few weeks.
4. I have been working with BOP personnel on their Federal solicitation for sewer service over the next ten years. This is essentially a process to satisfy the BOP's administrative needs as it is our intent to bill them like other user in their class using the rate set each year by City Council.
5. I have also been working with BOP personnel and CMA Engineers to secure a 5 year permit/easement for landfill gas monitoring on the BOP site next to East Milan Road.

Councilor Rozek moved, with a second from Councilor Higbee, to accept the City Manager's Report and place it on file. So moved, the motion carried.

6. Mayor's Report

Mayor Grenier thanked the Council for allowing himself and City Manager Wheeler to pursue an RFP for work at Veteran's Park on the lawn to help make it a beautiful place.

a. Letter from Mike Holt re: Building Committee

Good Morning Danielle!

I hope that you are enjoying your new job! My daughter heard about a school building committee being formed and that there was a need for community volunteers, and I would like to put my name in. Is there a list or someone I need to speak to? If you could help me that would be great. Thanks.

Mike Holt

b. Letter from Jennifer Lazzaro re: Building Committee

Hello I would really love to be on new building committee. I love this community so much and have two children who go to Berlin elementary school. I think it would also be a wonderful learning experience for me. I love getting involved in anything that's going to better Berlin and the school system. Thank you for your time

Jennifer Lazzaro

Councilor Rozek moved, with a second from Councilor Theberge, to accept the Mayor's nominations of Mike Holt and Jennifer Lazzaro as members of the School Building Committee. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Higbee asked if this committee was for all the City buildings or just the school buildings and was advised it is for the school buildings, as they are required to have a committee in order to accept State grant funds. Councilor Higbee asked if there were any spaces still left on the School Building Committee and was advised there are.

c. Trustee of Trust Funds Appointment – Bronson Frizzell

Councilor Rozek moved, with a second from Councilor Theberge to accept the Mayor's nomination of Bronson Frizzell as a Trustee of Trust Funds with a term to expire June 30, 2024. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Rozek moved, with a second from Councilor Theberge, to approve the Mayor's report and place it on file. So moved, the motion carried.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

8. Council Comments

Councilor Remillard advised that although there was no budget discussion tonight, she will not support a tax increase. Mayor Grenier advised there is additional money coming from the State according to Senator Hennessey. Councilor Remillard advised there will need to be increased revenue or further cuts. Councilors Rozek and Eastman advised they agreed with Councilor Remillard.

Councilor Eastman asked about the USDA water and sewer funds that are available. Pam Laflamme advised that they are aware and looking into it. Councilor Eastman asked about the Conway office and was advised that if we had an active project, Conway would be the office to provide service.

Councilor Eastman asked how much the City charges to fill pools and Mayor Grenier advised that we did not provide this service, but if someone was to fill their pool with a hose they would pay the current water rate for what they used. It is recommended that they hire a private contractor for this service. Councilor Eastman advised that the residence at the corner of Norway and Tenth Streets was filling their pool with a hose attached to the fire hydrant across the street on Memorial Day. City Manager Wheeler will look into this.

Councilor Rozek noted that a letter had been received about the left turn arrows on traffic lights and advised it has been requested to add them at the East Mason Street intersection and the 12th Street Bridge. City Manager Wheeler advised he will research this and that this should be referred to the Traffic and Safety Committee.

9. Adjournment

On a motion by Councilor Rozek, seconded by Councilor Theberge, the Council voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 pm. So moved, the motion carried.

A True Record, Attest:

Shelli Fortin
City Clerk

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