

## **CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Tuesday, February 20, 2024**

### **Regular Meeting**

Mayor Cone called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 7:02 pm.

#### **a. Pledge of Allegiance**

#### **b. Roll Call**

Present: Mayor Cone, Councilors Mia Qualls, Higbee, Morency, Valerino, Morgan, Korzen, and Theberge.

Absent: Councilor Berthiaume

Also present: City Manager Phillip L. Warren Jr., Finance Director Holly Larsen, Chief Daniel Buteau, Superintendent Julie King, Brian Lamirande, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Jamie Welch, Gina Welch, Bunny Caldwell, Ernest Martin, and Lisa Connell, Berlin Daily Sun.

**c.** Councilor Theberge moved, with a second by Councilor Higbee, to accept the minutes of the February 5, 2024 Regular Meeting and Work Session. So moved, the motion passed.

### **Disbursements:**

Disbursement Summary Draft #1955 with a start date of 02/06/2024 and an end date of 02/20/2024 for a total cash disbursement of \$1,344,311.32. Councilor Theberge moved, with a second by Councilor Valerino, 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.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **1. Resolution 2024-04 ARPA Funds Expenditure (1<sup>st</sup> read)**

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to table the Resolution and schedule a public hearing for March 4, 2024. So moved, the motion carried.

#### **2. City Manager's Report**

1. Attached is the January 2024 Real Estate Transfer Report.
2. As an update to the Burgess Biopower bankruptcy, it appears that the main strategy in this bankruptcy is to unburden Burgess of the current Power Purchase Agreement and 100 million of charges from Eversource. They appear to want to stay operating. There are portions of the bankruptcy which ask the court to use funds on hand by Burgess to keep them in business, including payments to the City. They are current at present. It also appears that Burgess does not want to invalidate the payment in taxes deal in place and our attorney will work to ensure that. Same goes for the water use and sewer use agreements. Our attorney is monitoring the progress of the bankruptcy, right now it is a wait and see situation.
3. We are looking into a solution to correct the "on demand" function of the traffic lights at the Cleveland Bridge. Our original strategy was to repair the traffic sensing loops located in the road as they are broken. Due to the heavy truck traffic in this area that fix has been determined to be a temporary one, as the continued truck traffic will break the wire loops again. A better strategy has been discovered – an optic system, similar to what is at the 12<sup>th</sup> Street bridge could be installed – thereby removing the need for the wire loops in the road. Cost and compatibility is being researched.

4. The boiler at the City Hall suffered a failure last week – it appears that a power surge destroyed all the electronic parts of the boiler. Repairs are ongoing, some intermittent issues need to be worked out. This heating system is slated for upgrade as part of the district heating system planned for downtown.

Councilor Theberge asked about the age of the furnace is at City Hall, and City Manager Warren advised it appears to have been replaced in the 1990's.

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second by Councilor Morency, to accept the City Manager's Report and place it on file. So moved, the motion passed.

### 3. Mayor's Report

#### a. Letter from Berlin PD for Commissioner Nault

Dear Mayor, Council, and the Citizens of the City of Berlin:

I would just like to take the time to express my appreciation for Police Commissioner Jerry Nault and his service to the City of Berlin and the Berlin Police Department. He was appointed as a commissioner in 2008 and served for more than 15 years. He came to the position without law enforcement experience, just like many of the commissioners the city has appointed in the past. He brought his unique perspective and expertise to the table. His service proved that diversity of background makes for a stronger board, when it comes to decision making. His guidance and wisdom were highly valued and appreciated. Always the calm and supportive professional, he helped lead the department through a number of changes and some very difficult times. His care for the City and the Department were never in doubt and always on full display. He officially finishes his service on March 1, 2024.

During our February 2024 meeting, Commissioner Nault was honored and presented with an award for his many years of service. A number of Berlin police officers and staff, along with newly appointed Police Commissioner, Linda Pivin, were there to honor his service. He will certainly be missed and, while I am sad to see him move on, I wish him and his family the best of luck. May God bless him in his future endeavors.

Sincerely,

Chief Dan Buteau  
Berlin Police Department

#### b. Re-appointment to Berlin Housing Authority – M. McClellan

Dear Mayor and Berlin City Councilors:

This is to request that City Council renew the term of Margaret McClellan, Berlin Housing Authority Commissioner, for a term of five (5) years to end in December 2028.

Ms. McClellan has served on the board faithfully and has helped the Authority become what it is today.

We request that you kindly begin the process of reappointment. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Christin Bernier  
Executive Director

Councilor Theberge noted that he was glad a letter was sent from the Director for the reappointment, as there is no question as to Ms. McClellan's expertise.

Mayor Robert Cone moved, with a second by Councilor Valerino, to reappoint Margaret McClellan as a Berlin Housing Authority Commissioner for a five-year term to expire December 31, 2028. So moved, the motion carried.

#### c. District Representatives to AVR RDD – Second Alternate

Mayor Robert Cone moved, with a second by Councilor Korzen, to appoint Peter Morency as the Second Alternate as the City's representative on AVRDD. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second by Councilor Morency, to accept the Mayor's Report and place it on file. So moved, the motion passed.

**4. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**5. Council Comments**

Councilor Morency noted that Commissioner Nault was an asset to the City and the Police Department and thanked him for his time given to the community.

**6. Adjournment**

On a motion by Councilor Higbee, seconded by Councilor Morgan, the Council voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 pm. So moved, the motion carried.

A True Record, Attest:

Shellie Fortin  
City Clerk

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