

## **CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Monday, May 18, 2020**

Mayor Grenier called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 9:00 p.m. via Zoom, pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, Section 8 and Emergency Order #12, Section 3.

### **Regular Meeting**

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

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

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

Absent: Councilor Berthiaume

Also present: James Wheeler, Susan Tremblay, Pamela Laflamme, Shelli Fortin, Matthew Buteau, Julie King, Louise Valliere, Marion Moore, Jamie Welch, Ted Bosen, Gary Croteau, and Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Daily Sun.

**c. Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Otis, to accept the minutes of the May 4, 2020 Regular Meeting and Work Session, and the May 11, 2020 Work Session. So moved, the motion carried by roll call vote. Higbee- yes, Rozek – yes, Theberge – yes, Remillard – yes, Otis – yes, Morgan – yes, Eastman – yes, Grenier - yes**

#### **Disbursements:**

Disbursement Summary Draft #1863 start date 05/02/2020 end date 05/15/2020 for a total cash disbursement of \$1,092,018.45. Councilor Theberge moved with a second by Councilor Morgan to accept the disbursement summary and pay all bills as recommended by the Committee on Accounts/Claims. So moved, the motion carried by roll call vote. Higbee- yes, Rozek – yes, Theberge – yes, Remillard – yes, Otis – yes, Morgan – yes, Eastman – yes, Grenier - yes

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ted Bosen of 13 Bisson Road spoke about the COVID19 Pandemic and how it affects him and the community. Bosen requested that there be local enforcement of the use of face masks with the opening of the ATV trails and increased visitors to the area.

Louise Valliere of 25 Pinecrest Avenue thanked the Council for their consideration of the budgets and their ongoing support, and reminded them that it has been a difficult year for the school with the reorganization and remote learning.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **1. Council Committee Reports**

There were no Council Committee Reports.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **2. School Contracts**

##### **a. BESS**

Mayor Grenier read the cost items into the record.

FY21 2.5% increase for a cost of \$27,555

Stipend of \$18,108

Professional Development \$2,000

Health Insurance savings total \$64,191, for a net savings year 1 of \$12,341

FY22 2% pay increase for a cost of \$22,595

Stipend of \$18,108

Professional Development \$2,000

Total \$128,595

Health Insurance savings total \$123,889 for a net cost of \$4,705

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second from Councilor Remillard, to approve the cost items in the BESS contract as presented, for a total cost of \$128,595. So moved, the motion carried by roll call vote. Higbee- yes, Rozek – no, Theberge – yes, Remillard – yes, Otis – no, Morgan – yes, Eastman – no, Grenier – yes

**b. AFSCME 1444**

Mayor Grenier read the cost items into the record.

FY21 3% increase for a cost of \$13,592  
On-call stipend of \$5,400  
Total \$22,567  
Health insurance savings of \$61,625 for a net savings of \$39,059  
FY22 No increase, same cost of \$13,592  
On-call stipend of \$5,400  
Total cost for both years of \$61,284  
Health insurance savings of \$118,937  
The two year savings of \$57,654

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second from Councilor Remillard, to approve the cost items in the AFSCME 1444 contract as presented, for a total cost savings of \$57,654. So moved, the motion carried by roll call vote. Higbee- yes, Rozek – yes, Theberge – yes, Remillard – yes, Otis – yes, Morgan – yes, Eastman – yes, Grenier – yes

**3. City Manager's Report**

1. Bids have been received for Landfill Monitoring. Otter Creek Engineering will be doing the groundwater testing at the landfills, in May through November.
2. Bids have been received for Pavement Markings. Hi-Way Safety Systems will be doing the pavement markings with the work to be completed by August 14, 2020.
3. There are bids out for Propane, Electrical Services and Boiler Services at this time.
4. Brookfield Renewable has informed us that they will be doing maintenance work at the Gorham Island near the Hogan Road ATV trail starting May 11th. The work will be done Monday through Friday through late July.
5. I participated on a call with Sen. Maggie Hassan earlier today that included leaders representing; healthcare, education, food and beverage and other business segments. The Senator was seeking an update on the concerns of the North Country relative to the current COVID-19 pandemic and response. The Senator cited the \$3 Trillion stimulus bill passed by the House last week. She indicated that the bill includes direct aid to municipalities which would not run through the states. This bill must still go through the Senate.
6. The City's BUILD application for the reconstruction of the downtown including a snowmelt system was submitted today and today is the deadline for applications. The project cost is estimated at \$18,746,740 and includes complete reconstruction of Main St. and Pleasant St. from Green Square to St. Anne's Church. Rural Area applications are not required to submit a match and given this we have applied for the full amount of the project. We intend to link the application to the City's website. We encourage anyone who has an interest to read the application. The anticipated benefits of the project are described in detail in the application. I would like to thank Burgess BioPower for their partnership and enthusiasm in developing this transformational project. Both, UNH and the US Army Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory (CRRELL) have provided letters of support for the project and have expressed a desire to be long term partners in the project.
7. Statistics for the PD are attached.

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 by roll call vote. Higbee- yes, Rozek – yes, Theberge – yes, Remillard – yes, Otis – yes, Morgan – yes, Eastman – yes, Grenier – yes

4. Mayor's Report

a. Kids to Parks Day Proclamation

*PROCLAMATION*

Proclaiming May 16, 2020, as Kids to Parks  
Day in the city of Berlin, NH

WHEREAS, May 16, 2020, is the tenth Kids to Parks Day organized and launched by the National Park Trust held annually on the third Saturday of May; and

WHEREAS, Kids to Parks Day empowers kids and encourages families to get outdoors and visit America's parks, public lands and waters; and

WHEREAS, we should encourage children to lead a more active lifestyle to combat issues of childhood obesity, diabetes, hypertension and hypercholesterolemia; and

WHEREAS, Kids to Parks Day will broaden children's appreciation for nature and outdoors.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Mayor Paul Grenier, do hereby proclaim May 16, 2020, as Kids to Parks Day.

b. Letter from Jen and Gary Lamontagne re: Trash Fees

Good Morning,

There's going to be a vote coming up on the city charging residents \$2 per bag for trash. Seems cheap enough, right? Not for many residence and especially for foster parents and here's why:

I'll use our family as an example. We recycle EVERYTHING. I mean everything. We also compost. Alas, our family is large and there are still many things that cannot be used as compost, or recycled. Currently, as a family of 6 (typically our family size runs at 8 people) we fill, and I stuff it until it's about to burst, 2- 20 gallon bags per day.

My husband and I were discussing the burden such a fee would pose to foster families and how it may potentially impact considerations for certain age groups that generate more trash that does not fall into the recycle or compost category. Particularly we think of children in diapers or pull ups. The use of pull ups is not restricted to young children of potty training age. When children come from hard places we've found many of them are as old as 10 and still using pulls ups (double at night) due to their trauma and resultant diagnosed PTSD. Other children in care with developmental delays or other medical or physical diagnosis' also fall in this group regardless of age. Infants and toddlers in diapers and children who need pull ups contribute significantly to the amount of trash bags per day a family would utilize. When a call comes in from DCYF to take a child, how much trash they're going to generate and the potential expense should not be a deterrent to saying yes.

Voting yes for a \$2 per bag fee has far reaching negative implications for families and children in the city of Berlin. I encourage you to use our family as an example. We are already, and have been throughout history, taking numerous actions to reduce waste. We still, because our family is large (we are long time foster parents), produce two trash bags per day. The math on that with our family only currently at 6 (typically 8 as we serve children in care ongoing), would equal \$28 per week in trash fees. At 6 family members, that's \$112 per month.

We truly hate to "complain" without offering a solution so here's something else we've noticed over time: on our street alone there are only three families that recycle. All other households on our street throw everything out for trash collection. Could the city perhaps start with enforcing their current recycling ordinance? It's clear that there's just not any enforcement or fines being issued for those already not in compliance. Here's a link to the most recent recycling ordinance found on the city website, <https://www.berlinnh.gov/home/news/trash-and-recycling-city->

[berlin](#) Please feel free to pass this email along to the Mayor and any other Councilors not already included. We look forward to hearing your thoughts after considering this information.

Many thanks,  
Jen and Gary Lamontagne

Councilor Rozek moved, with a second by Councilor Higbee, to accept the correspondence from Jen and Gary Lamontagne and send a letter thanking them for their interest in this issue. So moved, the motion carried by roll call vote. Higbee- yes, Rozek – yes, Theberge – yes, Remillard – yes, Otis – yes, Morgan – yes, Eastman – yes, Grenier – yes

Councilor Rozek moved, with a second from Councilor Morgan, to accept the Mayor's Report and place it on file. So moved, the motion carried by roll call vote. Higbee- yes, Rozek – yes, Theberge – yes, Remillard – yes, Otis – yes, Morgan – yes, Eastman – yes, Grenier – yes

## **5. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Julie King thanked the Mayor and Council for their consideration of the union contracts, as a lot of time and effort was put into them.

Louise Valliere of 25 Pinecrest Avenue thanked the Council for their vote on the union contracts.

Matt Buteau of 275 Willard Street thanked the Council for agreeing to the school contracts.

## **8. Council Comments**

Councilor Remillard encouraged people to wear masks to help stop the spread of COVID19 and to respect the recommendation of 6 feet of distancing from others.

Councilor Theberge agreed with Councilor Remillard and stated the importance of following the rules that are in place.

## **9. Adjournment**

At approximately 9:35 p.m. Councilor Rozek moved with a second by Councilor Morgan to adjourn the regular meeting. So moved, the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote. Higbee- yes, Rozek – yes, Theberge – yes, Remillard – yes, Otis – yes, Morgan – yes, Eastman – yes, Grenier – yes

A True Record, Attest:

Shelli Fortin  
City Clerk

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