

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Monday, November 6, 2023

Public Hearing

Mayor Grenier opened the Public Hearing at 7:41 pm for Resolution 2023-35 InvestNH Municipal Per Unit Grant. There were no public comments. Mayor Grenier closed the Public Hearing at 7:42 pm.

Regular Meeting

Mayor Grenier called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 7:42 pm.

a. Pledge of Allegiance

b. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Robert Theberge, Higbee, Berthiaume, Morgan, Eastman, and Roland Theberge.

Absent: Councilors Morency and Valerino

Also present: City Manager Phillip Warren, Jr, Finance Director Holly Larsen, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, State Representative Henry Noel, and Lisa Connell, Berlin Daily Sun.

c. Councilor Berthiaume moved, with a second by Councilor Higbee, to accept the minutes of the October 16, 2023 Regular Meeting and Work Session. So moved, the motion passed.

Disbursements:

Disbursement Summary Draft #1948 with a start date of 10/17/2023 and an end date of 11/06/2023 for a total cash disbursement of \$1,698,712.33. Councilor Roland 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 passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Council Committee Reports

There were no Council committee reports.

2. Resolution 2023-35 Invest NH Municipal Per Unit Grant (tabled 10/16/2023)

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Three

A RESOLUTION authorizing the application to NH Business & Economic Affairs InvestNH Municipal Per Unit Program for Brown School Housing Project in an amount totaling \$150,000.00.

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

Whereas, NHBEA has housing funds for municipalities that are eligible to receive per-unit incentives for a project; and

Whereas, the Brown School Housing Project is an eligible project bringing 15 new affordable units in spring 2024 to the City's housing stock; and

Whereas, the funds are available to the municipality in the amount of \$10,000.00 per affordable unit; and

Whereas, no financial match is required; and

Whereas, the City is able to spend the funds at its own discretion as there are no restrictions on the use of these funds.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved by the City Council of the City of Berlin as Follows:

That the City Manager is authorized to receive said grant, and the grant proceeds are hereby appropriated for a purpose to be determined by the City Council and all grant proceeds shall be deposited with the City Treasurer, and any use of these funds shall require prior approval of the City Council.

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

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

Councilor Berthiaume moved, with a second by Councilor Higbee, to read Resolution 2023-35 by short title for a second time. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Berthiaume moved, with a second by Councilor Higbee, to read Resolution 2023-35 by short title for a third time. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Berthiaume moved, with a second by Councilor Higbee, that Resolution 2023-35 be passed. So moved, the motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Resolution 2023-36 Discontinuance Moreau Street (1st read)

Councilor Roland Theberge moved, with a second by Councilor Higbee, to table the Resolution and schedule a public hearing for November 20, 2023. So moved, the motion carried.

2. Resolution 2023-37 USDA Forest Service WERC Grant (1st read)

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to table the Resolution and schedule a public hearing for November 20, 2023. So moved, the motion carried.

3. Resolution 2023-38 Cary Over Capital Appropriations (1st read)

Councilor Berthiaume moved, with a second by Councilor Higbee, to table the Resolution and schedule a public hearing for November 20, 2023. So moved, the motion carried.

4. City Manager's Report

1. Attached please find the BWW – Municipal Water Usage from July 1, 2023 to October 1, 2023 (November 2023 Billing Quarter).
2. I had the opportunity to tour the Career Technical Education program classrooms at the high school. The programs offered and the learning spaces are impressive. The curriculum prepares students for careers in welding, mechanical engineering, woodworking, early childhood care, medicine / nursing and graphic arts. It is just as impressive that a community of this size is able to have such robust programming.
3. The traffic lights at East Mason and Hutchins Street have had a component fail. We are in the process of securing a replacement component. At this time this light should not be replaced completely – it would make better sense to include an upgrade to this signal when the Main Street work is done, as the signal could coordinate and communicate with signals on Main and Pleasant street, making for more effective intersection and traffic flow management. No cost estimate on the component replacement is available yet.
4. As of this report, the new salt shed is almost complete, it may be finished later today. Strong winds delayed final completion this weekend.
5. As a reminder, the winter parking ban is now in place. In addition, residents should remove items from the right of way, including basketball hoops, trailers and other items stored in the road.

City Manager Warren advised that the biggest benefit of the salt shed is that they will be able to order several loads of salt at one time. Mr. Warren noted that sand had been stored in the building, which used up storage space. The new shed is a welcome addition to the snow and ice control program. Mayor Grenier asked if the City would be able to get volume pricing on salt, and Mr. Warren advised they would not. Mr. Warren noted that a large part of the cost is the delivery. Salt is currently about \$93 per ton.

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

3. Mayor's Report

a. Proclamation – Extra Mile day

WHEREAS, Berlin is a community which acknowledges that a special vibrancy exists with the entire community when its individual citizens collectively “go the extra mile” in personal effort, volunteerism, and service; and

WHEREAS, Berlin is a community which encourages its citizens to maximize their personal contribution to the community by giving of themselves wholeheartedly and with total effort, commitment, and conviction to their individual ambitions, family, friends and community; and

WHEREAS, Berlin is a community which chooses to shine a light on and celebrate individuals and organizations within its community who “go the extra mile” in order to make a difference and lift up fellow members of their community; and

WHEREAS, Berlin acknowledges the mission of the Extra Mile America Foundation to create 300 Extra Mile cities in America and is proud to support “Extra Mile Day” on November 1, 2023.

NOW THEREFORE I, Mayor of Berlin, New Hampshire do hereby proclaim November 1, 2023 to be Extra Mile Day. I urge each individual in the community to take time on this day to not only “go the extra mile” in his or her own life, but to also acknowledge all those around who are inspirational in their efforts and commitment to make their organizations, families, community, country or world a better place.

The Proclamation was read at the beginning of the Work Session.

b. Appointment to Berlin Housing Authority – P. Parent

Dear Mayor and Berlin City Councilors:

This is to request that a vacancy be filled on the Berlin Housing Authority's board for a term of five (5) years to end in December of 2028.

In requesting this appointment, we offer for your consideration, Mr. Patrick Parent. He is eminently qualified to assist the Housing Authority in its mission to create and preserve affordable housing. He has been an active member in the community for years.

The Commissioners and I are looking forward to a lasting relationship with Mr. Parent as his knowledge of the resources in the area can only complement our objectives.

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

Sincerely,

Christin Bernier
Executive Director

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to approve the nomination of Patrick Parent as a member of the Berlin Housing Authority, with a term to expire December 31, 2028. So moved, the motion carried.

4. Public Comments

Representative Henry Noel, of 7 Bisson Road, spoke concerning HB142 which was vetoed by the Governor. This bill would have forgiven debt incurred by the Biomass facility. Rep. Noel advised that all of the representatives from Berlin spoke in defense of the bill and the Democratic Caucus worked in support, however most members of the Republican Caucus did not vote to overturn the veto. Rep. Noel advised the vote was 196-157, which did not meet the 2/3 majority required to overturn the veto. Rep. Noel stated that he spoke with Burgess Biopower, who advised they will do everything they can to continue operating. Burgess Biopower is currently trying to modify their agreement with Eversource.

5. Council Comments

There were no Council comments.

6. Adjournment

On a motion by Councilor Higbee, seconded by Councilor Berthiaume, the Council voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 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.