

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Monday, May 6, 2019

Mayor Grenier called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 7:51 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Public Hearing

Mayor Grenier opened the Public Hearing at 7:51 pm for Resolution 2019-14 Authorizing a Grant for the Summer Food Program up to \$8,000. Betty Perreault of 191 Collins Street commented that she was glad to see this in the budget, as it is important for the children. Mayor Grenier closed the public hearing at 7:52 pm.

Mayor Grenier opened the Public Hearing at 7:52 pm for Resolution 2019-15 Eversource LED Rebate. There were no public comments. Mayor Grenier closed the Public Hearing at 7:52 pm.

Regular Meeting

a. Pledge of Allegiance

b. Roll Call

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

Absent: Councilors Gentili and Berthiaume

Also present: Jim Wheeler, Susan Tremblay, Corinne Cascadden, Brian Lamirande, Chief Peter Morency, Shelli Fortin, Pam Laflamme, Chief John Lacasse, Claire Stiles, many members of the public, and Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Daily Sun

c. Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Otis, to accept the minutes of the April 15, 2019 Regular Meeting and Work Session, April 22, 2019 Work Session, and April 29, 2019 Work Session. So moved, the motion carried.

Disbursements:

Disbursement Summary Draft #1837 start date 04/16/2019 end date 05/06/2019 for a total cash disbursement of \$1,568,293.42. 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 carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Richard Laflamme of 128 Jasper Street asked why the school system cost so much to operate, as there used to be 6,000 students and now there are only 600. Laflamme mentioned that money should be spent on the school instead of brickwork and stones. Laflamme stated that the city is not growing and that people cannot afford the taxes. Laflamme stated that this used to be the “City that Trees Built” and is now the “City that Welfare Built”. Laflamme feels that the police service is atrocious and they do nothing for the drug issue or prevention. Laflamme mentioned that he is going to try to get a private audience with Governor Sununu and will run against Mayor Grenier in the upcoming election.

Jamie Welch of 102 Church Street introduced himself as a second generation educator and parent. Welch stated that the tax rate is high, but the last thing he would like to see is to continue to pay a lot in taxes, but get less in services. Welch stated that the school, police, and fire department all need support. Welch stated this is a defining moment for the City, and although the decisions are not easy to make, the City would be doing a disservice to the community if they do not support the programs that the students deserve. Welch also stated that we are currently in the largest national teacher crisis, and will lose teachers to other districts, along with their families and students. Welch stated that the current teachers are packing and moving their classrooms on their own time, and need to see the support of the Council. Welch stated he would rather pay a little more in taxes to keep what we need.

Gina Welch of 102 Church Street stated that she came to Berlin in 2007 because of the good school system and community. She is concerned that families will choose to leave for better school systems if the cuts in our school are made. Welch stated that the taxes are not cheap, but we need a school system that we are confident in.

Ted McCormick of 19 Prospect Street stated that he has worked here for 34 years and every year the school has given money back to the City. McCormick stated that he has two children who will be affected by the cuts and asked the Council to give the same thing to the children today that they had.

Craig Melanson of 409 Madison Avenue stated that he was born and raised here in Berlin. Melanson stated that morale at the school is at an all-time low and he is also concerned that teachers will pack their classroom boxes and then leave the city. Melanson states that the children need to be able to compete, in the classroom, in sports, and in life. If the children here are not getting a good education, families will be forced to look elsewhere. Melanson stated that sports and clubs are what help to make schools great. Melanson asked what the backup plan is if the state does not come through and stated that the City needs to be sure the kids have what they need to be successful.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Resolution 2019-14 Authorizing Grant for Summer Food Program up to \$8,000 (tabled 04/15/2019)

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Nineteen

A RESOLUTION authorizing an application to the New Hampshire Department of Education for reimbursement funding through the USDA Summer Food Program for up to Eight Thousand Dollars (\$8,000.00) and appropriating these funds to the Berlin Recreation Department to provide lunches and snacks at playgrounds in Berlin throughout the summer.

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

Whereas the number of students eligible for Free/Reduced School Lunch in the Berlin School District is 55.70% of the 1,061 students enrolled; and

Whereas, the USDA has funds available to provide lunches and snacks to children during the summer months; and

Whereas, Tri County Community Action Program Senior Meals Program has agreed to provide lunches for the reimbursement rate of \$3.92 per lunch and .93 per snack; and

Whereas, the Summer Food Program is administered by the Berlin Recreation Department and made available to children, free of charge, at the City's Parks throughout the summer.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Berlin that an application to the NH Department of Education is authorized for up to \$8,000.00 of reimbursement funding for the Summer Food Program and that all proceeds from the grant shall be appropriated to the Recreation Department.

Be it Further Resolved that the City Manager is authorized to accept and do all things necessary to effectuate the grant.

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

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

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan Allain, to read Resolution 2019-14 by short title for a second time. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan Allain, to read Resolution 2019-14 by short title for a third time. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan Allain, that Resolution 2019-14 be passed. So moved, the motion passed.

2. Resolution 2019-15 Eversource LED Rebate (tabled 04/15/2019)

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Nineteen

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

Whereas, the City Council passed Resolution 2017-15 accepting \$203,779.42 of Highway Block Grant Funds; and

Whereas, said funds were appropriated for highway construction, reconstruction or maintenance purposes; and

Whereas, the City entered into a contract for LED streetlight replacements, and used said Highway Block funds for these streetlight replacements and the total final cost of the LED project was \$217,980.45 requiring funding above the Highway Block funds in the amount of \$14,201.03; and

Whereas, such energy efficient highway lighting is eligible for an incentive rebate from Eversource NH and the City applied for and received a rebate in the amount of \$91,750.00; and

Whereas, in addition to the streetlight replacements, the City paved a section of Bemis St. for a total cost of \$11,500 which together with the \$14,201.03 totals \$25,701.03 or approximately \$26,000;

Whereas, the City planned to use the rebate funding for the additional amount needed to pay for the Highway Construction/Reconstruction projects described herein.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Berlin, NH, that Twenty Six Thousand Dollars (\$26,000) shall be appropriated from Miscellaneous Revenue Account 01-373-701-0000 to Fiscal Year 2019 Capital Improvements for Highway Construction/Reconstruction.

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

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

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Otis, to read Resolution 2019-15 by short title for a second time. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Otis, to read Resolution 2019-15 by short title for a third time. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Otis, that Resolution 2019-15 be passed. So moved, the motion passed.

3. School Contract Votes

Mayor Grenier explained that the cost items submitted for the April 1, 2019 votes on the AFSCME and BEA contracts were not presented correctly and amounted to a substantial difference in cost. Mayor Grenier recommended that the votes be rescinded and a new vote taken. Mayor Grenier suggested that the school board consider negotiating a 1-year contract with the unions, until the City knows how the state is going to handle school funding.

Councilor Rozek moved, with a second from Councilor Remillard, to rescind the Council's affirmative vote on the cost items of AFSCME Local 1444 and BEA contracts. A roll call vote was taken. Councilor Higbee - Yes, Councilor Rozek - Yes, Councilor Theberge - Yes, Councilor Remillard - Yes, Councilor Otis - Yes, Councilor Morgan Allain - Yes, Mayor Grenier - Yes. The motion passed.

a. AFSCME

Mayor Grenier advised the cost items for AFSCME Local 1444 total \$41,662.

Councilor Rozek moved, with a second from Councilor Remillard, to not accept the cost items for AFSCME Local 1444. So moved, the motion passed.

b. BEA

Mayor Grenier advised the cost items for BEA total \$559,998.

Councilor Rozek moved, with a second from Councilor Remillard, to not accept the cost items for BEA. So moved, the motion passed.

c. BESS

Mayor Grenier advised the cost items for BESS total \$166,733.

Councilor Rozek moved, with a second from Councilor Remillard, to not accept the cost items for BESS. So moved, the motion passed.

4. Council Committee Reports – There were no council committee reports.

NEW BUSINESS

5. Resolution 2019-16 Rescinding 2019-07 and Authorizing an Application to the New Hampshire Department of Safety for \$7,495.07 for POD Exercise (1st read)

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Otis to table the Resolution and schedule a public hearing for May 20, 2019. So moved, the motion carried.

6. City Manager's Report

1. Below are two items of interest from the Governor and Executive Council meeting of Wednesday, April 17, 2019:
 - a. The COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCE AUTHORITY was authorized, under the Community Development Block Grant program, to award a grant to the City of Berlin, NH, in the amount of \$500,000 to support the St. Regis Affordable Housing rehabilitation project. Effective April 17, 2019 through December 31, 2020. 100% Federal Funds. VOTE: Unanimous
 - b. The Division of Forests and Lands was authorized to enter into a memorandum of agreement with the Department of Corrections to oversee the harvest of timber from the DOC State Prison land in Berlin, NH. Effective upon G&C approval, expiring with the conclusion and final close out of the timber sale. No State Funds Required. VOTE: Unanimous
2. A list of property transfers is produced monthly by the Assessing Department. It reports properties that have changed hands in the last month, their value, and sale price. I have attached the latest report.
3. The airport's timber harvest had a gross yield of \$38,667.99. The budgeted revenue estimate is \$30,000.00
4. In conjunction with Water Week, there will be an Open House at the Ammonoosuc Water Treatment Facility, off Jericho Road, Monday, May 6, 2019 through Friday, May 10, 2019 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Questions may be directed to the Berlin Water Works at 752-1677.
5. In response to a request from March 20, 2019, Jon Goodreau produced a report showing changes in the Wastewater Treatment Plant's I & I since 2013. The report is attached.
6. Chris Walters is the new staff employee hired at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. He will be working toward his wastewater operator's license on an apprenticeship.
7. A mandatory site walk meeting was held on Friday, May 3rd regarding the Solar Request for Proposals. There were five interested parties at the meeting and proposals are due May 16, 2019.
8. Spohn Ranch is planning to resume work on the skate park during the first week of June.
9. Cory Booker has rented the City Hall auditorium for Sunday, May 12th for a campaign stop. He will be in the City from 4-6 pm.

10. Police Department Activity Report is attached.

11. PWD Activity Report is attached.

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

7. Mayor's Report
a. Planning Board Appointments

Mayor Grenier and City Council,

At the April Planning Board meeting, the board reviewed expiring terms of the membership. The following members all wish to continue serving on the board for new three year terms.

- Naomi Levesque – Three-year term to run from May 2019 until April 30, 2022, regular board member.
- Helene Rayborn – Three-year term to run from May 2019 until April 30, 2022, regular board member.
- Richard Cassidy – Three-year term to run from May 2019 until April 30, 2022, regular board member.

We would also like to correct the term limit for new alternate board members, Suzanne Wasileski, who the Council recently approved for a two-year term. In order to keep the format of staggered terms for the membership, we would like to adjust her term to expire as an alternate member on April 30, 2022 rather than the current term she was approved for ending in April 2021.

Finally, I would like to bring Anthony Valliere for consideration as a new alternate member for a three-year term to also run until April 30, 2022. Tony is a school teacher at Berlin High School and a resident of Charron Avenue. Tony's grandfather, Omer Morin, was a long serving member of the Planning Board as well as the chair for many years. Tony is finishing up his master's degree and is very interested in serving on the Planning Board and serving the community.

We thank you for your consideration. With these re-nominations and new members, we are nearly back to a full complement of regular and alternate members.

Sincerely,

Pamela Laflamme
Community Development Director

Councilor Rozek moved, with a second by Councilor Higbee, to appoint Naomi Levesque, Helene Rayborn, and Richard Cassidy to three-year terms to expire April 30, 2022 as regular Planning Board members, and Anthony Valliere to a three-year term to expire April 30, 2022, as an alternate Planning Board member. So moved, the motion passed.

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Rozek, to adjust the expiration date of the appointment of Suzanne Wasileski as an alternate Planning Board member to April 30, 2022. So moved, the motion passed.

b. The Mayor thanked those that took part in last Saturday's Community Clean-up Day. Mayor Grenier advised that there were 78 volunteers, who filled 5 flatbeds full of trash. They are planning to make this an annual event.

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

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS – Kayla Steady of 115 Howard Street stated that she was born and raised in Berlin and chose to return. Steady has a 3-year old son and a daughter due in 2 weeks. She came back to teach and make a difference here in Berlin. Steady stated that when looking at what you want for your children, it is hard to not look at other places. Steady advised that she understands what is happening in Concord, but the problems need to be fixed here at the Council level.

9. Council Comments – Councilor Remillard advised the public present that their concerns are not falling on deaf ears, but the City needs support from the State. Remillard advised we all need to work together to make our voices heard.

Councilor Rozek stated that the councilors have grandchildren in the school department. Rozek stated that the Council is hoping for a good outcome from the state.

10. Adjournment

At approximately 8:39 p.m. Councilor Rozek moved with a second by Councilor Berthiaume to adjourn the regular meeting. 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.