

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Monday, November 4, 2019

Mayor Grenier called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 7:22 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Public Hearing

Mayor Grenier opened the Public Hearing at 7:22 pm for the Community Development Block Grant for the St. Regis Update.

Pamela Laflamme advised that Community Development Block Grant funds are available to municipalities through the NH Community Development Finance Authority. Up to \$500,000 annually is available for economic development projects, up to \$500,000 for public facility and housing projects, up to \$350,000 for emergency activities, and up to \$12,000 is available per planning study grant. All CDBG projects must primarily benefit low and moderate income persons. The purpose of the hearing is to update the public on, and take public comment, on the progress of the St. Regis rehabilitation project.

The substantial rehabilitation effort of St. Regis Apartments, 421 Main Street, Berlin is nearly 60% complete. From an exterior perspective the masonry tuck point work is 90% complete and will complete by November 15. All windows on the east and south elevations have been installed. The installation of the remaining windows will be completed by the end of November. The roof framing and decking are complete along with the installation of the new roof membrane. Other exterior work to be completed include the new concrete ramps and repairs to the existing retaining wall, as well as parking lot resurfacing and landscaping. All exterior work is underway and expected to be complete by end of January 2020.

The interior work which includes the rehabilitation of the units, corridors, community room, offices and new computer room continues to progress. To date, 19 of the 42 units are complete; whereas, those households have returned to their original units. There are eight units under construction at this time and the ground floor units are having new concrete flooring poured over the course of the next week. The balance of the units are expected to be completed by the end of January of 2020. The community room and ground floor office and computer room will be completed by mid-January. The modernization of the elevator which includes installation of a new cab and new cladding, as well as critical parts to ensure performance and safety will begin the week of December 9 and will be completed within one week.

The larger scale mechanical, electrical and plumbing work is on schedule. The chiller is onsite and pending installation shortly. Modification of the sprinkler system to meet fire code was also recently completed. The security, call for help, area of refuge and cameras are in process.

The project is expected to complete by January 30, 2020.

There were no public comments. Mayor Grenier closed the public hearing at 7:26 pm.

Regular Meeting

a. Pledge of Allegiance

b. Roll Call

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

Absent: None

Also present: James Wheeler, Pamela Laflamme, Susan Tremblay, Shelli Fortin, Mary Jo Landry, Jamie Welch, Gina Welch, Richard Laflamme, and Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Daily Sun.

c. Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Otis, to accept the minutes of the October 21, 2019 Regular Meeting and Work Session, and the October 28, 2019 Work Session. So moved, the motion carried.

Disbursements:

Disbursement Summary Draft #1850 start date 10/22/2019 end date 11/04/2019 for a total cash disbursement of \$1,161,582.94. Councilor Theberge moved with a second by Councilor Berthiaume to accept the disbursement summary and pay all bills as recommended by the Committee on Accounts/Claims. So moved, the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – There were no public comments.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Council Committee Reports - There were no Council Committee reports.

NEW BUSINESS

2. City Manager's Report

1. No bids were received for the Princess Theater acquisition/demolition project. Bids were originally due October 10th and the deadline was extended to October 24th. In the interim, ROMIK Construction is planning to take a close look at the front right corner of the building for its stability. I am also speaking with a potential demolition contractor about developing a project to demolish the building.

224 Madigan Street was sold, by bid due October 17th, for \$12,125 to Kristine Symonds and Charles Pentedemos. The bid sheet is attached.

2. Pursuant to a court order, 469 Hillsboro Street is being cleaned out by R. J. N. Maintenance of Berlin. Once cleared, the property will be further inspected by code officials for the potential of specific violations and dangers to the public.
3. Members of the OPEIU voted unanimously to change the bargaining group's representation to AFSCME on October 11th.
4. At their October 23rd meeting, the Governor and Council authorized a clean water state revolving fund loan agreement with the City of Berlin in an amount not to exceed \$848,620 to finance the Infiltration & Inflow Reduction – Phase 2 Contract 1 project.
5. Berlin's Winter Parking Ban began Friday, November 1, 2019 and remains in effect through April 1, 2020. No parking is allowed on city streets between midnight and 7:00 a.m. Emergency overnight parking is allowed in the Tondreau Parking Lot, and overnight winter parking is permitted in the municipal parking lot adjacent to the Salvation Army Community Center.
6. I attended the Annual ICMA Conference from 10/16 through 10/22 along with approximately 52 other NH town and city administrators. Education sessions I attended included emerging technology planning, innovation in local government, public engagement and assessing the value of public infrastructure investments to name several. During the latter session, the speaker presented the following quote, "Public infrastructure investment sets the stage for private investment." This quote made me think of the potential for redevelopment of Brown School in the backdrop of new public infrastructure on Rte. 16 including the Riverwalk as well as a future downtown reconstruction project designed to stimulate private investment.
7. The Fall Evening Series continues at the White Mountain Community College Fortier Library on November 13th at 6:00 p.m. with Sisters Too: Story Telling Duo with Cora Ciampi & Laurretta Phillips. This event is sponsored by the College, Berlin and Gorham Public Libraries and NH Humanities.
8. Property Transfers for September are attached.
9. Ambulance statistics are attached.
10. Public Work Statistics and Police Department Statistics are attached.

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

Councilor Remillard asked about the bids received for the cleanup at 469 Hillsboro Street. City Manager Wheeler advised no bids were received, so he solicited quotes and this was the lowest quote received. Councilor Remillard asked for a list of the quotes.

Councilor Rozek asked about negotiations with Eversource, which City Manager Wheeler advised were not final. Councilor Rozek asked for a copy of the agreement when it has been settled. Councilor Rozek also asked if the tax rate has been set, and City Manager Wheeler advised the MS5 and MS1 still need to be filed and a tax rate will be set after this has been done.

So moved, the motion carried.

3. Mayor's Report

a. Letter from John & Kathy Trumbull re: Speeding on First Avenue

Dear Mr. Wheeler and City Council Representatives;

Mr. Wheeler, thank you for taking the time to speak with me regarding this problem today. As I explained, the problem with vehicles travelling with excessive speed on First Avenue is getting worse. I've been nearly hit myself numerous times, called police about this issue multiple times over the past few years, and nothing is being done to enforce the speed limit of 25 mph. Twice in the recent past a radar sign was put in place for a week, however, this resulted in zero improvement. It appears that we need to involve our City Manager, Police Chief, and possibly others before there is a terrible tragedy.

Sunday at least 50 vehicles went by our house at speeds over 50 mph, and at 6:55 am Monday a pickup truck went by doing all of 60 mph, passing our windows like a flash! I've resorted to yelling at drivers to slow down if I'm in the road with my dog, and it shouldn't come to this. It is not safe. We have 9 dogs and about 8 young children riding bikes and playing in the street just in the few homes in my section of First Avenue. Other neighbors are also concerned. The worst portion of the road appears to be from Mink Street to Coolidge Street. After dark between 7:30 and 10:30 pm, commuting times on both ends of the day, as well as weekends are problem times.

How about speed limit signs and some police enforcement? If people began to get fined and ticketed for speeding, this problem would certainly improve. We deserve protection that we are not getting. A City like Berlin should WANT to retain productive, community-oriented, law abiding citizens like us, and not discourage us from living here. We are tired of this problem getting ignored. What is the next step needed to get some results?

Sincerely,

Kathy & John Trumbull

Councilor Rozek moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to refer this letter to the Traffic Safety Committee, Police Department, and Public Works, and to send a letter to the Trumbulls acknowledging receipt of the correspondence. Councilor Rozek requested the Police Department research how many calls have been received and what has been done for enforcement. So moved, the motion carried.

b. Mayor Grenier advised that Governor Sununu will be at BMHS tomorrow at 1:00 pm to celebrate school funding.

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.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS – There were no public comments.

5. Council Comments –

Councilor Morgan asked if a meeting date had been set for the Traffic Safety Committee and Councilor Rozek advised it has not been set yet.

Councilor Remillard reminded the Council that Election Day is tomorrow and to vote.

6. Adjournment

At approximately 7:42 p.m. Councilor Rozek moved with a second by Councilor Higbee 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.