

City Council Work Session September 20, 2021

Present were: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Eastman, Remillard, Rozek, Theberge and Otis. Councilor Higbee via Zoom. Councilors Berthiaume and Morgan were absent.

Others present: City Manager Jim Wheeler via Zoom. Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Waste Water Treatment and Collection System Superintendent Jon Goodreau, Pete McGillen and Floyd Burlock from the VFW, Ritchie Associates Consultant Alex Ritchie, WMPC owner Evan Behrens, WMPC CEO Price Howard, WMPC VP of Operations Del Doyle, Robert Theberge, Lori Korzen, Steven Korzen, Kathy Trumbull, Eli Clemmer, Paul Ingersoll, Sr., and William Carroll, Berlin Daily Sun.

Mayor Grenier called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Purple Heart Community

Mr. Wheeler advised he received a communication from Marie Grella, Purple Heart Community Project Advocate, inviting the City of Berlin to approve a proclamation to make the City of Berlin a Purple Heart Community. He stated Mr. Burlock from the VFW was invited to this meeting representing the Veterans group to express their support in this. Mayor Grenier invited Mr. Burlock to speak on behalf of the Veterans Council. Mr. Burlock introduced himself and Mr. McGillen who are here today to represent the Veterans Council. Mr. Burlock advised he was sent the communication, reviewed and discussed it at his last week's meeting with other groups and the only changes he would like to make is where it states in the proclamation "selfishly", he would like the word changed to "unselfishly". Mayor Grenier asked Mr. McGillen if he had anything to add. Mr. McGillen commented the only concern was how many signs they would need to buy as there are three entrances to the City. He also commented that if a member has a purple heart and want to put up a purple heart sign on their street, the member would be responsible for this. Mr. Burlock commented that he can see many people wanting to identify trails as purple heart and the opportunity of naming the trails in honor of a purple heart community member. He stated that would need to come in front of the City Council. Mayor Grenier questioned Mr. Burlock as to if he feels there should be signs at the City's three entrances identifying the City as a purple heart community. Mr. Burlock responded yes. Mayor Grenier commented the signage should be an expense of the City and not the Veterans organization. He stated to Mr. Burlock he would have him approve the design and the City will pay for the signs and installation. Councilor Otis commented that a pamphlet is included in the communication stating the State of NH produces the signs at a discounted rate. Councilor Remillard commented that the proclamation should read City instead of Town. Mayor Grenier asked for Council's permission to place this in the Mayor's report and read it into the record. Councilors were all in agreement.

WMPC Wastewater Treatment System

Mayor Grenier advised he invited Mr. Howard, Mr. Behrens, Mr. Doyle and Ms. Ritchie to tonight's Council work session to do a presentation. He also asked Mr. Goodreau to attend so all can get an overview of the unique proposal for WMPC. Mr. Howard explained that back in June a scenario was presented to Council with the idea of creating a closed-loop waste treatment system between Gorham, Berlin and the mill. He advised that in talking with people in the community, he understands there are a few concerns with the current plan. He stated that WMPC is now proposing an alternate plan which would take wastewater effluent from the Berlin wastewater treatment plant to use as the company's process water. He commented this would only represent phase 1 of the plan which is a short step and is about 25% of the original scope. He advised it is not a new proposal, it is just a way to get things going faster in a unique way of taking the wastewater treatment, working in developing relationships with Jon

and his team and then being able to address the longer term with the larger closed-loop process at a later date. Mayor Grenier commented he met with Mr. Howard, Ms. Ritchie, Mr. Goodreau and Mr. Wheeler the week before last and discussed this new proposal.

Mr. Goodreau clarified that what Mr. Howard is saying is if the ARPA funds applied for from the State are awarded, he would like use the funds for a feasibility study on this piece of the project which is referred to as phase 1. Mr. Goodreau stated he would wait for the feasibility study to be completed before coming forward and saying it would impact the City. He commented he doesn't see how this would impact his facility at the wastewater treatment plant. Councilor Remillard commented she would like the group to come back after the feasibility study is completed before Council approves moving forward. Mr. Howard stated he agrees. Mayor Grenier questioned what is the limit before triggering CSO's. Mr. Goodreau responded the permit is 3,000,000 gallons per day. What triggers the CSO's is when trying to push the water through the plant. The permit allows 3,000,000 gallons to be discharge per day, but if 5,000,000 gallons is discharged a day, they are more than happy we treated it. It is not a violation. He stated that what triggers the CSO's is not being able to pump the water through the plant without the current structures overflowing. He commented there is a PLC program designed to limit the flow of water going into the plant in gallons per minute so it doesn't overwhelm the Watson street plant. Mayor Grenier questioned on average what is the City treating per day in the last three years. Mr. Goodreau responded around 2,300,000 gallons. Councilor Rozek asked how many gallons per day does WMPC use. Mr. Howard responded this is a two-part answer. He stated WMPC needs 1,250,000 gallons per day, but due to age of the water intake structure and the construction of it, they currently pull 4,000,000 gallons per day. Councilor Rozek questioned if any of this will affect the Taxpayers. Mayor Grenier stated the applications is looked for two things; can the City provide water on an on-going basis and the study will allow WMPC to figure out on the lean days where they would get the make up water to not interrupt their process. Councilor Remillard moved to allow the City of Berlin, the Town of Gorham and WMPC to proceed with securing engineering funds from the State for a feasibility study for phase 1; Councilor Eastman seconded and the motion carried by majority in favor. Mr. Behrens commented that he hopes this will help WMPC make more sustainable products which will create a better operation. He stated the aspiration is for WMCP to be a better bigger business.

Pollution Control Chief Chemist Position Fill Request

Mr. Goodreau confirmed this is the Chemist/Assistant Chief position which is the individual who is in charge of the plant when he is absent. He commented this position requires a lot of responsibilities and knowledge which we are losing with Mr. Miller's retirement. He wished him the best of luck. Mr. Goodreau stated he would like to move as soon as possible in advertising for this position as the new candidate would have a chance to work with Mr. Miller's. His retirement is effective December 24th. Councilor Rozek moved to allow the City Manager and the Pollution Control Superintendent to post the Pollution Control Chief Chemist/Assistant Superintendent position; Councilor Remillard seconded and the motion carried by majority in favor.

Ordinance 2021-01 Conflict of Interest and Incompatibility of Office

Mr. Wheeler advised the first read of this item will be under new business, item 3 of tonight's regular meeting. This ordinance essentially creates some amendments to the existing Chapter 2 and were created by the City's Attorney. Councilor Rozek questioned who requested these amendments. Mayor Grenier responded this was the request of the City Attorney that he brought to the City Council after the Board of Assessor's situation was resolved that Council needed to look at the conflict of interest policy. Councilor Remillard asked for a copy of the original as usually both copies are presented with changes indicated. Mr. Wheeler advised the City's Attorney made changes to Chapter 2 and all ordinances are available online and can be read at any moment. Councilor Remillard requested to see the original to see what is being changed. Mr. Wheeler directed Councilor Remillard to the first sentence of Ordinance

2021-01, under the Be it ordained section, he explained the City Attorney's approach was to amend section 2-3 by deleting it and replacing it with this which is why you don't see marked up changes. Councilor Remillard requested to see the old one. Ms. Laflamme presented Councilor Remillard with the electronic copy. Councilor Rozek commented that family members can't serve on two boards at the same time. Mayor Grenier responded correct. Councilor Rozek commented that if an individual is on a board, he can't run for City Council. Mayor Grenier responded that is incorrect and gave an example that if an individual serve on the Police Commission and gets elected for City Council, he would have to forego his Police Commission position. Mayor Grenier advised an elected Mayor cannot appoint a family member or a Councilor's family member to the Police Commission, Board of Assessors and School Board. Councilor Rozek commented that in the upcoming elections, there's an individual running for Mayor and his employer is suing the City, does this affect this individual. Mayor Grenier responded no and commented the policy doesn't stop the situation where two immediate family members, one runs for Council and one runs for the School Board, if bot get elected, they both serve. Councilor Remillard questioned if it's only affecting section 2-3. Mayor Grenier responded yes. Councilor Rozek commented that the biggest change is the Mayor's appointments. Mayor Grenier responded it reduces the power of appointments from the Mayor.

City Manager Recruitment Timeline

Mr. Wheeler advised Council in their packets there is an updated revised timeline from Toni Flewelling at Primex. He pointed out to the October 18-22 timeline and advised originally it was talked about having five Council Members serving on the hiring committee. In realization that would constitute a quorum, and the interview sessions should be done in private and not be held in Public Meetings, it was changed to four Council Members. Mr. Wheeler commented two applicants were received so far. Mayor Grenier stated at next Monday's City Council work session, he will appoint the 3 Council Members who want to serve on the hiring committee and will need the names of two Dept. Heads who want to serve on the hiring committee and also senior staff. Mayor Grenier commented he may ask the previous City Manager to serve on the committee.

Other

Ms. Laflamme advised Council a copy of the revised resolution 2021-20 was given to them for 121 Main St. including all the edits made by the City Attorney and agreed to by Mr. Scalley. The revised copy 2021-20R1 will be read tonight during the regular meeting.

At 7:34pm, there being no further business in Work Session, Mayor Grenier recessed before moving on to the Regular Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Danielle Rioux
Executive Assistant

*Minutes are unofficial until they have been accepted by the City Council by motion.