

**City Council Work Session
August 16, 2021**

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

Others present: City Manager Jim Wheeler, Community Development Director Pam Laflamme, City Clerk Shellie Fortin, Stuart Arnett from ADG, BIDPA Chair Mike Caron and William Carroll Berlin Daily Sun.

Councilor Remillard called the meeting to order at 6:28pm acting as the Chair in Mayor Grenier's absence.

TIF District

Stuart Arnett from ADG, LLC led a presentation to Council in regards to adopting a Tax Increment Financing District. He discussed financing tools, listed the Do's and Don'ts of a TIF district adoption, explained the TIF-D concept, gave recent examples from other cities/towns in New Hampshire, discussed the steps to adopting a District and used Route 110 as an example of an infrastructure enhancement that would benefit from a TIF district adoption. He stated it's a very simple concept where a public entity makes a public investment that allows private development to go forward bigger, better and sooner and then takes the new revenue from the development to help pay back the public investment. Councilor Eastman commented and asked if it is the increase in taxable properties that pays the City back. Mr. Arnett replied yes and if there is no increment and there is an MOU, it will need to be paid back. Councilor Eastman asked if the information was on the City's website. Ms. Laflamme responded that it is not on the website yet as the district has not been finalized. Once the district is finalized and an actual plan has been put together, it will be on the website.

Certificate of Vote – CRRSA Act Grant – Berlin Municipal Airport

Mr. Wheeler advised Council this is a Certificate of Vote that is required to enter into an agreement with the Division of Aeronautics. He explained that back in March, an application was submitted for a grant in the amount of \$9,000 for the airport. This grant is related to the Coronavirus relief and can be used for operations. He stated he is requesting Council to authorize the City Clerk to execute the Certificate of Vote indicating that Mayor Grenier is the Chair of the Berlin Airport Authority and he is duly authorized to execute the agreement. Councilor Rozek moved to authorize the City Clerk to execute the Certificate of Vote as presented; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried by majority in favor.

Mason Street Bridge Closure

Mr. Wheeler advised he will be mentioning this in the City Manager's report but wanted to discuss the Mason Street Bridge closure during the work session because it will be for quite a period of time from August 23, 2021 till mid-October. He stated vehicular traffic will have to use Cleveland Bridge or 12th Street Bridge. For pedestrian traffic, the suggested plan will be to come into the Tondreau Park, down into the Tondreau Park and across the headworks so they can access Main Street by Toni's Pizza. Councilor Rozek questioned public safety traffic as they frequently utilize the Mason Street Bridge. Mr. Wheeler responded Lieutenant Barney Valliere attended the pre-construction meeting and the police department have been made aware and emergency vehicles will have to go around. Councilor Higbee asked if the bridge that connects the Tondreau Park parking lot to the Tondreau Park be repaired. He advised one of the boards is rising up and someone tried to screw it down, but it came back up. Mr. Wheeler advised this was Central Rivers bridge and that they also attended the pre-construction meeting so he will pass this information on to them. Councilor Berthiaume commented in regards to the trash in the area per Mrs. Berntsen letter that will be addressed in the regular meeting following this work session. She would like this addressed and action taken. Mr. Wheeler advised that Mrs. Berntsen

indicates in her letter that she wants the garbage picked up daily. He stated he thinks the City could accommodate garbage pick up weekly on downtown's garbage scheduled pick up day. Mr. Wheeler also commented that this is Central River's park and the first stop would be to ask them to do something, whether they put cans out there and take care of them rather than take on effort through tax dollars. Councilor Remillard commented she doesn't want this to carry on too long and agreed with Mr. Wheeler contacting Central Rivers first. Councilor Berthiaume commented that in the meantime we should consider at least a one-day weekly garbage pick-up. Councilor Rozek asked Mr. Wheeler for an update on how positively receptive Central Rivers is in regards to correcting the walk way itself and also the garbage issue. Mr. Wheeler confirmed he'd follow up.

Fire Department Bids

Mr. Wheeler presented a handout to Council showing where the City is at as far as the Fire Department bids. He advised bids were received and opened last week for the roofing, boiler and windows. All these will be paid out of the construction loan processed last year. This construction loan is paying for this, paid for the Hutchins street paving and also paying a piece of Mason Street Bridge. He directed Council to the handout stating there were rounded amounts allocated to the various pieces that totaled \$150,000. This was the budgeted amount. The bids came in at a total of \$161,000 and this is without receiving any bids for the windows. Mr. Wheeler discussed the Fire Dept. floor work that was budgeted at \$393,000, but he feels pretty confident it will come in under the budgeted amount. Bids are due September 2, 2021. He also commented he included the demolition work done which was budgeted at \$35,000 but ended up coming in at \$104,504 as it included the Princess theater demolition, the Fire Station Building and 758 Second Avenue. When totaling all these items, the budgeted amount is still above the estimated amount. Mr. Wheeler commented he did list the underdrain work at \$20,000 which didn't go out to bid and he is suggesting doesn't go out to bid. He advised Council he is comfortable moving forward with this and if needed, will reallocate some capital improvement money from dated projects or projects that are not time sensitive. Council agreed with moving forward.

Non-Public Session

At 7:36pm, Councilor Higbee moved with a second from Councilor Rozek to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3, II. (I) Consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel. So, moved, the motion carried by majority in favor. Legal matters were discussed. Councilor Rozek moved to come out of non-public session; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried by majority in favor.

Councilor Rozek moved to seal the minutes until the Mayor and City Manager determine they can be released as releasing them would render the action taken ineffective; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried by majority in favor.

At 7:40pm, Council and Staff came out of non-public session.

There being no further business in Work Session, Councilor Remillard 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.