

City Council Work Session

October 25, 2021

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

Others present: City Manager Jim Wheeler, Community Development Director Pam Laflamme, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Finance Director Holly Larsen, SAU3 Superintendent Julie King, SAU3 Business Manager Marion Moore, Jarad J. Vartanian, CPA of Vachon Clukay & Company PC via Zoom, William Carroll, Berlin Daily Sun and Stuart Light.

Mayor Grenier called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

FY2020 Audited Financial Statements

Mr. Wheeler introduced Jarad J. Vartanian, CPA of Vachon Clukay & Company and advised Mr. Vartanian would be presenting the FY2020 audited financial statements via Zoom. Mr. Vartanian prepared a [power point presentation](#) for Council which reviewed the financial highlights of the FY2020 audited financial statements. Questions from the Mayor and Council in regards to the audit was asked and answered by Mr. Vartanian.

Androscoggin Valley ATV Club – Food & Coat drive request

Mayor Grenier discussed the request from the Androscoggin Valley ATV Club. Councilor Rozek asked if it's a good idea to allow this event with the recent adoption of the face covering ordinance. Mayor Grenier advised they AVAC had already been approved for a road toll earlier this year. Mayor Grenier asked for the City Clerk's input. Ms. Fortin advised the AVAC informed this would not be cash donations like the road toll they held earlier this year, strictly food and coats. Councilor Theberge commented there was a road toll held recently and they were wearing masks and suggested the AVAC do the same. Councilor Rozek moved to allow the AVAC to hold a road toll drive to collect food and coats, Councilor Theberge seconded and the motion carried by all in favor.

Berlin Public Schools – Update on intent for building projects

Mrs. King discussed ESSER II & ESSER III funds available for building projects which total \$5,394,656.59. She informed Council the status of the top three projects. The first project is the HVAC at BMHS which is estimated at around \$3,000,000. The second projects are the roofs at BES & BHMS which total \$3,280,000 from bids obtained. The third project is the outside learning spaces at BES of which a landscape architect created a design on the existing property to meet the outside needs for Pre-K to grade 5. Mrs. King stated the roofs at BES & BHMS were both redone in 1998 with a 20-year product. They had also installed heavy duty trusses and reinsulated with insulation that meets today's standards at that time. She commented that because of this, the structural aspect of both roofs is ready to go and just needs the membrane. They would at the same time replace any insulation that is wet. She commented the 20-year product installed in 1998 has lost its usefulness and has been leaking in spots for quite a few years. She commented that the HVAC system at BHMS is original which is 50 years old and well beyond its life. The HVAC system at BES was replaced and has few more years left. There are a few options coming forward. Mrs. King stated she recommended options to the School Board which they voted on last Thursday night and now needs to be approved by Council to move forward. The options recommended were to do the roofs now as they are ready to go. Mrs. King commented it is beneficial to do the roofs now as we have a contract in place and the cost is known. She was also made

aware by engineers for the roofing that the costs will be going up 15% by the end of November so if this project waits till Spring, the cost will go up. She stated with this said, they could do both roofs and then have to finance for the HVAC at BHMS which is more in need of an update at this time. The Board approved last Thursday to start the roof project and hopefully getting it done before snow flies at just the BMHS building for \$1,890,000 and hopefully the HVAC cost comes in and there's enough funds for both projects. Councilor Rozek commented that the roof that was replaced in 1998 was a synthetic roof membrane if he remembers correctly and had a lifespan of 30 years which brings it to 2028. Mrs. King advised she was told it was a 20-year product, but will verify. Mayor Grenier commented he sees this as a time sensitive issue as the school is looking to extend ARPA funds to get the roof at BMHS done now as the funds are available now and the contractor is ready to go and the roof is leaking now. Mrs. King responded yes, that is correct. Councilor Eastman commented he agrees with the School Board to move forward with the roof as it's in need of repairs and feels it would be money well spent and would avoid potential structural problems. He commented that at this time HVAC materials are hard to come around. Mrs. King commented they have till 2024 to use the funds. She commented the HVAC project is anticipated for summer of 2023. Mayor Grenier commented the issue that Councilor Rozek brought to the table is valid and asked if there is a way to obtain the contract including the material warranty from the company who installed it in 1998 for Council's review. Mrs. King responded she will look into it. Councilor Remillard commented she hates to see the schedule for the roof be delayed and would like to proceed with the roof project. Councilor Remillard moved to award the low bid of Imperial from CT in the amount of \$1,890,000 for the replacement of the roof at BMHS using a combination of ESSER II and ESSER III funds, Councilor Eastman seconded and the motion carried by all in favor.

Other

Mr. Wheeler advised that Duane Johnson who is currently the Assistant Recreation Director has accepted the Recreation Director position. With this said, he is asking for permission to fill the position of Assistant Recreation Director. Councilor Remillard moved to allow the City Manager to advertise for the replacement of the Assistant Recreation Director, Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried by all in favor. Mayor Grenier commented he has seen the work Mr. Johnson has done with the kids for the last four years and it's incredible. He also commented that there hasn't been an American legion baseball league for at least 20 years and primarily because of Mr. Johnson's hard work, there was one this year. He feels Mr. Johnson is a great asset to the community.

Councilor Eastman questioned if there are any grants in place for the water and sewer on Route 110. Mayor Grenier responded the City can't apply for Grants until a design is in place. He commented that might be funds available from the EDA which will be a combination of grant loan forgiveness which needs a stamped project in order to get that going. Ms. Laflamme commented there will be a resolution next Monday to accept the funds for engineering.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Councilor Rozek moved to adjourn; Councilor Theberge seconded and the motion carried by all in favor. The meeting ended at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Danielle Rioux
Executive Assistant

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