

**City Council Work Session
November 8, 2021**

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

Others present: City Manager Jim Wheeler, Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Police Chief Peter Morency, Karen Collins, and William Carroll, Berlin Daily Sun.

Mayor Grenier called the meeting to order at 6:34pm.

Councilor Rozek moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to add the Lavoie Property under Item #3 to the agenda. So moved, the motion carried.

Declaration of Election/Accepting the Results of the November 2, 2021 Election

Councilor Rozek moved to accept the results of the November 2, 2021 Municipal Election as presented; Councilor Morgan seconded. So moved, the motion carried.

2021 MUNICIPAL ELECTION				
Tuesday, November 2, 2021				
<u>Mayor - 2 Year</u>	<u>PRECINCT</u> <u>1</u>	<u>PRECINCTS 2&3</u>	<u>PRECINCT</u> <u>4</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
PAUL GRENIER	196	530	179	905
ROBERT HAYNES	188	415	168	771
WRITE-INS	5	8	2	15
<u>City Council - 4 Year</u>				
LUCIE REMILLARD	212	492	171	875
ROBERT THEBERGE	224	523	199	946
KATHY TRUMBULL	165	356	137	658
DIANA BERTHIAUME	172	460	174	806
TIMOTHY DONOVAN, SR	119	208	90	417
STEVEN KORZEN	151	373	151	675
RICHARD LAFLAMME, JR	64	134	49	247
PETER MORENCY	158	430	150	738
HENRY NOEL	149	391	162	702
ELI CLEMMER	10	37	10	57
WRITE-INS	1	6	2	9
<u>Moderator - 2 Year</u>				
ROBERT DUMOULIN	282	631	264	1177
GISELE MCKENZIE	231	572	204	1007
LINDA PIVIN	1	1	5	7
WRITE-INS	4	12	4	20

Ward Clerk - 2 Year

JEANINE MCKENZIE	322	786	299	1407
OTHER WRITE-INS	7	14	9	30

Supervisors - 2 Year

NANCY DRAPEAU	214	529	200	943
STUART LIGHT	169	432	147	748
DINO AMATO	164	389	160	713
DONALD BISSON	188	530	188	906
JEANNE CHAREST	206	545	213	964
RALPH COLLINS	141	359	143	643
ROLAND CROTEAU	186	453	180	819
NANCY CUSSON	220	525	217	962
WRITE-INS	0	21	6	27

School Board - 4 Year

MARK EVANS	199	403	165	767
NATHAN MORIN	186	511	179	876
JESSTINA MURPHY	1	4	0	5
WRITE-INS	1	9	3	13

School Board - 2 Year

JEANNE CHAREST	198	512	196	906
EAMON KELLEY	202	462	170	834
LORI KORZEN	177	388	153	718
JESSTINA MURPHY	159	371	137	667
ANN NOLIN	237	633	228	1098
MARK EVANS	0	8	4	12
WRITE-INS	1	5	2	8

Library - 4 Year

STEVEN GRIFFIN	284	648	263	1195
STUART LIGHT	13	36	6	55
SHANNON LAVERTU	9	5	6	20
OTHER WRITE-INS	1	18	6	25

Library - 2 Year

STUART LIGHT	114	257	100	471
YVONNE THOMAS	207	544	208	959
DEBRA JANE ACKERMAN	45	98	37	180
SHANNON LAVERTU	5	7	2	14
OTHER WRITE-INS	1	2	0	3

Building and Land Sale Fall 2021

Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme presented the Council with a list of multi-family properties and land that the City owns. Ms. Laflamme advised that the multi-family units have been city-owned for a number of years and all are in tough shape. Ms. Laflamme advised that these were properties that Linda White wanted to have torn down when she was in the Housing Department. These properties did not qualify for the I&I project. There has been abutter interest in three of the properties; 96-98 Hillside Avenue, 37-39 Cambridge Street, and 767 Second Avenue. However, the interest was in the land after the removal of the building by the City. Ms. Laflamme advised there are also three single family homes that were left after the last sale; 293 Burgess Street, 827 Western Avenue, and 212 Glen Avenue. The Burgess Street property has received two inquiries as to whether it is available, but the other two did not. There was interest from the abutter on Glen Avenue, however again only if the City was to remove the buildings.

The potential parcels for land sales were discussed. Ms. Laflamme advised that there are other parcels that are owned by the City that are not included on this list, however those are used for snow removal, drainage, or are topographically challenged. The first 6 properties on the list all had buildings on them at one time. The 7th property, on Jericho Road, was the former Hodgdon Oil site and the tanks were removed. This property runs next to the main line for water works, and the Council questioned whether there are any covenants on the property.

The buildings that are being removed as part of the I&I project must be maintained as open space until the SRF loan is paid off, then the City can sell those lots. Councilor Eastman asked about the amount of the SRF loan and City Manager Wheeler advised it is \$500,000, however there is 20% loan forgiveness. This project is being funded by the sewer fund, so it is not using tax dollars. Ms. Laflamme advised that the property at 592 Rockingham Street will cost \$12,000 just to remediate the lead and remove the garage. They just did an environmental study on the house, which also has lead contamination, so that will also be costly to remove. Mayor Grenier noted that the multi-family buildings are in extremely dense neighborhoods and it will not serve the public interest to put these out to bid, as the increased cost to education and emergency services will not be worth the minimal tax revenue received. Councilor Berthiaume suggested that the Council take time to look at the list of properties available, as some are not structurally sound, and discuss again at the next meeting.

Ms. Laflamme shared communications received from abutters in reference to properties on Maple Street and 7th Avenue. A letter was received from Celeste Borrayo with interest in Map 128, Lot 232, which abuts her property on Maple Street. An email was received from Christina Ciampa concerning Map 110, Lot 153, which is in the middle of her properties on 7th Avenue. Councilor Remillard asked about the Maple Street property, which abuts Highland Park, and if this would limit access to the parcel. Ms. Laflamme advised that there are a few different access points to Highland Park. Councilor Eastman asked about the process for putting parcels out to bid to just abutters, and was advised that this has been done by the Council many times before in the interest of improving properties. Councilor Remillard asked about the time frame, as both letters were received in September. Ms. Laflamme advised that they have been in contact with both taxpayers in reference to the properties. The Council discussed minimum bids for the lots, and it was suggested by Councilor Remillard that they be put out as highest and best offers.

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second from Councilor Berthiaume, to offer the properties on Maple Street, Map 128, Lot 232, and 7th Avenue, Map 110, Lot 153, to the two adjoining abutters on each and to table the other properties until the next meeting. So moved, the motion carried.

Lavoie Property

Pamela Laflamme advised that as far as the EPA is concerned, they have done what they need to do at the Lavoie property on Hillside Avenue. The property is no longer considered a hazard to the

community or surrounding properties. According to NHDES, the property is considered available to redevelop, it is not clean but clean enough. The house is still there and debris has been piled neatly. Contaminated soil was removed along with one building which was contaminated. The executor of the estate, Sister Pauline, has passed away in Canada and has left her small estate to the convent that she was a member of. The property has not been tax deeded in the past due to the environmental issues, but they could tax deed now. Attorney Chris Boldt has suggested that they work with an attorney in Canada to deal with the probate issues, as they would benefit from Canadian counsel. There have been one or two interested parties in the three parcels, which have about \$70,000 due in back taxes. Councilor Remillard suggested contacting the convent to see what they would like to do with it and Ms. Laflamme advised that they do not want to discuss it. Councilor Eastman suggested that the interested parties contact the convent directly and remove the City from the process. Councilor Theberge asked about the paper street on the property, which Ms. Laflamme advised is not owned in fee by any one entity. Paper streets are still valid unless the Council takes a formal vote to give up interest. After 20 years, the City's right to develop the paper street as a public way is extinguished. Councilor Theberge asked about the tower near the property, which Ms. Laflamme advised is owned separately from the land it sits on.

Ms. Laflamme was asked to get an estimate of the cost to work with a Canadian attorney to deal with the probate issues and bring it back it to the Council for their consideration.

Councilor Theberge moved, with a second from Councilor Remillard, to enter into Non-Meeting at 7:20 pm per RSA 91-A:2 I (b) Collective Bargaining. So moved, the motion passed by roll call vote. Rozek- yes, Berthiaume – yes, Remillard – yes, Morgan – yes, Eastman – yes, Theberge – yes, Grenier – yes

Councilor Rozek moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to enter Non-Public session at 7:34 pm per RSA 91-A:3 II (b) Hiring. So moved, the motion passed by roll call vote. Rozek- yes, Berthiaume – yes, Remillard – yes, Morgan – yes, Eastman – yes, Theberge – yes, Grenier – yes

The Council discussed hiring.

Councilor Berthiaume moved, with a second by Councilor Rozek, to leave Non-Public session at 7:37 pm. So moved, the motion passed by roll call vote. Rozek- yes, Berthiaume – yes, Remillard – yes, Morgan – yes, Eastman – yes, Theberge – yes, Grenier – yes

Councilor Rozek moved, with a second by Councilor Berthiaume, to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 pm. So moved, the motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Shellie Fortin
City Clerk

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