

City Council Work Session December 20, 2021

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

Others present: Interim City Manager & Community Development Director Pam Laflamme, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Finance Director Holly Larsen, Assessing Coordinator Lise Barrette, Chief of Police Peter Morency, Deputy Chief Dan Buteau, Officer Rachel O'Connell, Micah Bachner, Amber Bachner, Stuart Light, Lori Korzen, Steven Korzen, Robert Theberge, Nathan Morin, David Morin, Theodore Bosen, Gary Croteau, Eli Clemmer, Amanda Clemmer, Mark Ginnetty, Spencer Fortier, Tiffany Hale, other members of the public, and William Carroll, Berlin Daily Sun.

Mayor Grenier called the meeting to order at 6:32pm.

Mayor Grenier requested to add an agenda item for a Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3 II; (b) Hiring. Councilor Remillard moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to add an agenda item for Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3 II; (b) Hiring. So, moved, the motion carried by roll call with all in favor.

2022 Proposed Budget Schedule

Ms. Laflamme explained this is brought to Council for review and approval before it goes out to Department Heads and City Staff. Councilor Berthiaume moved to accept the 2022 proposed budget schedule for the FY2023 budget, Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

Assessing – Special Tax Warrant

Ms. Laflamme advised there was an adjustment error to the Jericho Mountain Wind Company's parcel which is Map 410 Lot 5 and because of this, the December tax bill was not printed. She advised the adjustment has been fixed on the Special Warrant and is asking Council for approval to submit the tax bill. Councilor Remillard moved to approve of the special tax warrant to be sent to Jericho Mountain Wind Company, Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

Freedom Energy Logistics Net Metering Agreement

Ms. Laflamme explained prior City Manager Jim Wheeler had started working on this agreement prior to his departure. She stated Freedom Energy has been doing some work here in Coos, they have an agreement with the Town of Gorham and with the County. This is a net metering agreement that would use the energy that the City is consuming and would offer an incentive for this participation at \$0.005 for every kilowatt hour utilized to offset hydro generation. The agreement is for five years and states that we do not enter into any net metering agreement with anyone else for that time period. Ms. Laflamme explained it doesn't change how we pay our bills, it doesn't change anything other that we will receive a quarterly payment for a total of approximately \$6,800 annually. They're also asking that we send them our bills which is related to three accounts; two at Pollution Control and one at City Hall. Mayor Grenier questioned if this will affect the very favorable contract the City currently has with Constellation. Ms. Laflamme responded no, and the contract we currently have with Constellation is locked in till November 2024 which changes nothing. Councilor Remillard commented that she thinks the State of Maine has a lot of net metering and questioned if this is the \$0.005 is the average rate. Ms. Laflamme responded she doesn't know as she only read up on New Hampshire's and the house bill they cited which is HB315. She commented she would get more information. Councilor Eastman commented he would also like more information as it is not clear and would like to understand better.

Ms. Laflamme commented she could ask Freedom Energy to do a presentation. Mayor Grenier stated Council will hold off approving the agreement until the January 3, 2021 Council meeting where Freedom Energy will do a presentation.

Public Works Laborer Position

Ms. Laflamme advised an employee who just started in a PW laborer position is going back to their old job so she is requesting for permission to fill the position. She stated it doesn't need to be advertised as we currently have an advertisement out to replace another laborer position. Councilor Berthiaume moved to authorized the Interim City Manager to fill the laborer position, Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

Opioid Settlement Discussion

Mayor Grenier commented this discussion will be part of the Non-Meeting for legal consultation.

Inauguration Plans

Mayor Grenier commented there are two members in the audience who will soon become members of Council. He asked permission from Council to allow the members to speak. Councilors agreed. Mayor Grenier asked Robert Theberge and Peter Morency if they had any wishes or plans with inauguration. Both Mr. Theberge and Mr. Morency requested to keep it low key with immediate family and not incur extra cost to the Tax Payers.

At 6:49pm, Councilor Remillard moved with a second from Councilor Morgan enter into Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3 II; (b) Hiring. So, moved, the motion carried by roll call with all in favor.

The hiring matter was discussed.

At 7:00pm, Council and Staff came out of Non-Public Session.

At 7:01pm, Councilor Remillard moved to enter into Non-Meeting per RSA 91-A:2, I. (c) Legal Consultation, Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried by roll call with all in favor.

Opioid Settlement Discussion

Police Chief Morency explained three pharmaceutical companies agreed to a twenty-one-billion-dollar settlement of which one hundred fifteen million is coming to the State of NH. The discussions are in regards to the breakdown of the funds between the twenty-three communities that are involved in this law suit. Councilor Remillard moved to approve the proposed settlement with the State of NH's Attorney General's Office and the three pharmaceutical companies, Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

At 7:28pm, 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.