

City Council Work Session
February 14, 2022

Present were: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Robert Theberge, Higbee, Eastman, Roland Theberge, Remillard and Morency via Zoom. Councilors Berthiaume and Morgan were absent

Others present: Interim City Manager Pamela Laflamme, Finance Director Holly Larsen, SAU3 Superintendent Julie King, SAU3 Business Manager Marion Moore, SAU3 School Board Chair Ann Nolan, Lori Korzen, Steven Korzen, and William Carroll, Berlin Daily Sun

Mayor Grenier opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Snow Removal Policy

Ms. Laflamme advised she spoke with the Assistant Public Works Director to get feedback for this. She commented she was contacted last week by Councilors and Citizens who had multiple questions and concerns in regards to the snow removal policy. There were concerns about the time frame the snow is removed especially in the school areas, more specifically the Elementary School. She commented Councilor Remillard reminded her the policy was revised a couple years ago and the policy was changed to reflect priority on schools over churches and funeral homes. She stated downtown is still priority over schools in the policy and the area where they do removal downtown is quite large. She advised the Assistant Public Works Director suggested doing downtown in a different way so they could get the first brush up Main Street done as well as the elementary school and then move to Pleasant Street and other areas around downtown in a daytime kind of removal.

Ms. Laflamme commented that there is a lot of new staff in the Public Works department who have never plowed before. They are learning as they go which is going a little slower than it normally would go with staff who have years of experience. Mr. Lapointe is also trying really hard not to burn the employees out between the time in which they finish maintaining and cleaning the storm versus the time they clean up the storm giving them a night off in between. Since this is the Council's policy, Ms. Laflamme is asking if they want to revisit the order of removal or just give latitude to the Assistant Public Works Director and the Supervisors to change things in a moment they see make more sense. Councilor Remillard commented the policy should be revised putting the schools as priority, then downtown. For weekends and school vacations, it would be ok to do downtown first. Mayor Grenier suggested giving the latitude to the Assistant Public Works Director, let him do his thing for the rest of the winter and then adjust the policy accordingly in the Fall.

Councilor Eastman commented he agrees with the Assistant Public Works Director's suggestion to do Main Street, then the Elementary School. He is also in favor of giving him the latitude. Councilor Robert Theberge commented he thinks the school should be priority one but at the same time give the latitude of how it should be done to the Assistant Public Works Director. Mayor Grenier recommended that when Public Works gets to the Eastside they prioritize removing snow at the bus stops. Councilor Roland Theberge suggested if they do run into having to do snow removal during the day in downtown to utilize no parking, snow removal signs. Ms. Laflamme commented she will not revise the policy at this time as Council agreed to give latitude to the Assistant Public Works Director to make changes as he sees fit and revisit the policy in the Fall. Councilor Robert Theberge commented when they revisit the policy to address wards as they are now precincts.

2022 Budget Schedule Update Request

Ms. Laflamme advised Council that Rodney Bartlett from MRI who is helping Public Works, Pollution Control and Recreation with their budgets is not able to be here on March 23rd. She is requesting Council to approve switching their budget presentation to March 16th and move Outside Agencies, Health and Welfare to March 23rd. Council agreed to the budget schedule change.

Special Warrant/Tax Deferral Discharge

Ms. Laflamme advised this is tax deferrals that were given by the Board of Assessors. When a tax deferral is given, that is something the tax payer applies for and when granted the deferral, it results in a lien on the property. However, that lien is different from a lien that the Finance department may place for tax deeding where taxes are not paid. She explained in this situation where these property owners who are deceased had applied and been granted deferrals for their taxes. In order for the taxes to be collected properly by the Finance department, what needs to happen is that the deferrals need to be discharged from the Assessing side and then moves to the Finance department under a Special Warrant so Ms. Larsen can collect the back taxes. Ms. Larsen explained that for this particular situation the deferrals have been granted year after year and both have passed. What the deferral says is either the passing of the owners will push out the deferrals to the Tax Collector or if they were to sell the property, those deferrals need to be paid up. Councilor Remillard moved to approve the Tax Deferrals granted on the property pursuant to RSA 165:28 and RSA 72:38-a and discharge the property from Tax Deferral status to Finance with a second from Councilor Robert Theberge. So moved, the motion carried by majority in favor with one recusal from Councilor Eastman.

At 7:00pm, Mayor Grenier requested to enter in Non-Meeting per RSA 91-A:2, I; (b) Collective Bargaining. Councilor Remillard moved with a second from Councilor Roland Theberge to enter into Non-Meeting per RSA 91-A:2, I; (b) Collective Bargaining. So moved, the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

At 7:46pm, Mayor, Council and Staff came out of Non-Meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Councilor Higbee moved to adjourn; Councilor Morency seconded and the motion carried by all in favor. The meeting ended at 7:47pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Danielle Rioux
Executive Assistant

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