

## **City Council Work Session**

### **March 14, 2022**

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

Others present: Interim City Manager Pamela Laflamme, Finance Director Holly Larsen, Airport Manager Marcel Leveille, Lori Korzen, Steven Korzen, Stuart Light and William Carroll, Berlin Daily Sun.

Mayor Grenier opened the meeting at 6:31 p.m.

#### **Budget:**

##### **BIDPA**

Ms. Laflamme advised BIDPA's budget is similar to last year. It went down as they shifted around some of their funds. At their last meeting in February, they discussed a few things including focusing on the Camoin strategic plan and working out some of those areas that were identified as important such as Route 110 and Downtown. They've discussed a name change, keeping BIDPA as their legal name, but coming up with a name that highlighted economic development representing more what they do. Mayor Grenier suggested researching the guidelines in regards to the name change as BIDPA was created under RSA 162-G.

Councilor Remillard questioned the difference in contingent. Ms. Laflamme responded that contingency is where the funds are spent when there's special consultant services required. They've decided to increase it more in line with what they've spent out of that account in the past year. Councilor Eastman noted that the park improvement line item had \$350,000 budgeted in FY22, but only \$35,540 was spent. He is asking where this balance is carried over. Ms. Laflamme explained that BIDPA as an enterprise fund has money not related at all to the general fund but related to the sale of land and/or building or lease and sale of buildings. Councilor Higbee explained that BIDPA's money is in the bank and its way more than the budgeted amount. It is not part of the general fund as it's an enterprise fund. The \$300,000 in the budget is for potential expenses and is more of a place holder should expenses come up. It does not affect the taxes whatsoever. Mayor Grenier commented that all members appointed to the BIDPA Board are made up of Berlin business people. Those appointments are all apolitical, business people and volunteers that want to see the community grow. He stated BIDPA Chair Mike Caron was very instrumental in multiple economic developments in our community.

##### **Airport**

Mr. Leveille advised the salaries went up \$4,157 in total. There are increases in telephone, internet and postage. He commented that the \$330,515 in capital improvement is for fencing, lighting and signage and is a grant 100% funded by the FAA. Mayor Grenier asked Mr. Leveille to give a brief update as to where they're at with the National Guard. Mr. Leveille stated they've had a few meetings and some with the Town of Milan as the National Guard want to be neighbor friendly. By meeting with residents of Milan, they've cleared up a lot of oppositions. HEB which is the airport's engineer of record, selected a good area for the National Guard to develop and they've agreed to the location. At this time, they're at a standstill due to the weather. They would like to do some test drilling and more. His contacts are out doing maneuvers right now so it will be a couple weeks more before they present their plan. They are still in the planning stage right now. Mr. Leveille commented that with the National Guard on site, he is estimating this would generate approximately \$95,000 in fuel sales. Councilor Eastman asked about the credit card machine. Mr. Leveille advised they would not honor a 5-year lease. They did agree to give us 60 days to pay the machine instead of 16 days. Mayor Grenier commented G&C approved the \$9,000 grant which we have budgeted in our current revenue. He's mapping out 60 days from that point in time, we pay the

bill and hopefully by then the G&C will approve the \$22,000 of the next round that we can use as a receivable in this budget to cover the expense.

### **Administration/IT**

Ms. Laflamme advised the budget for Mayor & Council is down slightly. Mayor Grenier discussed the contract with Vachon & Clukay for the municipal audit. He stated with all the additional federal funds we've received in various forms, he thinks there might be a surcharge. Ms. Larsen commented the amount in the FY23 budget was provided by Vachon & Clukay.

Ms. Laflamme commented that the administration budget which includes Finance, Assessing, City Clerk, City Manager and Planning. It also includes items such as legal services, professional services which are some of the bigger items. This is basically the running of most of City Hall. Mayor Grenier asked where the statistical update is. Ms. Laflamme explained in the FY23 budget it's under capital improvement. Mayor Grenier asked about the assessment contract line item. Ms. Laflamme stated this will stay exactly the same, the statistical update is in addition to the assessment contract.

Councilor Remillard questioned the fuel oil for City Hall as it went down. Ms. Laflamme stated the City Clerk brought it down based on where she was at with usage at that time which was prior to the spike in prices. She stated we discussed this today and will try to push off putting out our fuel bid as far as possible, but before Council has to publish the budget. Hoping in this time frame the prices will go down. Ms. Laflamme commented the IT budget is just about the same except the software item was decreased by \$20,000 as we will be switching vendors over this next year for finance and FY22 had two vendors in place for the transition.

Mayor Grenier questioned the contracts with Majestic Maintenance and Demers for the mowing of City owned housing. Ms. Laflamme advised she didn't find anything specific, it was an informal agreement. She discussed this with the City Clerk and between the two companies, the cost is about \$18,000 per year just for mowing. The idea discussed was to combine funds and have one person, for a good wage, do all the mowing for our vacant parcels plus the cemetery. This is an ongoing discussion. Mayor Grenier questioned since BIDPA doesn't own property anymore, they are not responsible for park maintenance. Ms. Laflamme commented this will come up once in a while and someone will advise about the ditches and how they have overgrown in the park. The Prison has done a great job on their side of East Milan Road in clearing up and clearing out a lot of what were the problem spots and the drainage coming across the street into the park. Mayor Grenier commented the airport has the mowing equipment. Perhaps this should be coordinated with the airport manager as he might have one of his part time employees that might want to grab two or three days a week versus one. Councilor Morency questioned the IT transition. Ms. Laflamme explained it's a transition to a new finance software. Mayor Grenier asked how long will the transition take. Ms. Larsen stated she's hoping it will be done by the end of December as there is a lot of data conversion to be done.

### **BEMS Contract**

Mayor Grenier advised Chief Watkins did get Butler to agree to the 60-day reciprocal opt out part in the language. He suggested to vote on this when Chief Watkins is here presenting his budget on March 30<sup>th</sup>. Councilor Higbee commented he went through the contract and marked up some formatting errors that he will send to Ms. Laflamme.

### **New Language TITLE VI 91-A:3 Nonpublic Sessions**

Ms. Laflamme explained to Council that as of January first of this year, any time Council goes into nonpublic sessions, The City Manager's Executive Assistant will be keeping a spreadsheet of when they went in, under what part of the Statue. In this section it talks about transactions related to sale of property looking for public

disclosure as quickly to the decision as possible. She commented she discussed this with City Attorney Chris Boldt and are advising Council should take a look at this spreadsheet during a time frame agreed upon whether it be quarterly, every six months or once a year. At that time, if they wish to release these minutes, they would take a vote into 2/3 majority to unseal the minutes. This applies to all City Boards. Mayor Grenier suggested having someone from NHMA come do training sessions for board members as we have new people on multiple boards. It would be good to give everybody a refresher course on these regulations.

At 7:33 p.m., Councilor Morgan moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to enter into Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3 II; (a) The dismissal, promotion or compensation of any public employee. So, moved, the motion carried by roll call with all in favor.

Compensation of two public employees was discussed. Council will be voting on the compensation during the March 21, 2022 Council Meeting.

At 7:49p.m., Council and Staff came out of Non-Public Session.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Councilor Remillard moved to adjourn; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried by all in favor. The meeting ended at 7:51p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Danielle Rioux  
Executive Assistant

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