

City Council Work Session

October 17, 2022

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

Others present: City Manager Phillip L. Warren Jr., Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Chief of Police Dan Buteau, Library Director Ann Brungot, Rick Alpers, Lori Korzen, Laura Boucher, Sarah Swift, Greg Swift and Lisa Connell, Berlin Daily Sun.

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

United Way Presentation

Mayor Grenier introduced Ms. Laura Boucher, Regional Manager of Granite United Way-Northern NH Region and invited her to speak in regards to the organization and its many benefits. Ms. Boucher advised that the City of Berlin campaign will be kicking off soon and she is hoping to get the word out to increase participation. This will help local non-profits and their programs. She commented this past summer they were able to allocate funds to eleven local agencies. Some of the agencies receiving funding are; Believe in Books, Copper Cannon Camp, Family Resource Center, Northern Human Services, Tri-County Cap, NH Legal Assistance, NH JAG, White Mountains Pride, Retired Senior Volunteer Program and Feeding Hope Food Pantry and Community Café. All these agencies will be receiving funds from donations collected in the Community.

Ms. Boucher introduced Sarah and Greg Swift of the Feeding Hope Food Pantry and Community Café which is an agency that receives funds and invited them to discuss their agency and how Granite United Way has benefited them. Mrs. Swift, Director of the Feeding Hope Food Pantry and Community Café advised she has been running the program for almost three years. She commented she is seeing more individuals reaching out lately now that all the Covid funding assistance has gone away. They offer a lot of support to individuals and families in need. She advised Granite United Way has been a tremendous help in providing funding and support. Just last week, they put out 162 meals to the Community. They are working on helping people feel more connected and will be having sit down meals indoors again soon. With the increase use of the services and unexpected expenses, United Way's donations have helped tremendously. Mr. Swift shared a few statistics. In 2021 they served 1170 families and 250 individuals. In 2022, with only nine months in, they've already served 915 families. He commented without the funds received from United Way, they would be hard pressed.

Ms. Boucher stated any donations are welcome and can be made through a payroll deduction or just a one-time amount. Mayor Grenier asked City Manager Warren if he could coordinate a presentation with Ms. Boucher for Municipal employees. Mr. Warren advised he would coordinate a presentation for all employees.

Primex Update

Mayor Grenier introduce Rick Alpers, Risk Services Consultant from Primex which is the City's WC and P&L insurance carrier. Mr. Alpers is attending the work session to give an update on how the City is doing. Mr. Alpers advised he is here tonight with some good news. The City's overall performance is good in both Worker's Compensation and Property & Liability. He commented there has been many changes at Primex and they are currently changing the use of their building to offer more training spaces for members. He recently completed a training with Police Chief Buteau and his command staff in regards to communication and behavioral analysis. He continues to do yearly trainings with the Public Works Department employees. He discussed Ms. Laflamme's engagement in cybersecurity and advised how this is a major issue for municipalities and governmental entities across the State. He distributed packets which showed comparisons from past years (2014-2018) to current in regards to WC's top claims and P&L top claims. Worker's Compensation is trending down and rating will be down 14% for next year. Property & Liability is also trending down. He commented about 75% of today's Worker's Compensation claims are for medical compared to loss time in the past. In general, he feels this is good news for

the City. He reminded everyone that all municipal employees are eligible for Primex trainings. Mayor Grenier thanked Mr. Alpers for the update.

Library Trustee Interview

Mayor Grenier invited Ms. Katie Barth to discuss her interest in the Library Trustee position. Ms. Barth advised she is a mother of two small children and a member of the community. She visits the library often, especially the children section. She has been going to the library since she moved to the area in 1992. She commented there has been a lot of changes, but it still feels like a small-town library which she appreciates. She feels like it represents the community well. She would love to support the staff and represent the community. Mayor Grenier thanked Ms. Barth for her interest in serving the community. The appointment of the Library Trustee will be processed during regular meeting tonight.

Fee Schedule Recommendation-Planning Board

Ms. Laflamme advised the fees were last increased in 2010. She commented the proposed increases will not fully cover costs nor make a profit. She stated the Planning Board fees are good as is and don't need any increases. The proposed increases are for the building inspection fees, driveway/curb cut permit fees and the Zoning Board fees. Councilor Remillard suggested reviewing the fees more often as 12 years is too long. Ms. Laflamme advised if Council agrees with the proposed fee schedule, the Planning Board will come to Council with a new ordinance at the first meeting in November for the first read and table. All were in agreement.

Use of AVH Wellness Funds

Mr. Warren reminded Council the City has accepted over the last two years \$40,000 and no plans to allocate have been made. He is proposing over the next 6 to 12 months that a schedule be determined as to what the funds will be utilized for. He is requesting from Council this evening the approval to use, not to exceed \$500, for CPR training for City employees. The funds are to be used for health and wellness initiatives and he feels this would be appropriate. Councilor Remillard moved to allow the City Manager to expend up to \$500 from the AVH wellness funds, to offer CPR training to Municipal employees. Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

Easement Request - Walgreens

Mr. Warren advised in order for the new Walgreens location to get electricity and telecommunications to their building they need to run a trench through the City owned parking lot as there is a transformer right there. It would be a 30'x3' trench. Walgreens has made the request and one of the conditions is that they would return the parking lot to its original state. They will also compensate the City for any legal work done to issue the easement. He advised the first read of the Resolution for the easement request will be this evening during regular meeting.

At 7:38 p.m., 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.