

## **City Council Work Session December 19, 2022**

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

Others present: City Manager Phillip L. Warren Jr., Dir. Of Strategic Initiatives and Asst. City Manager Pamela Laflamme, Finance Director Holly Larsen, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Lori Korzen, Ed Bryant, and Lisa Connell, Berlin Daily Sun.

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

### **Welfare funeral home reimbursement rates**

Mr. Warren discussed a letter received from Bryant Funeral Home requesting an increase in the City's Welfare Department's assistance with cremation costs for indigent or low-income families within our community. The contribution from the City has been the same since 1990 at \$750. They are requesting an increase from \$750 to \$1,250. Mr. Warren advised \$10,000 is budgeted under this line item and there are funds in the budget to absorb the cost increase. He recommends the approval of the request. Councilor Robert Theberge moved to acknowledge the communication from Bryant Funeral Home and increase the contribution from \$750 to \$1250. Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

Mayor Grenier requested an item be added under other of the work session agenda. Mr. Warren advised the item is for four abatements that are for City properties that were sold this year and should have been prorated. Councilor Remillard moved to authorize the inclusion of property tax abatements under other. Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

### **2023 Proposed Budget Schedule (FY2024)**

Mr. Warren presented the proposed budget schedule. He commented the schedule is similar to what has been seen in the past years. The only difference is instead of being on Wednesdays, it is on the off Mondays. Mayor Grenier commented he would like to add a second meeting with the Board of Education on April 24, 2023. Mr. Warren advised the schedule will be updated to include the April 24, 2023 Board of Education meeting.

### **Closed Loop Project – Update**

Mr. Warren advised he had a walk through at the White Mountain Paper Company regarding the closed loop project. He commented the group took an extremely deep and necessary dive into all of the pieces of what needs to be considered when we send our effluent water to the plant to use in the process. A couple of takeaways were; right now, with one machine they would use the majority of our effluent. This would become more critical if they decided to put a second machine in as it would definitely exceed our capacity. There are concerns with the chemistry of the effluent. There were experts from every discipline at the meeting. There were individuals from the paper industry, the water reuse industry and the sewer industry. It was an interesting process to go through and to see the machine in action. As a result of this meeting, everyone went home with a list of questions and as of now, they are in the process of gathering information.

Mayor Grenier questioned when the engineering will begin. Mr. Warren commented this was the pre-meeting to start the engineering. Councilor Roland Theberge commented Mr. Warren discussed the treatment of the water but this is a closed loop system so the water will be filtered at the Berlin Plant to go back to the paper mill. Mr. Warren advised this is a two-phase project. The first phase is we send them water that they still need to treat to waste. The second phase, in the engineering piece, we find out what it will take to send it back to our plant. This second phase will be the more extensive piece of the two. Mayor Grenier asked if Wright-Pierce was the engineer

for this project. Mr. Warren responded Wright-Pierce is doing the engineering, but they have consultants under their umbrella some from the paper industry and some from water reuse. Mr. Warren advised he should have more information in a couple months.

## **Other**

### **Abatelements**

Mr. Warren advised the first abatement would be issued to the Clifford Family Revocable Trust for a lot they purchased from the City located at 1051 Main Street. It was registered on July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022 and should have only been billed for 266 days. The abatement is in the amount of \$120. Councilor Remillard moved to approve the abatement for the Clifford Family Trust in the amount of \$120. Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

The second one is for David B. Connelly who purchased 611 Rockingham Street. He should have only been billed for 248 days and the abatement amount is \$583. Councilor Remillard moved to approve the abatement for David B. Connelly in the amount of \$583. Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

The third one is for Steven and Lisa Vien Revocable Trust for Map/Lot 131-26 on Berwick Street. They should have been billed for 276 days and the abatement amount is \$181. Councilor Remillard moved to approve the abatement for Steven and Lisa Vien Revocable Trust in the amount of \$181. Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

The fourth one is for Steven and Lisa Vien Revocable Trust for Map/Lot 131-27 on Berwick Street. They should have been billed for 276 days and the abatement amount is \$145. Councilor Remillard moved to approve the abatement for Steven and Lisa Vien Revocable Trust in the amount of \$145. Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

### **Non-Meeting**

At 6:53pm, Councilor Higbee moved with a second from Councilor Morgan to enter into Non-Meeting per RSA 91-A:2, I. (a) Collective Bargaining. So, moved, the motion carried by roll call with all in favor.

At 7:07pm, Mayor, Council and Staff came out of Non-Meeting.

At 7:08 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.