

City Council Work Session February 21, 2023

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

Others present: City Manager Phillip L. Warren Jr., Finance Director Holly Larsen, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Lori Korzen and Lisa Connell, Berlin Daily Sun.

Mayor Grenier opened the meeting at 6:35p.m.

Abatement Recommendations

Mr. Warren discussed the following abatement recommendations received from Ms. Monica Hurley of Corcoran Consulting Associates;

1. **29 Jericho Road (Map 108 Lot 2)**, Ms. Hurley recommends approving the abatement application for the 2022 tax year and reduce the assessment from \$104,900 to \$71,500.
2. **530 Second Avenue (Map 111 Lot 16)**, Ms. Hurley recommends denying the abatement application.
3. **221 Finland Street (Map 127 Lot 112)**, Ms. Hurley recommends approving the abatement application for the 2022 tax year and reduce the assessment from \$260,100 to \$253,500.
4. **365 Portland Street (Map 120 Lot 378)**, Ms. Hurley recommends approving the abatement application for the 2022 tax year and reduce the assessment from \$140,300 to \$118,100.
5. **87 Poplar Street (Map 128 Lot 34) & Off Poplar Street (Map 128 Lot 33)**, Ms. Hurley recommends denying the abatement application.
6. **660 Blais Street (Map 132 Lot 58) & Trudel Street (Map 132 Lot 50)**, Ms. Hurley recommends approving the abatement application for the 2022 tax year and reduce the assessment from \$135,400 to \$126,000. She is recommending no reduction for the vacant lot as they have already applied an abutter lot discount of 50% on the land.
7. **390 Second Avenue (Map 112 Lot 47)**, Ms. Hurley recommends approving the abatement application for the 2022 tax year and reduce the assessment from \$174,400 to \$148,000.
8. **27 Arlington Street (Map 137 Lot L27)**, Ms. Hurley recommends approving the abatement application for the 2022 tax year and reduce the assessment from \$54,900 to \$52,500.
9. **4 Clover Lane (Map 119 Lot 250)**, Ms. Hurley recommends approving the abatement application for the 2022 tax year and reduce the assessment from \$71,500 to \$70,800.
10. **434 Goebel Street (Map 130 Lot 392)**, Ms. Hurley recommends approving the abatement application for the 2022 tax year and reduce the assessment from \$126,900 to \$91,600.
11. **162 Washington Street (Map 119 Lot 211)**, Ms. Hurley recommends approving the abatement application for the 2022 tax year and reduce the assessment from \$139,700 to \$116,500.
12. **812 Second Avenue (Map 119 Lot 435)**, Ms. Hurley recommends approving the abatement application for the 2022 tax year and reduce the assessment from \$179,600 to \$149,500.

Mr. Warren commented he reviewed the documents and supports Ms. Hurley's recommendations. Councilor Remillard moved to approve the property abatements as recommended by Corcoran Consulting Associates. Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

School Funding Letter

Mayor Grenier advised he received the letter included in the packet from Zach Sheehan of the NH School Funding Fairness Project. He commented the Legislature, at this time, is debating a few different bills with regards to school funding and HB529 which came out of Committee with a unanimous vote to be sent to Finance. It seems to be the bill that has the most support. He commented that the Governor, in his proposed budget, wants to amend the formula so that there's an across the board increase in a per student payment from the State plus extra funding based on free reduced lunch and other items that would funnel more funding to property poor districts. In the formula there will also be increased funding for students that attend Charter Schools.

Mayor Grenier stated the NH School Funding Fairness Project is looking for the Mayor and Council's support by signing the presented form and submitting. Councilor Remillard moved to send the communication in support on behalf of the Mayor and Council. Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried with all in favor. Mr. Warren advised he would submit the communication on behalf of the Mayor and Council.

Other

Councilor Morency updated Council on the opioid settlement case. He received recent communication from the AG's office advising there is twenty billion more coming out. He has reached out to the NH Attorney who advised the City should move forward with the agreement. He is waiting on feedback from the NY Attorney before moving forward with another agreement. He has been working with a group of individuals looking at how to improve the situation in the North Country. He would like to meet with Coos County in the near future as they received three times the amount the City received. He would like to discuss working together with those funds and do something for Coos County. Mr. Warren advised the City can move forward as soon as Councilor Morency hears back from the NY Attorney.

At 7:07p.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.