

City Council Work Session July 17, 2023

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

Others present: City Manager Phillip L. Warren Jr., Dir. Of Strat. Initiatives and Asst. City Mgr. Pamela Laflamme, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Lori Korzen, David Rose and Lisa Connell, Berlin Daily Sun.

Mayor Grenier opened up the meeting at 6:32p.m. He discussed two items being added to the work session agenda under other. One item is in regards to a certificate of vote and the other is for a discussion in regards to the Cabins in the Clouds. Councilor Remillard move to add the two agenda items under other. Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

Polling Places Discussion

Mrs. Fortin advised she wanted to start a discussion about polling places. We currently have three and she feels we could easily go down to two which would reduce cost and volunteers to work the polls. It has been looked at before as she found the study when it was reduced from four to three locations. She advised that St Anne's raised the amount to rent the space from \$300 to \$700 for each election. Councilor Remillard questioned if we pay to rent the other two location. Mrs. Fortin responded we do not pay for the Recreation Center as it's City owned and it's \$200 for the Community Bible Church location. Mayor Grenier commented there will be Municipal elections in November and the NH Primary in January. He feels we should keep the three locations for those elections and reduce to two locations afterwards so the voters of the community will have plenty of notice of the changes. Mrs. Fortin stated she is not looking for a decision, she wanted to bring it to the Council's attention to start the discussion.

ARPA Funds Discussion – City Manager

Mr. Warren advised there is still \$1,059,669 available in ARPA Funds. There have been internal discussions with staff in regards to the uses of these funds. The funds need to be spent by December 2024. There are some needs the City has that these funds would be suitable for.

The first one being the wheelchair lift here at City Hall which is currently out of service. He's done an informal look at the building and knows there has been a study done to put an elevator in the current staircase location, but there is no good way to put an elevator in that location and retain the architectural integrity of that staircase area. This would involve major cost. He recommends replacing the wheelchair lift that is currently out of service with an updated version. The current quote is in the amount of \$68,360 to do so.

The second one is in regards to the tennis courts across from the Berlin Marketplace. It was brought to our attention they are not suitable for varsity tennis. People have also shown interest in pickleball so he is suggesting reconstructing the tennis courts at Horne Field and install pickleball courts across from the Berlin Marketplace. The cost to do this is \$150,000. Mayor Grenier commented to have varsity tennis you need three courts not two. Mr. Warren advised he was not aware of this and will confirm with Craig Melanson, BHS Athletic Director.

The third one is related to IT. We currently don't have the ability to live stream to a website, video program, etc... from the Council Chambers and the conference room off the chambers. He obtained a quote from SOS Tech in the amount of \$30,250. This would provide HD broadcast quality for each room. Also, we do not have good data connections between all the City buildings. We have a combination of Spectrum, Netafy and FirstLight. We need our own fiber backbone that touches each City building and terminates at our head end which would be the Police Station. The benefits of this are it's our own and doesn't touch the internet, it has expansion capabilities and it also gets you off the internet which is the biggest benefit. A quote was obtained from SNS in the amount of \$166,000 for the fiber and \$167,00 for the parts. Mayor Grenier questioned if this would enhance our Cyber security and Mr. Warren responded yes it would as we would have a true intranet and then have established points of our network that would go to the internet versus every building touching the internet. He also

commented that the phone system at City Hall is antiquated and if it fails, we have to go to salvage market to get parts. The upgrade would allow us to migrate to a hosted voice over IP system.

Finally, he is recommending spending the remaining \$477,000 on a crack sealing machine and repairs to roads/streets. Councilor Remillard questioned if there was a quote obtained to install street lighting from the Cleveland Bridge up to East Mason Street as it was requested in the past. She feels this should be priority over tennis courts. Mr. Warren responded he will look into it and obtain a quote for lighting.

Other

Certificate of Vote

Ms. Laflamme advised Council they already did this Certificate of Vote last month, but DES realized they hadn't provided the proper title to what the City is entering into for an agreement and requested it be redone. This is for the wastewater improvement grant;

Councilor Higbee moved to certify that at a meeting held on July 17, 2023 the City Council voted to enter into a sewer overflow and stormwater reuse municipal grant program grant agreement with the New Hampshire Department Environmental Services to fund a Wastewater Improvement Project. The City of Berlin, through the City Council further authorized City Manager Phillip L. Warren Jr. to execute any documents which may be necessary to effectuate this grant agreement. Councilor Remillard seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

Cabins in the Clouds

Councilor Remillard distributed a [letter](#) received from Mr. David Rose, owner of Cabins in the Clouds, LLC. Mr. Rose advised his letter is asking Council to consider extending the Route 110 water and sewer project further north on the West Milan road to service the Jericho Family Campground and the Cabins in the Clouds, LLC. Mr. Rose expressed his gratitude to Council for letting him discuss his project. Councilor Eastman asked if there are any updates on the Route 110 extension project. Mr. Warren advised he is currently working with staff and the public works consultant. The consultant has identified some capacity concerns that they are working on at this time. Mayor Grenier advised this project is still in the preliminary stage and it will all depend on funding. Mr. Warren commented he will take this into consideration when putting the plan together.

Non-Public Session

At 7:21 p.m., Councilor Roland Theberge moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to enter into Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3 II; (d) Consideration of the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community. So, moved, the motion carried by roll call with all in favor.

A discussion was had on the sale of two City owned properties. No votes were taken.

At 7:43 p.m., Councilor Roland Theberge moved with a second from Councilor Morgan to come out of Non-Public Session. So, moved the motion carried by roll call with all in favor.

At 7:44 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.