

City Council Work Session September 11, 2017

Present were: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Otis, Gentili, Morgan Allain, Higbee, Rozek, Nelson, Remillard and Theberge.

Others present: City Manager Jim Wheeler, Pam Laflamme, Michael Perreault, Jay Poulin and Barbara Tetreault *Berlin Daily Sun*

Mayor Grenier opened the meeting at 6:38 p.m.

CDBG Planning Grant for City Hall

Ms. Laflamme stated that last Friday, the City received word that the final grant for the feasibility study for the City Hall elevator was approved by CDFA. She anticipates that the funds will be released within the next couple of weeks. While Donna Lane will not be directly taking care of the grant, she will assist if needed. The RFP is currently being pulled together for the project.

Councilor Theberge asked if the Mason Street stairway will be fixed. Mr. Wheeler stated that there is approximately \$21,000 to make the necessary repairs. An RFP for repairs is currently being pulled together.

FY2018 Budget and Tax Rate Implications

Mr. Wheeler stated that he has been working on estimating what the upcoming tax rate might be, noting that it is good news. The utility value went up 4.7 million dollars; the county tax is approximately \$173,000 less than last year's payment. With those two things taken into consideration, along with using \$800,000-900,000 of the undesignated fund balance, the projected upcoming tax rate should remain level. The remaining UFB should be approximately 1.6 million dollars. This is a healthy balance and is higher than last year. The DRA will need to prepare the tax rate, therefore, this is not official. However, the DRA does use the figures that the City provides. Mr. Wheeler indicated that two other items helped the City's situation. The first being how segregated funds were handled, and the second being the school surplus. The Council was pleased to be able to pass the savings onto the taxpayers.

Consideration of SB38 Projects

Mr. Wheeler stated that he added an additional item to the list of projects that had been reviewed at a previous meeting. The portion of Route 16 from Costello Tire to Williamson Avenue has not been touched yet. At this time there is an anticipated Route 16 Project surplus in the amount of \$200,000. Mr. Poulin suggested that rather than simply milling the asphalt as planned, that the Council consider actually removing the asphalt and concrete roadway bed. He anticipates that the cost to do this would be \$50,000. It is not a full box cut, but rather a transitional process. The contractor will use the existing gravel, add additional gravel and then pave. Mr. Poulin stated that it was not a complete rebuild but would be better than milling and paving. Councilor Rozek moved, with a second by Councilor Theberge, to allow the contractor to increase the level of roadbed rehab from Twelfth Street to Williamson Avenue to include removal of all asphalt and concrete roadway, with a projected cost to not exceed \$50,000.

Said monies will be taken from the anticipated surplus funds of the project. So moved, the motion carried.

Further discussion took place regarding the funding and projects. SB38 Funding is \$203,000 and the anticipated Route 16 surplus is \$200,000. Therefore, the total funds available to complete projects is \$403,000. Of that amount, \$50,000 will be used for the upgraded work on Route 16. The Council feels that the important project items are LED lighting, the Bridge Street/Hutchins Street intersection and the Riverwalk match. It was agreed, that Bridge/Hutchins Street intersection decision will be on hold until after the EPA Superfund meeting on September 19th and Mr. Wheeler will contact NHDOT regarding the 20% match funds for the Riverwalk project and verify that the Northern Borders monies can be used toward the match.

There being no further business for the public Work Session, Councilor Higbee moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan Allain to move into non-public session at 7:18 pm. Roll call resulted all in the affirmative the motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Elaine Riendeau
City Clerk