

City Council Work Session
January 22, 2018

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

Others present: City Manager Jim Wheeler, City Clerk Elaine Riendeau, School Superintendent Corinne Cascadden, Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, Marcella Houle, Eric Thomas, Bob Debbie Goddard, Julie King, Bob Rodrigue, Brynna Kelley, Aaron Dupuis, several members of the public, Barbara Tetreault *Berlin Daily Sun*.

Mayor Grenier called the meeting to order at 6:30

Snowmobile Trail

Mr. Wheeler reported that last Friday the City received a petition from people in the Highland Park area requesting that a snowmobile trail be established on what is now Goddard Hill Road. This is the former 12th Street Extension. Preliminary research supports that this is a Class VI road that was discontinued some time ago. If this matter needs to go further, we would want a legal opinion on the status of the street.

There needs to be 100 feet of frontage on a city street for a building permit and Mr. Goddard was granted the permit with 100 feet on Goddard Hill Road. Councilor Remillard asked for a clarification of the request and Mr. Wheeler read the petition and stated that the residents are asking for an ordinance to allow riders to use 500 feet of Goddard Hill Road as a snowmobile trail.

Ms. Laflamme stated that she has worked with several owners and has done research on that 500 feet of property. In her research she found that the land is a public way. Councilor Nelson questioned the purpose of the request if this is already a public way. Mr. Wheeler noted that there is not an official snowmobile trail.

Eric Thomas said that the trail used to come down off of Balsams Street and the groomer would go to there. The Tremblay's have a gate; however they have agreed to move a rock to allow snowmobiles through. Councilor Remillard asked to see the written permission granted from the Tremblays and Mr. Rodrigue produced it. Mr. Rodrigue also noted that the trail was moved to alleviate traffic in front of the Goddard's home. He added that with landowner permission comes a \$2 million insurance policy paid for by the State.

Mr. Goddard questioned the permission granted saying that it would need to be a connector trail with no other access on the property. Responding to a question about how far the groomer goes, Mr. Rodrigue stated that the trail has not been groomed this year. Mayor Grenier indicated that we would need a legal determination of Goddard Hill Road and we also need to address riding on city streets that can't be done legally. There would need to be a change in the ordinance to allow snowmobilers access to the road to get to the trail.

Mayor Grenier said that it is not up to the City to get involved between private property owners. Mr. Goddard stated that there are two landowners that are adamant that the snowmobiles are not going through. Mayor Grenier added that from the city standpoint there is 500 feet that is possibly a Class VI road and a potential city ordinance to access trails. The Police Department will need to be involved to offer guidance on access. Mr. Rodrigue noted that people are leaving from their homes around the perimeter of the city and all of those will need to be addressed. Mayor Grenier closed by saying that all will have to work together and the neighbors will have to work with the Goddard's.

NH Scholars Program

Corinne Cascadden reported that 7th and 8th graders in Berlin schools have won a lottery by being invited to participate in a federal program to increase the number of low-income middle and high school students to enter and succeed in post-secondary education. Berlin was one of seven schools chosen to participate. With this program, all 7th and 8th grade students who choose to go to college will receive a scholarship equivalent to a PELL grant or approximately \$6,000.

There is also the opportunity for a "Running Start" program in which students can achieve college credits in high school and could graduate with one year of an Associate's Degree in place. Councilor Remillard confirmed that every student in 7th and 8th grade is eligible. Councilor Rozek complimented the program and the schools for putting these opportunities in place.

Review Investment Policy

RSA 48:16 requires that the Council adopts an investment policy yearly. Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Morgan Allain to adopt the investment policy as presented. Councilor Theberge asked if the reporting in Item 8 of the policy is being done and Ms. Chase confirmed that it is. Councilors asked if they could be copied on the report. All voted in favor of the motion.

Mileage Reimbursement Rate

The IRS mileage rate has gone from .54 per mile to .54.5 per mile and the Council typically adopts changes by motion. Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Nelson to accept the IRS mileage reimbursement rate of .54.5 per mile. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Theberge questioned supervisors using their own cars for city business and Mr. Wheeler noted that he will look into it.

HB 1381

Mr. Wheeler explained that HB 324 which would require all utility valuations to be based on net values has not been finalized in the Legislature yet and the new House Bill #1381 is introduced. It would cap values at the net book value of the utility. The City would lose \$78 million of utility value. Notice of the bill came late last week and it is being heard tomorrow. Mayor Grenier agreed to go to the hearing. Councilor Remillard moved with a second from Councilor Rozek to send a letter to the House Ways and Means Committee opposing House Bill 1381. So moved, the motion carried.

Hawker Peddler License

Mr. Wheeler explained that Elaine Riendeau had done some research with the Secretary of State's office regarding when we should be requesting a Hawker Peddler License. It was determined that the City has control over city permits and fees; however we do not have any control over what the State requires. It was agreed that a committee would be convened consisting of the Chamber, Main Street Program, PD and members of the Council as well. Councilor Remillard, Councilor Higbee, Paula Kinney, Councilor Nelson on behalf of the Chamber, Pamela Laflamme and PD were named as committee members.

Non-Public Session

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Theberge to go into nonpublic session per RSA 91-A:31I(d) land matters. So moved, the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Councilor Rozek moved to come out of non-public session; Councilor Remillard seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to seal the minutes until the Mayor and City Manager deem it appropriate to release them as releasing them would make the action taken ineffective; so moved, the motion carried

Councilor Rozek moved to adjourn; Councilor Nelson seconded and the motion carried. The meeting ended at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Tremblay
Administrative Assistant

Minutes are unofficial until they have been accepted by the City Council by motion.