

City Council Work Session December 17, 2018

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

Others present: City Manager Jim Wheeler, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Community Development Director, Pamela Laflamme, School Superintendent Corinne Cascadden, Ken Gordon CEO of Coos County Family Health, Barbara Tetreault, *Berlin Daily Sun*

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Morgan Allain to amend the agenda to include a thank you letter to Joe Kenney. So moved, the motion carried.

Motion to Authorize Execution of TANS

Mr. Wheeler explained that the sole purpose of the TAN is to pay current year expenses in anticipation of tax receipts. Any funding used by the city will be charged 2.25% interest. Councilor Rozek confirmed that we are not able to use money from other City funds as a loan.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to execute a Tax Anticipation Note (TAN) until we receive tax revenues from 2018 and authorizing the Mayor, City Manager, and City Treasurer to sign on the City's behalf. So moved, the motion carried unanimously.

Referring to the Board of Assessors not yet having approved a statistical update done by KRT, Councilor Rozek stated that it may be better to increase taxes and give the board time to work it out. He added that the board is having a difficult time with the assessing firm's calculation.

Mayor Grenier noted that would contribute to further degradation of utility properties. The factor has gone from 114 to a factor of 96. Councilor Higbee said that he would feel differently if the need for TANs was due to carelessness or an ongoing thing. He does not see this as a trend.

Economic Development and Marketing Strategy

Ms. Laflamme reported that BIDPA is looking to do a marketing strategy for the city. The discussion was to research where the city is now, emerging areas of growth, trends, and using the data to put together a marketing plan to attract new business and look at what may be stopping the City from experiencing growth. The strategy will be routed in economics, and identifying what is driving the economy. The proposed budget is \$40,000 that are not taxpayer dollars. Councilor Rozek asked about marketing and Ms. Laflamme stated that a component of the strategy will be to tell us how best to market the City. Mayor Grenier mentioned a 54 minute video was put together by North Country Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Laflamme said that BIDPA wants to work in concert with other efforts in the region. Councilor Higbee expressed that by looking at the whole city, someone from the outside may see our resources in a different light.

Nellie Mae Funding

Ms. Cascadden explained that there is a resolution asking to accept an additional \$200,000 from the Nellie Mae Foundation to work collaboratively with SAU 20. The existing grant put students together from both SAUs and put teachers together; there was community outreach as well. Nellie Mae was interested in the project and the schools reapplied with a different spin. A major factor in education is

the loss of stabilization funds. The additional Nellie Mae funds will be used to hire a communication specialist to work actively on educating the legislature about the importance of stabilization aid in the North Country. The grant is for 16 months. Nellie Mae has advised that there could be additional funding if necessary.

Mayor Grenier said that there have been many bills submitted to the Legislature regarding education funding. It is clear that the Coos County delegation still does not understand stabilization vs equity. There may need to be a meeting in Concord to explain the situation that Berlin is in.

Other

Mayor Grenier stated that he wants to deliver a letter to Joe Kenney thanking him for the service he provided during his time as Executive Councilor. Councilor Rozek made the point that there should also be a letter to incoming Councilor Mike Cryans. Councilor Morgan Allain moved with a second from Councilor Otis to authorized Mayor Grenier to sign a letter to Councilor Kenney and to send a letter welcoming Mike Cryans to his new job.

Non-Public Session

Councilor Morgan Allain moved with a second from Councilor Otis to enter into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3II(d) land matters. All voted in favor by roll call.

Councilor Rozek moved to come out of non-public session; Councilor second handed and the motion carried unanimously.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to seal the minutes of the real estate transaction as releasing them would render the proposed action ineffective. So moved, the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Mayor Grenier moved on to the Regular Meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Tremblay
Administrative Assistant

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