

**City Council Work Session
January 27, 2020**

Present were: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Rozek, Higbee, Eastman, Otis, Theberge, Remillard, Morgan and Berthiaume

Others present: City Manager James Wheeler, Fire Chief James Watkins, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Richard Laflamme, Barbara Tetreault, *Berlin Daily Sun* and public.

Mayor Grenier opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Fire Department Narcan Grant

Chief Watkins reported that Local Union 1088 asked about a Narcan grant through the State of NH. In this program, when an overdose is encountered, emergency responders can leave a narcan kit with the family. This is not a solution but it's a help. The Grant will provide 50 kits and will not cost the city anything. The in-kind of \$4,544 will come from training provided by the State. They will train every shift so that there is no overtime involved. Councilor Berthiaume asked what the training is for and Chief Watkins replied that it will train the firefighters to train people to use the Narcan. He added that it is not the intent for the Fire Department to be administering Narcan unless there is a dire emergency.

Councilor Remillard commented that she has had the training and noted that kits expire in one year. She asked if the State will replenish and Chief Watkins stated that it is a federally funded program which may or may not be funded. Councilor Morgan confirmed that there is one dose per kit. Councilor Berthiaume affirmed that the Fire Department is called out for every overdose. Mayor Grenier questioned whether making the kits available is enabling the addict to continue; he asked if there is counselling. Chief Watkins indicated that the kit has a pamphlet that will give information regarding programs to beat addiction. Councilor Remillard stated that, with this grant, we are doing something. It takes some a long time before they are ready to go forward with treatment. Councilor Rozek asked what the frequency of overdoses is and Chief Watkins replied that the BEMS reported 26. He confirmed that the firefighters will be tracking the nature of their calls in more detail. A Resolution is drafted for the grant for the next meeting.

FD Department Gear Bids

Chief Watkins stated that when he took over in October, he saw that Chief Lacasse put money in the budget for replacing the existing turnout gear which is 18 years old and noncompliant. We went through the bid process and got a price of \$48,000 for gear that meets the specifications. There is \$35,600 in the budget and we reached out to the manufacturer to see if they would accept \$12,400 after July 1 and they were amenable to that.

Chief Watkins explained that he wants to use equipment money to develop a good program for cleaning gear as a means to prevent cancer. Firefighters would be provided with a second hood and an extra set of gloves. Equipment money could be used for the turnout gear but that would delay implementation of the new program. Mayor Grenier stated that it will take some time to acquire the equipment and there may be surpluses in other line items in the FD budget that can be used.

Councilor Higbee moved to award the bid for turnout gear to Bergeron Protective Clothing, Epsom, NH for \$48,000 with \$35,600 payable in this fiscal year and \$12,400 from either surplus or from a 2021 appropriation; Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried.

Council Policies and Rules of Order

Existing rules were presented to the Council. Mayor Grenier indicated that the Town of Alton was involved in a lawsuit that did not turn out in their favor because no time frame was mentioned in their rules for public speaking. He suggested a rule that would limit public comments to 3 minutes with the Chair having the ability to allow more time. In the discussion that followed, the Council suggested a 5 minute time limit with the Council having the authority to extend if necessary. Mayor Grenier added that vulgarity is not allowed and the speaker has to abide by the rules. Councilor Evans mentioned that the Board of Assessors adopted rules so that they are covered legally.

Councilor Remillard moved with a second from Councilor Eastman to add Section XXI to the Rules and Orders of the City Council:

“A time limit of 5 minutes shall be placed on any one individual speaking during Public Comments. The Mayor shall call for a vote of the Council to allow more time.” So moved, the motion carried.

Council Committee Appointments

Councilor Higbee moved with a second from Councilor Morgan to accept the following committee assignments. So moved, the motion carried.

BERLIN AIRPORT AUTHORITY: Mayor Paul Grenier, Chair; Councilor Otis, Councilor Eastman, Councilor Rozek, Councilor Higbee

COMMITTEE ON ACCOUNTS & CLAIMS: Mayor Paul Grenier, Chair; Councilor Remillard, Councilor Eastman, Councilor Rozek, Councilor Théberge

COMMITTEE ON TRAFFIC SAFETY & TRANSPORTATION: Councilor Remillard, Councilor Morgan, Councilor Rozek, Chair, Councilor Théberge, Councilor Otis (Alternate)

COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS: Councilor Otis, Councilor Morgan, Councilor Higbee, Councilor Berthiaume

COMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY ACTION (one appointment): Councilor Higbee

BUDGET COMMITTEE: Entire Council

SEWER APPEALS COMMITTEE: Entire Council with power to act.

Planning Board Member: Councilor Remillard

BIDPA Member: Councilor Berthiaume, Ex Officio; Councilor Higbee, Council Appointment

Councilor Rozek confirmed that it is required by Charter that the Council meet twice per month, on the first and third Mondays. Meetings in a work session occur as needed.

Legislative Update

HB 1237 regarding the reporting of information required for utility property valuation. Mr. Wheeler noted that he sent a letter supporting this bill. Mayor Grenier added that utilities have held back the information needed to calculate their value.

HB1218 & HB1225 are bills supported by NHMA. Governor Sununu vetoed the bill last year and the Council has not yet taken a position on the bills. Currently, net metering is for solar projects up to 1 megawatt and these bills would extend net metering to 5 megawatts. Councilor Higbee stated that if there is incentive, this could encourage neighborhood groups that want to pool. Mayor Grenier said that the Governor is talking about a compromise. Councilor Eastman asked if there has been any interest in a solar farm. He was informed that rates are too low to sell to the grid; a solar farm could be beneficial if the power can be used locally. The Coos Loop has a lack of capacity here and in Whitefield.

Councilor Rozek moved to send a letter of support and possibly testify; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried.

HB1156; HB1438; HB1426; HB1427; HB1165; HB1688 are six bills dealing with OHRV and OHRV regulation. There are Public Hearings Wednesday, January 29, 2020 for all the bills. There is a movement to table these into one big bill and form a study committee to determine the impact of OHRV's on the economy; and to hear from the public on areas of discontent. Mayor Grenier reported his intent to testify along with the Chamber, police, ATV Club and multiple others.

Councilor Remillard feared that a Legislative Committee would come up with a statewide solution that takes local control of ATV's away from municipalities. Councilor Berthiaume confirm that these bills are damaging to the ATV industry and are creating negativity. Councilor Eastman stated that if these bill go into a Study Committee, then each bill will not be heard separately.

Mayor Grenier added that there are those who support OHRVs; those who support OHRV's but are negatively impacted; and those who just want it stopped. The key is to find solutions for the people are negatively impacted. The State and Town of Gorham are working on a solutions. Councilor Berthiaume stated that the DB it's real to the people who are living on the trail. Councilor Theberge said that people are buying homes for OHRV and snowmobiling. Councilor Rozek commented that there are some communities that would never allow OHRV's in their own municipality and their views could be enacted on the whole state. Councilor Remillard voiced that the OHRV decisions should be decided upon in each community. Mayor Grenier agreed with local control.

Downtown Revitalization

Councilor mentioned that HGTV is looking for a Main Street to revitalize for a show. The community needs to be less than 40,000 people. He thought the governing body should support.

Councilor Higbee said that there is a meeting to talk about the future of downtown beginning at 6:00 Tuesday, January 28, 2020 at City Hall.

Non Public Session

Councilor Higbee moved with a second from Councilor Berthiaume to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II(d) land matters and RSA 91-A:3II (e) consideration or negotiation of pending claims. So moved, the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Mr. Wheeler updated the Council on Land Matters and Pending Claims

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

Councilor Rozek moved to seal the minutes as releasing them would make any action taken ineffective; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried.

Councilor Rozek moved to adjourn; Councilor Berthiaume seconded and the motion carried. The meeting ended at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Tremblay
Administrative Assistant

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