

City Council Work Session

Pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, Section 8 and Emergency Order #12, Section 3

June 8, 2020

At 6:30 p.m. Mayor Grenier opened the meeting. Due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04 this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to the meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, this is to confirm that we are:

- a) *Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means;*

We are utilizing the Zoom platform for this electronic meeting. All members of the Council have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through the Zoom platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone # 1-646-558-8656, meeting ID 84693323306, or by clicking on the City Council agenda on the City's website, www.berlinnh.gov.

- b) *Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting:*

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom or telephonically. Instructions have been provided on the City of Berlin's website of the Council at City Council-agendas

- c) *Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access:*

If anybody has a problem, please call Pam Laflamme at 603-752-8587 or e-mail at: plaflamme@berlinnh.gov

- d) *Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting*

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, we will adjourn the meeting and have it rescheduled at that time.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by Roll Call vote. By roll call, each member is to state their presence, and whether there is anyone in the room during this meeting, which is required under the Right to Know law.

Members present at roll call: Councilors Remillard, Higbee, Otis, Eastman, Morgan, Theberge, Rozek, Berthiaume and Mayor Grenier at City Hall.

Also present at City Hall, City Manager James Wheeler, via Zoom: City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, Superintendent of Schools Julie King, Fire Chief James Watkins, School Board Members Matt Buteau and Jeanne Charest, School Business Administrator Marion Moore, Public Works Director Ben Hall, Library Director Ann Brungot, Barbara Tetreault, *Berlin Daily Sun*, and public

FY2021 Budget

Mayor Grenier noted that he met with Ms. King and Ms. Moore to review the school budget. He and the City Manager have been working with the Council's directive of lowering the tax rate by \$1.

Mr. Wheeler explained the changes in revenues. Motor Vehicle Registrations will have \$60,000 added; Highway Block Grants will be decreased based on a State projection of 7.5% reduction communicated by NHMA. We anticipate a premium return from Primex of \$34,425; \$100,000 increase by Schools for a total change to Revenue of an added \$176,025.00

Expenses will be reduced by decreasing \$45,000 from the capital expense of a minivan for the school department; decreasing Marston School fencing by \$5,000; reducing the Loader mounted snowblower by \$45,000 due to a refined estimate; reducing the garbage packer by \$57,500 due to a refined estimate.

Mr. Wheeler went on to say that there are expenses that will need to increase such as adding \$85,000 for the demolition of the Princess Theater and of 758 Second Avenue; \$100,000 to the schools, offset by the accompanying revenue. The UFB will contribute to reducing the tax rate with \$550,000, an increase of \$150,000. With these changes, the tax rate is decreased by \$1 to \$38.82

Councilor Rozek confirmed that the demolition of the Princess is a high priority. Councilor Otis asked if this action will maintain a healthy UFB and Mayor Grenier stated that it maintains what we had.

Mr. Wheeler cautioned that the reval could change the calculation; these are estimates and there is always a chance that the projection is not correct. We have been very accurate in the past. Councilor Remillard said that she is happy with the \$1 decrease adding that it is encouraging for people.

Councilor Remillard moved to add I & I to the agenda; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

I & I Discussion

Mr. Wheeler stated that we held back projects that were set to move forward in anticipation of receiving stimulus funds. There does not appear to be any stimulus for these projects and the recommendation is that we move forward with a pipeline project and the flat roof project that will use \$500,000 to tear down buildings that contribute to I & I. Councilor Higbee confirmed that the buildings are tax deeded and unoccupied. Mr. Wheeler added that they have been vacant for some time. Councilor Remillard moved to go forward with the two I & I projects; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Non-Public Session

Councilor Higbee moved with a second from Councilor Morgan to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3II (a) the dismissal, promotion or compensation of any public employee (b) hiring (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 unanimously by roll call.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Tremblay
Administrative Assistant

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