

City Council Work Session

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

July 6, 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 860 7202 6117, 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.

Present at roll call were: Mayor Grenier, Councilor Rozek at City Hall; via Zoom, Councilors Theberge, Otis, Remillard, Higbee, Morgan, Eastman, Councilor Berthiaume was absent.

Councilor Higbee moved with a second from Councilor Morgan to adjourn the non-meeting. So moved, the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Work Session

Present were: City Manager James Wheeler, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Community Development Director Pam Laflamme, Board of Assessors Chair Robert Goddard, Public Works Director Ben Hall, Fire Chief James Watkins, Library Director Ann Brungot, Police Chief Pete Morency, Assistant Chief Dan Buteau, Officer Dennis Gayle, a representative of the Moultonborough PD, Kodiak (police K-9) Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Daily Sun and public

Mayor Grenier called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Councilor Higbee moved to seal the contents of the non-meeting; Councilor Morgan seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Mayor Grenier noted that the 155-B order would be discussed first as the PD is having connection problems. There is a public hearing scheduled for 7:30 p.m.

155-B Order for 35 Western Avenue

Chief Watkins stated that this order was in the making prior to him becoming Fire Chief. The order addresses a safety issue and it comes after several attempts have been made to work with the owner. This order will allow us to remedy the problems with the house and then lien any property in the State under the same ownership.

Councilor Eastman confirmed that the order is enforceable and there is a game plan on how to enforce. Councilor Remillard moved with a second from Councilor Theberge to authorize a 155-B order on a property at 35 Western Avenue. So moved, the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

BPD Canine Program

Chief Morency reported that during the budget process he had asked to fund a Canine Program for drug enforcement and for tracking. Berlin has its share of drug problems and if an elderly person is missing, time is of the essence. There is a \$52,000 price tag with a car, training and buying a dog. Chief Morency stated that Officer Dennis Gayle owns a kennel and he wants to donate a certified dog. Chief Morency noted that he wants to finance the canine unit without using taxpayer dollars and that can be done using drug forfeiture funds, combined with the \$5,000 donation from Jericho Wind. Training would come from the PD budget.

Officer Dennis Gayle, said that as a Marine, he was deployed with narcotics and apprehension dogs. He introduced Kodiak, and expressed his willingness to donate the dog. Chief Morency noted that he confirmed with Primex that there is insurance coverage for the K-9 program. Councilor Eastman expressed his support. An officer from Moultonborough explained how having a canine is a force multiplier for the pd. The Hillsborough Selectmen see the benefit of having a dog in the PD budget; it is an additional tool for the community.

Councilor Morgan asked how long a dog is expected to work and Officer Gayle replied 8 to 9 years. Councilor Higbee confirmed that Officer Gayle will be the primary handler; however other officers will be involved with training. The dog will work primarily for Berlin, but if there is a need, he can be made available for the north country. Councilor Remillard moved to support the purchase and commitment to

having a dog as part of the Berlin Police Force; Councilor Theberge seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Councilor Higbee moved to recess the work session for a public hearing on Resolution 2020-14 Library Grant; Councilor Remillard seconded all voted unanimously in favor of the motion by roll call.

Councilor Higbee moved to continue with the work session; Councilor Remillard seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Mason Street Bid Results

Mr. Wheeler explained that the Mason Street Bridge project was put out to bid and there were 10 sets of plans that went out; however no bids were received for the project. HEB contacted many of the contractors and they expressed that the short window in the time the penstock has a draw down was the reason they did not bid.

Since this project cannot be done this year. Mr. Wheeler asked if the Council wants to go ahead with Hutchins Street as it is a similar amount of money. Councilor Rozek confirmed that we will put the bridge project out in January of 2021. Mr. Wheeler reasoned that if we borrow for Hutchins Street this year, we would need to finance Mason St Bridge next year. Mayor Grenier said that we will be doing \$1.1 million of work but instead of doing Mason St Bridge, we will do Hutchins Street. Councilor Rozek mentioned a separation of pavement on the south bound lane in the last project which he would like repaired as part of the Hutchins St. Project. Councilor Eastman stated that before shuffling funds around, he wanted to talk about Route 110.

Route 110 Urban Compact

Councilor Eastman said that when this was addressed by the Council, there was no urgency to get it done. Mayor Grenier clarified by saying that there was a general push to extend the urban compact to Jericho and there needs to be a lot of work done on the road before the city takes it over. One of the two bridges needs to be replaced and the road needs to be repaved. The State was not willing to do that work now but they encouraged getting the road on the 10 year plan with no guarantee of when it will be funded.

Councilor Eastman said that there is development that will come to Jericho Road if water and sewer are extended. He said that there are housing developers waiting in the wings and projects are being held up by bureaucracy. Mayor Grenier indicated that no one has approached the Planning Board with conceptual designs. Mr. Wheeler noted that extending sewer would mean adding pumping station upgrades of about \$500,000. If we have development that relates to jobs, we can apply for public facilities money for the project.

Councilor Eastman asked what is needed to move forward with adding water and sewer and Mr. Wheeler replied we would need a proposed project, with studies on job creation. Councilor Higbee asked how many dollars it takes and how long it would take to get the return on property taxes. Councilor Eastman said that we would have to wait for developers to show up before water and sewer are put in. Mayor Grenier added that engineered plans would need to come before the Planning Board.

Construction Loan Financing Restoration

Mason Street Bridge is out and will be funded at another time. The Resolution in the packet is for the Fire Department building improvements and pavement of Hutchins Street from East Mason to Bridge Street.

General Assessing Contract

Mr. Wheeler stated that we have a contract agreement with Corcoran for 5 years of general assessing. They were the only firm to submit a proposal. Their cost is higher than KRT. In terms of budget, there is a total of \$142,500 for assessing. We will be short \$17,000 which can be absorbed in the general assessing line item. There were questions about a statistical update vs. full revaluation and Mr. Wheeler said that he would send out a link to a manual put out by the ASB that has all the terms. Councilor Rozek asked about the hearings for the public and Mr. Goddard said that they can be done telephonically or via zoom and there is more time given for the hearings. Mr. Wheeler noted that the DRA approved the contract with a few minor revisions. Councilor Higbee moved to approve the contract with Corcoran for the General Assessing subject to the DRA recommended revisions; Councilor Otis seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

566 Burgess Street

Mr. Wheeler reported that Gary Zalenski is asking if the City would receive a building as a donation. Typically the answer would be no; however this building has a flat roof that is connected to the sewer system. The building could be demolished with our own sewer money. Councilor Otis stated that there were many gallons of oil dumped into the building. Mr. Wheeler said that we would want an environmental review. Mayor Grenier suggested that the owner be asked to do a phase 1 environmental review that costs about \$3,000. Councilors asked for costs for environmental abatement and the cost of taking it down. It will be brought back at a future meeting.

Tax Deeded properties

Councilor Rozek commented that we need to get rid of these properties. Councilor Eastman suggested having the properties on the web site so that people could bid on them. Mr. Wheeler stated that we have an obligation to put the properties out to bid. Councilor Higbee noted that we've looked at the properties one by one and make the best decision for each such as releasing to abutters, densifying or putting out to bid. He questioned whether we would lose that ability if the properties are published. Mr. Wheeler suggested that staff come back with recommendations for six with all the information needed to make a decision.

At 8:45. There being no further business in Work Session, Mayor Grenier moved on to the Regular Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Tremblay
Administrative Assistant

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