

**City Council Work Session  
November 21, 2016**

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

Others present included City Manager Jim Wheeler, Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, City Clerk Elaine Riendeau, Northern Human Services Director Charlie Cotton, AV Home Care Interim Director Pauline Tibbets, Barbara Tetreault Berlin Daily Sun

**AV Home Health Care Annual Update**

Ms. Tibbets reported that Margo Sullivan left in September and she has stepped in as interim director. Funding for the program is derived from Title 20 and the agency helps care for people so that they can stay in their homes. There are LNA's who provide personal care, household help as well as running errands. The average age of the workers is over 50 and there are two who are 81 years old. They are a very dedicated crew. The clientele of the program is changing with less elderly and more assistance going to those with mental health issues. Funding from the city's budget stays in the city and supplements Title 20 funding; it also helps with emergency needs.

Ms. Tibbets spoke about a worthwhile charity that started with an elderly lady sending an extra \$5 to help others. Dorothy's Gift helps clients who cannot afford services. There is now an annual campaign to fundraise. All of the funding goes directly to client care and none to administration. Ms. Tibbets also informed the Council that a giving tree will go up next week at the Northeast Credit Union where people can buy an item for a person in need. Ms. Tibbets thanked the Council and left the meeting at this time.

**Northern Human Services**

Charlie Cotton explained that one in four people will have mental illness in their lifetime. Northern Human Services has been in the area for over 50 years. They are a private nonprofit that provides timely care to those in need of mental health assistance. They serve 7% of the residents of Berlin or 677 people and they have provided emergency services to 196 residents. There are a number of grant funded programs and the city money is used for match. Mr. Cotton reported that an average of two people per week are involuntarily committed. There is an increasing opiate problem affecting every family.

Councilor Remillard asked if the availability of beds has gotten better and Mr. Cotton replied that it has not. There is a short term unit at the state hospital; however some may wait days for admission. There is an effort going on for problem solving with northern hospitals, trying to figure out the best solutions for a severe situation in Coos County and the North Country.

Mr. Cotton went on to say that Northern Human Services joined a coalition to improve the wellbeing of children in Coos County. Cathy McDowell is the director. Studies show that a child's brain is 90% formed in the first five years of life. Early childhood education is making progress in changing the lives of children in Coos County and a tracking system is trying to prove the changes. It will be a centralized

way of knowing factors like child poverty that affect how children are doing. Councilors viewed the web site at <http://investincooskids.daveystrategies.com>

Mayor Grenier asked if Northern Human Services works with the faith community. Mr. Cotton indicated that the churches of all denominations are in support of clients. Mr. Cotton thanked the Mayor and Council for the support and left the meeting at this time.

#### **Non-Public Session**

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Theberge to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (d) Land Matters. So moved, the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

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

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Morgan Allain to seal the minutes until transactions are enacted as releasing them would render the action taken ineffective. So moved with the motion carried.

There being no further business in work session, Mayor Grenier moved on to the Regular Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Susan Tremblay  
Administrative Assistant