

City Council Work Session

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

January 11, 2021

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 **893 1496 0466**; Passcode 358974, 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 at City Hall and in the room with James Wheeler, Councilors Higbee, Remillard, Otis, Morgan, Theberge, Berthiaume, Rozek and Eastman who noted they were alone in their respective rooms.

Others present: City Manager James Wheeler, Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, Fire Chief Jay Watkins, Finance Director Holly Larsen, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Daily Sun.

Investment Policy

Mr. Wheeler explained that the City's investment policy is reviewed on an annual basis which is required for the audit. There are no reasons to change anything and the policy is to assure safety and liquidity; yield is secondary. Mayor Grenier confirmed that we bank with Northway which has the best rates at this point. Councilor Higbee moved to reaffirm the investment policy for the new year; Councilor Berthiaume seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Letter to NHDOT regarding Route 110 and OHRV's

Ms. Laflamme reported that a letter to the NHDOT has been reviewed by BIDPA Chair Mike Caron, AV Chamber of Commerce President, Bronson Frizzell and Mayor Paul Grenier. The joint letter proposes a plan to ask the DOT to help facilitate economic development by lowering the speed limit and extending the 40 mph zone to the entrance of Jericho Park. This proposal is not in lieu of the urban compact conversation but rather the first of several steps to increase development and activity in the Route 110 corridor. Lowering the speed limit is also a safety consideration with the different types of traffic on the route. BIDPA is proposing to pay for changes in signage to get this done quickly. The Chamber of Commerce would help to get the word out through social media. Ms. Laflamme added that the letter was written with the consent of the representative of the developers along the route; she helped revise and edit the letter. Councilor Remillard moved to accept the letter as written and to send to Deputy DOT Director Bill Cass; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Berlin Face Covering Ordinance

Mayor Grenier informed the Council that the sunset clause written into the mask ordinance takes effect January 17. At the time that the ordinance was passed, the State had not stepped up with a mask mandate. Mayor Grenier recommended that Berlin allow its ordinance to sunset and let the State's mandate govern. Councilor Remillard commented that there is no harm in continuing the City's ordinance. She moved to extend the ordinance for another 30 days to be reviewed in two weeks. Mr. Wheeler noted that the State's law supersedes the City's ordinance; however not everyone understands that and foregoing the ordinance may give the impression that masks are no longer necessary in the City. He added that an extension could be done by motion since the issue has already been debated and a public hearing was held. Councilor Rozek seconded Councilor Remillard's motion to extend the mask ordinance for another 30 days to be reviewed in two weeks. So moved, the motion carried by roll call vote. All Councilors voted affirmatively with the exception of Councilor Otis who voted in the negative. The ordinance will be reviewed 2/25/21.

TAP Funding

The next round of TAP funding is coming up with a letter of interest due by February 5, 2021. Ms. Laflamme stated that, in the last round, we submitted a project that would complete the Hutchins Street sidewalk from Napert Village to Columbia Avenue. This is 1760 feet of sidewalk with an estimated project cost of \$700,000. The City's match would be approximately \$143,000. There was some discussion about having BWW to the work; however Ms. Laflamme noted that any project would have to go out for bid. Mayor Grenier noted that if awarded, the project would not get done until next year or the year after. He asked if the Council supports the proposal. Councilor Remillard asked if the

City is committed to the project or is there the option to not move forward. Ms. Laflamme confirmed that the Council is not committed. She added that a resolution will come when the grant is submitted. Councilor Remillard moved to authorize a letter of interest to the NHDOT for TAP funds for an extension of sidewalk on Hutchins Street from Napert Village to Columbia Avenue; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Other

Chief Watkins gave an update on the repair of the ladder truck. Chapman was hired as the trucking company to haul the ladder truck to Barre, Vt. The FD has an agreement to rent a ladder truck until their truck is repaired. Chief Watkins confirmed that the truck was looked at by a local mechanic; however it was found that the company in Barre has the expertise to go through the entire truck. They have a pit and a lift so that the undercarriage of the truck can be properly analyzed. Councilor Eastman expressed concern that there would be a delay in getting the repairs done. Mr. Wheeler assured that the repairs will be done asap.

Councilor Remillard asked about cost? Mr. Wheeler said that the \$15000 estimate was for work to be done to the hangars and we are hoping to have an estimate for frame work as well. Chief Watkins mentioned that the truck has had questionable issues with hydraulics which was brought forward by the former chief. He added that the ladder truck company went out of business in 1998 making the parts obsolete. Councilor Eastman asked if the truck could be undercoated to protect from salt and Chief Watkins said he would ask. Councilor Rozek pointed out that the truck is kept in a heated garage; he questioned whether salt corrosion could be prevented by rinsing the undercarriage of the truck with water. Mayor Grenier confirmed that it would be \$5,000 per month for renting a truck and he estimated it would be out of service for at least 8 weeks.

Non-Public Session

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

Mr. Wheeler reviewed a pending claim.

Councilor Higbee moved with a second from Councilor Remillard to come out of non-public session. The motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Councilor Remillard moved to seal the minutes indefinitely as releasing them would render any action ineffective; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Non-Meeting

Councilor Rem Higbee moved with a second from Councilor Theberge to go into non-meeting per RSA 91-a:2 II (b) Collective Bargaining. So moved, the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Councilor Rozek moved to adjourn; Councilor Theberge seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call. The meeting ended at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Tremblay

Administrative Assistant

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