

City Council Work Session
April 19, 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 825 4073 9754; Passcode 578640, 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: Councilors Remillard, Eastman, Theberge, Berthiaume, Morgan, Rozek, Higbee and Otis who acknowledged that they were alone in their respective rooms; Mayor Grenier was at City Hall with City Manager James Wheeler.

Others present: Community Development Director Pam Laflamme, Finance Director Holly Larsen, Fire Chief James Watkins, Chief of Police Peter Morency, Deputy Chief of Police Dan Buteau, DTC Attorney Eric Maher, Barbara Tetreault Berlin Daily Sun and Members of the Public.

Mask Ordinance

City Manager James Wheeler discussed Governor Sununu's statewide mask mandate which expired on Friday, April 16, 2021. The City Council had voted on February 1, 2021 to keep the mask ordinance in place for as long as the State mandate. Mayor Grenier commented that Portsmouth is the only City left in New Hampshire with a mask mandate. He also mentioned that most people have received their first or both vaccines and feels we should see a reduction in positive cases in our area within a few weeks. He also suggested that members of the public continue what they're doing and not let their guards down as the numbers of positive Covid cases are still high in our area.

Mr. Wheeler advised he met with the task force today and a decision was made to still require the mask wearing in municipal buildings for a couple more weeks and revisit again at a later date. Councilor Remillard encourages businesses to continue requesting the mask wear. She feels we will see changes in the next month due to the population being vaccinated. Councilor Theberge commented he agrees with Mayor Grenier and Councilor Remillard and believes people in the community are used to it and are doing the right thing by wearing a mask. Councilor Higbee shared a screen with updates for Coos County's cases as of this morning from the NY Times. He demonstrated that our area is still at very high risk and the virus is still actively around us. Mayor Grenier stated his press release will ask to continue with CDC guidelines till we see the numbers of cases in our area reduced.

Non-Meeting

At 6:45pm, Mayor Grenier requested to enter in Non-Meeting per RSA 91-A:3 II; (I) Consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel and RSA 91-A:2, I. (b) Collective Bargaining. Councilor Theberge moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to go into Non-Meeting per RSA 91-A:3 II; (I) Consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel and RSA 91-A:2, I. (b) Collective Bargaining. So moved, the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

At 7:06pm, Mayor, Council and Staff came out of Non-Meeting. Mayor Grenier requested to go back in Non-Meeting per RSA 91-A:3 II; (I) Consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel.

At 7:28pm, Mayor, Council and Staff came out of Non-Meeting. Mayor Grenier requested to go back in Non-Meeting to continue discussion per RSA 91-A:2, I. (b) Collective Bargaining.

At 8:00pm, Mayor, Council and Staff came out of Non-Meeting.

*Note: Councilor Berthiaume did not participate during the Non-Meeting related to Collective Bargaining.

Recess

At 8:00 p.m. there being no further business in Work Session, Mayor Grenier recessed for a few minutes before moving on to the Regular Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Danielle Rioux
Executive Assistant

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