

City Council Work Session December 5, 2016

Present were: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Otis, Remillard, Gentili, Higbee, Rozek, Morgan Allain and Nelson; Councilors Theberge was absent.

Others present included City Manager James Wheeler, City Clerk Elaine Riendeau, Public Works Director Mike Perreault, School Superintendent Corinne Cascadden, Health & Welfare Director Angela Martin Giroux, Finance Director Patty Chase, Carla Patrick, Barbara Tetreault Berlin Daily Sun and public

Mayor Grenier opened the meeting at 6:31 p.m.

Property Motion for 418 Church Street

Mr. Wheeler explained that there is a recommendation to offer 418 Church St. for sale. It is a single family residence with good architectural features; however it is in need of major renovations. Before demolition, contractors will be given a chance to bid on the property.

Councilor Rozek moved that the City Manager is hereby authorized, indefinitely until rescinded, to offer for sale at the earliest appropriate opportunity Map/Lot 120-327, 418 Church Street at a minimum bid of \$1,500.00 by sealed bid with conditions to bring the property up to code within a specified time. Councilor Nelson seconded and the motion carried.

Home Health Clinic

Mr. Wheeler presented a summary of clinic services and explained that historically there had been a nurse in the building all day and she provided the services. There is an average of 2 to 4 walk-ins per day; however we don't have the staff on board to continue the service. Councilor Remillard stated that she does not agree with expending the funds to keep visiting nurses when these are the services the Health Department should be doing. Mr. Wheeler noted that it does not make good financial sense to take a nurse away from billable hours. Mayor Grenier added that the program is in transition, and we are trying to make it work. Councilor Higbee commented that, looking into the future, appointments could be scheduled.

Ms. Martin Giroux stated that the nurses are training to rebuild and it may be a few months before they can consider taking walk ins. Mayor Grenier added that the issue can be revisited once the transition has occurred, perhaps having one or two clinic days per month. Councilor Rozek noted that if the nursing program cannot be made profitable, it will come up for review again.

Capital Improvement Plan

Mr. Wheeler presented the Council with the Capital Improvement Plan that goes from 2018 to 2023. This is an annual process that gives an idea of the needs in the community. The first draft of the annual budget will include the capital projects for fy 2018. Mr. Wheeler reviewed some of the projects:

GF 6 Hutchins St Rehab. This project would straighten Hutchins Street at Bridge Street.

GF 7 Riverwalk. This project is relevant to the Route 16 project already being constructed. There are two possible grant sources, Northern Borders and TAP funding. NCC rated the project #3 and it now goes to the DOT. We expect an answer this month.

GF70 Downtown Snow Melt Project. Seems like a real potential project.

GF-11 Repairs to FD Apparatus Floor. There is degradation of the apparatus floor at the FD due to years of use, salt and the fact that it was constructed in the horse drawn days. There are repairs that should be done.

GF-67 is the EMR for the Health Department

GF-59 is the conversion of all street lights from sodium to LED. Once replaced, there should be electrical savings of 50%

GF-62 Tennis Court Rehab. The High School tennis teams cannot play meets in Berlin due to conditions.

GF-72 City Hall Elevator. There is a chair lift that is about ten years beyond its useful life. Folks are struggling to get into the building. The project would take one of the stair wells to create an elevator shaft. There is possible CDBG and RDG money for this project. There is also other work that could be considered at the same time, such as carpeting and repainting.

SF-4, 5, 9 and 14 from the Sewer Fund are to modernize technology at pump stations.

Coming up in FY 19, the Fire Department has equipment needs with the ladder truck, engine 4 and engine 1.

Councilor Remillard questioned some of the priorities and made the point that we should be maintaining what we have such as tennis courts before adding new parks like the skate park. Mr. Wheeler reasoned that a project makes it into the plan and it can then be prioritized. There are a lot more needs than there is money for.

Mr. Wheeler speculated that there could be money left from the Route 16 project to straighten the curve on Hutchins St. Mayor Grenier suggested revisiting the CIP at a work session in January. He added that this is an educated planning tool.

There being no further business in work session, Mayor Grenier called a recess until the start of the Regular Meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Tremblay
Administrative Assistant