

City Council Work Session July 19, 2021

Present were: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Eastman, Theberge, Remillard, Berthiaume and Otis; Councilors Rozek, Higbee and Morgan were absent.

Others present: City Manager Jim Wheeler, Community Development Director Pam Laflamme, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Fire Chief James Watkins, William Carroll Berlin Daily Sun and Members of the Public including: Robert Haynes, Steve Korzen and Paul Martineau.

Mayor Grenier called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Dinner on the Bridge St Kieran's Center for the Arts

Mr. Wheeler presented to Council a communication from Monique Lavertu requesting permission to use the Bridge Street pedestrian bridge to host the "Dinner on the Bridge" fundraising event on Sunday September 12, 2021. Councilor Theberge moved to approve the request from Monique Lavertu to hold a fundraiser on the Bridge Street Bridge for Sunday September 12, 2021 from 8:30am to 3:30pm; Councilor Berthiaume seconded and the motion carried by majority in favor.

Recreation Director – request to fill

Mr. Wheeler advised Council the current Recreation Director, Terry Letarte, is retiring at the end of October and he is requesting permission to move forward in seeking applicants. Councilor Remillard moved to authorize Mr. Wheeler to advertise and fill the position of Recreation Director. Councilor Theberge seconded and the motion carried by majority in favor.

Firefighter – request to fill

Fire Chief James Watkins advised Council that a few weeks back one of his firefighters accepted a position at the Federal Prison. He is requesting permission to fill this position. He stated this position was one of the floaters which helps filling the vacation schedules and such. Councilor Remillard asked if a floater has a full schedule. Chief Watkins responded floaters have been getting 42 hour work weeks. Councilor Remillard moved to approve the hiring of a firefighter that is leaving due to filling another position. Councilor Berthiaume seconded and the motion carried by majority in favor.

Fire Department Medical Calls

Mayor Grenier advised this item was brought up by the City Council last week questioning how much the utilization of our municipal staff in answering ambulance calls from the private contractor. He asked Chief Watkins to enlighten Council on this item. Chief Watkins advised that shortly after Butler took over Berlin EMS, he and the Assistant Fire Chief Peter Donovan met with Butler's management team and discussed how to bridge the working relationship between Fire and EMS. He commented that Scott from Butler had asked why the Fire Department didn't go on medical calls with EMS. Chief Watkins advised at the time, the Fire Department would go on calls if they were requested. He commented that most municipal Fire Department that work with a private EMS agency will do what is called first response which means they will respond with the private ambulance to provide manpower, backup, a driver or whatever they need. He advised that Scott from Butler comes from the Conway area and the Fire Department goes on every medical call with the private ambulance. He commented he didn't feel like the Fire Department should go on every call with EMS. He explained they came up with a compromise to start going on what is the 911 determinant of Charlie, Delta and Echo. The 911 dispatch would take the call, give it a determinant and contact the Fire Department's dispatch center

and advise what the determinant is which would then initiate whether the Fire Department would go on the call or not. Chief Watkins advised he has instituted a program where he reviews every run and is working on educating the officers on codes to use. Councilor Remillard questioned if the Fire Department always dispatches two trucks on every call. Chief Watkins advised that yes, this is the Berlin way, but could be changed. Chief Watkins commented that he is working on standardizing the equipment so all vehicles would have the same equipment on it. Councilor Berthiaume commented she had a discussion with Chief Watkins and has budgetary concerns. She stated we have a for profit company (Butler) getting a subsidy from the City, but we also show an 80% increase in Police Department calls assisting EMS. Her concern is that we are paying subsidy but are also subsidizing a private company with City staff from two different departments. She stated the Fire Department is given a budget to work with every year and the City is also giving EMS a subsidy which she feels they should be able to work with. She stated she doesn't feel like the Fire Department should be going on every call as the Tax Payers are paying twice. Chief Watkins commented that for 2021, they're EMS calls have gone up, but the building fire calls have gone down. Mr. Wheeler asked Chief Watkins if there is added cost when they go on medical calls. Chief Watkins advised that no with maybe a slight increase in diesel. Mayor Grenier thanked Chief Watkins for his detailed explanation.

Other-Hazard Mitigation Planning

Chief Watkins advised he had the first meeting for the 2021 Hazard Mitigation update last week. He commented that in 2016 Councilor Higbee was part of the team. He stated June Garneau, owner/Planner at MAPS, who conducts all meetings asked if a member of Council would like to be involved again. He explained that they will meet once a month via zoom. Councilor Theberge volunteered.

Veterans Park Quote

Mr. Wheeler advised he received one quote from Wintergreen Landscaping to do what was requested. He explained he tried to obtain other quotes to comply with the purchasing ordinance. He contacted Four Seasons Landscaping, Daniels Landscaping and Landscaping with Styles. All of them are too busy this season and can't take more jobs. He commented that Landscaping with Styles recommended Wintergreen Landscaping because of the hydro seeding request. He stated the first step for Wintergreen Landscaping is to spray the grounds to eradicate growth. They would then loam, hydro seed it and care for it for three weeks to get it established. Councilor Eastman questioned if the grass is not established within the three weeks, will they stay on it till it's actually established. Mr. Wheeler responded that not by what they offered in this quote, but he could ask for them to make sure it's established. Councilor Remillard questioned what funding this was coming from. Mayor Grenier advised Council Contingency which has an available balance of \$9,600. Mayor Grenier suggested contributing \$7,000 from Council contingency then funding the balance through donations. He also stated he is willing to donate a substantial amount from his Mayor salary. Councilor Remillard moved to fund \$7,000 from Council contingency toward the Veterans Park landscaping. Councilor Theberge seconded and the motion carried by majority in favor.

Notice to Municipalities re: Mountainside LLC

Mr. Wheeler presented the standard letter received from the NH liquor commission for Mountainside LLC requesting a beer specialty license. He is seeking any input from Council. Councilor Berthiaume moved to send a communication to the NH liquor commission supporting the application of a beer specialty license for Mountainside LLC. Councilor Theberge seconded and the motion carried by majority in favor.

At 7:18pm being no further business in Work Session, Mayor Grenier recessed 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.