

City Council Work Session
May 7, 2018

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

Others present: City Manager Jim Wheeler, City Clerk Elaine Riendeau, Community Development Director Pamela Laflamme, Chief Pete Morency, Barbara Tetreault *Berlin Daily Sun*.

Mayor Grenier opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Discontinuance of Union Street

Ms. Laflamme stated that there is a resolution on the agenda to discontinue Union Street. The resolution will mention the sale price, and the appraisal. The city will then issue a notice to Mike Caron to meet the 14 day window for a public hearing. The quitclaim deed will deal with relinquishing all utilities, trees, and street lights.

Union Street was bought in fee by the City and because we were able to track the transaction in minutes from 1888, we will be able to issue a deed. The resolution is specific to the discontinuance and the deed will have all other relevant information. Mayor Grenier asked if there are plans to join the properties to the existing parcel and Ms. Laflamme confirmed that it will be joined with Mr. Caron's big parcel which will likely be done in the deed. Mr. Caron will then have complete control and the City will have no interest in the parcel. Councilor Higbee suggested the use of one or two trees from Union Street as landscaping for the skate park.

PD Grants

Pete Morency reported that Assistant Chief Buteau went to a funeral for a fallen officer in Maine. *Ballistic Vests*. He went on to explain that there are capital funds for Ballistic Vests and those funds are used as match for a grant for \$6,800. Mayor Grenier asked if vests are lighter and more flexible now. Chief Morency noted that they have changed a lot and as vests improve, the costs have gone up.

Councilor Rozek asked what happens with vests that are not in use. He questioned whether they could get into the wrong hands. Chief Morency stated that some are used to train; some are kept at home so that if an officer had to leave from home to get to an incident, he would have something. Vests are tracked by serial number and at the end of their useful life, they are destroyed. It is unlikely that these would end up in the wrong hands

Homeland Security Training pays for training of an emergency response team that consists of officers from Berlin, the Sheriff's Office, Gorham PD, Forestry; medical personnel from AVH; and a psychologist. They are the first regional team in the state. This team needs a lot of training over and above regular training. Mayor Grenier confirmed that they can answer to any emergency county wide. Chief Morency stated that they can respond beyond the County as well. They were put on standby for the Boston bombing and more recently for the search of a shooter of a sheriff in Maine.

Highway Safety Grants. Chief Morency stated that highway safety grants are now under the direction of the state police. They are still effective and worth getting. These give the department additional funds for a sustained traffic enforcement program as well as distracted driving, OHRV, safe commute, seat belt, DWI, and DWI checkpoints. Councilor Remillard questioned the age for child seats asking if the resolution should be amended. Chief Morency admitted that this is not his expertise and he would check on the age.

Councilor Remillard asked if checkpoints are illegal. Councilor Otis stated that the issue was in the legislature this year and did not pass. Chief Morency stated that the effectiveness is in getting the word out and having people think about DWI. If the funding were not available, the Department would not do the checkpoints.

Other

Personnel Policy

Mr. Wheeler stated that under New Business there is a resolution to rescind the City's personnel policy from 1995. Councilor Rozek asked what purpose this serves and Mr. Wheeler indicated that the City has gotten by without updates because many items are covered in collective bargaining agreements. The current system makes it difficult to make changes. Council agreed to put together a system to get away from adopting the whole policy every time there is a change. This will allow changes one item at a time with Council approval.

Councilor Remillard asked how things are going on the replacement for a public works director. Mr. Wheeler stated that we were not overwhelmed with applicants and in fairness to the interview committee, we are trying to get a good compliment of candidates. Councilor Remillard asked for a list of positions that may be up for retirement. Mr. Wheeler stated that a list can be made available knowing that retirement is a personal decision.

Bemis Street

Councilor Morgan Allain stated that she has been approached by several people on Bemis Street about the condition of the street. They pay some of the highest taxes and Bemis needs to be paved.

Non-Public Session

Councilor Theberge moved with a second from Councilor Morgan Allain into non-public session per RSA 91-A:2 II(d) land matters (i) Consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel and Non Meeting per RSA 91-A:2 I (b) Collective bargaining; so moved, the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Councilor discussed the Cates Hill property.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Morgan Allain to come out of non-public session. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Rozek moved to extend the land sale opportunity by sealed bid of Cates Hill Map 407; Lot 17 to the two interested abutters for a minimum bid of \$5,000; Councilor Morgan Allain seconded and the motion carried.

Councilor Higbee moved to go into nonpublic session per RSA 91-A:3II(i) Consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel; Councilor Theberge seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call. Councilors discussed legal advice from the City Attorney.

Councilor Higbee moved to come out of nonpublic session; Councilor Rozek seconded and the motion carried.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to seal the minutes of the non-public session until the City Manager deems it appropriate, as releasing them would render the proposed action ineffective; the motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business in the work session, Mayor Grenier moved on to the Public Hearing and Regular Meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Tremblay
Administrative Assistant

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