

City Council Work Session
July 16, 2018

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

Others present: City Manager Jim Wheeler, Wastewater Superintendent Jon Goodreau, Police Chief Pete Morency, Assistant Police Chief Dan Buteau, Barbara Tetreault *Berlin Daily Sun* and public.

In the absence of Mayor Grenier, Councilor Remillard opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Request for Wastewater Operator

Jon Goodreau reported that he asked for a position on April 23 and was asked to justify the need. He explained that the department has been carrying a line item for a position for an electrical technician that has not been filled. His suggestion was to use the funding for an additional operator instead, in order to fill a need to do preventative maintenance.

Looking over the past year, there was a particular repair that could be attributed to the lack of preventative maintenance. It was found that a loose bolt caused the drive chain to fail and allowed grit to accumulate in a tank causing damage that accumulated to \$30,000. This occurred in a tank that had not been inspected. Having an additional person would allow for the inspection of all the tanks on a yearly basis. The breakdown occurred January 24 and it took until April 30 to return to full operation of the second grit chamber.

Mr. Goodreau also reported on his staff's eligibility for retirement. There are six operators at the plant and there are two who could have retired in 2017; one could retire in 2018; one in 2019 and one in 2022. He added that the upgrade increased the size of the plant and requires someone to monitor some aspects at all times.

Councilor Rozek asked if it is typical that the device needs constant monitoring. Mr. Goodreau explained that it will start automatically and will shut off automatically; however until there is an operator in place, nothing will happen. Councilor Rozek noted that there is a lot of expertise at the plant and within a few years, we could lose a skillset and knowledge that cannot be replaced. Mr. Goodreau indicated that he will have to hire the most qualified person for the position, no matter their age. Mr. Wheeler added that the position is in the budget and there is no question of how to fund.

Councilor Berthiaume moved to approve hiring an Operator II as recommended by Superintendent Goodreau; Councilor Rozek seconded. In discussion Councilor Theberge asked how the work that would be done by an electrical technician is done. Mr. Goodreau stated that the Harp Company comes twice per year for inspections and calibrations. In the vote that followed, all were in favor of the motion.

Purchase of Tractor

Councilor Rozek acknowledged that the Wastewater Treatment Plant needs a tractor. Mr. Wheeler added that he had been looking at the State bids and what other municipalities have done. There is a purchasing agent list serve that suggested a buying group that puts out public bids for equipment.

Mr. Goodreau stated that the local dealer offers a seven year warranty. Councilor Rozek commented that it is important to get the equipment that the plant operator would like to have. Mr. Wheeler stated that the spec could have minimum requirements that include a seven year warranty. Ideally a bid process will result in getting prices from more than one manufacturer to get more competition.

Councilor Theberge asked why a new tractor is needed and Mr. Goodreau replied that the existing tractor was purchased used in 1992. It often doesn't start, doesn't stop and the windows are ripped out. The tractor is still being used for snow removal, yard maintenance, transport of 55 gallon drums, though it is not functioning very well. Mayor Pro Tem Remillard noted that the tractor is needed.

Councilor Berthiaume moved to go forward with bidding the tractor conditional on the results of the bid getting Council approval before awarding; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried. Councilor Theberge asked what it would cost to replace everything. Mayor Pro Tem Remillard called for the vote on the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Wheeler explained that the USDA requires that the Sewer Fund have money to replace short term lived assets. There is a reserve of about \$460,000 to replace things like a tractor, failed pump or anything the plant needs. He showed a list of anticipated projects for this year including continued work on I & I, Napert Village Pumping Station, and other projects including \$55,000 for the tractor. The items are brought to Council prior to making the purchase. Councilor Rozek commented that it is good to have the Superintendent at the meeting to answer questions and offer helpful information.

TAP Grant Funding

Mr. Wheeler reported that a letter of intent was sent to Thomas Jamison, Manager of NHDOT TAP funding to express interest in extending the sidewalk on Hutchins Street by 1760 feet. This is the area that was mentioned by the youth group that was in some weeks ago. The project is estimated at \$715,000 and the City share would be \$125,000. There is no obligation to apply. Councilor Rozek mentioned that something needs to be done to control the geese prior to the Riverwalk project. He said that their excrement can be extremely toxic, especially to dogs.

Hillside Ave Bridge/Hutchins Street

The Hutchins Street paving at Bridge Street was moved to next week. The tracks will be removed and a five foot cut will be added to soften the turn.

Ray's Electric is going forward with the Hillside Avenue Bridge and it is on schedule. Councilor Berthiaume expressed concern about the road being closed during the ATV Festival. Mr. Wheeler stated that we will communicate with signage the best that we can.

PD Additional Grant Funds

Chief Morency reported that the PD applies for highway safety funds. The request is to have the grants appropriated to the PD. There is a resolution for first reading this evening.

Non Public Session

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Berthiaume to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II(d) Land Matters. So moved, the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

Mr. Wheeler explained that in January the City offered a lot on Forbush Avenue to abutters. One of the abutters was interested; however he was not eligible at the time. He has since become eligible and expressed interest in purchasing. It has been confirmed that the other abutter is not interested. The request is to sell the land to the interested abutter for \$1500. He will need to join the lot with his primary residence.

Councilor Berthiaume moved to come out of non-public session; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried.

Councilor Rozek moved to sell land on Forbush Avenue (Map 132/Lot 23) to Michael Shields for \$1,500; Councilor Otis seconded and the motion carried.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Higbee 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.

Chief Morency and Assistant Chief Buteau entered the meeting. A pending claim was discussed.

Councilor Berthiaume moved to come out of non-public session: Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

Councilor Rozek moved to seal the minutes of the pending claim until the Mayor and City Manager determine they can be released as releasing them would render any action ineffective; Councilor Berthiaume seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

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

Councilor Berthiaume moved with a second from Councilor Theberge to come out of non-meeting. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Higbee 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 reported that FERC has issued an order approving the transfer of licenses from PSNH to HSE Hydro NH Smith, LLC. The order acknowledges that Berlin has what they have asked for. It is recommended that the City seek no further action.

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

With no further business in the Work Session, the Council moved on to the Regular Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Tremblay
Administrative Assistant

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

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