

City Council Work Session
October 22, 2018

Present were: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Otis, Higbee, Rozek, Gentili, Morgan Allain, and Théberge.

Others present: City Manager Jim Wheeler, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Public Works Director Eric Grenier, Robert Doyle, Barbara Tetreault, *Berlin Daily Sun*, and public; Claire Stiles, Stuart Light, Matthew Chernicki

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

Mayor Grenier advised that a non-public session for legal matters and a non-meeting for collective bargaining would be needed after the agenda items.

City Hall Elevator Study

Robert Doyle summarized the elevator options from the City Hall Accessibility Study for the Council. Doyle reviewed the current accessibility, which includes the ramp out front, a platform lift in the basement, and the platform stair lift. The stair lift has malfunctioned in use and it is difficult to get parts for it due to its age. The manufacturer's recommendation for use is 20 years, and the lift was installed in 1988, so it is 30 years old. The platform lift is the same age and should also be replaced. The study provided cost comparisons for three options: the replacement of the existing platform and stair lift, the LULA elevator, and the 2100 lb hydraulic elevator. Doyle advised that after looking at several locations for the elevator, the best use and function would be in the central stair of the main hall. The structural system would not be impacted and the area would still be functional with a single stairway. The LULA (Limited Use Limited Access) elevator is smaller and slower, but provides a cost savings and would fit in the area of one of the stairways. The 2100 lb hydraulic elevator would be faster and potentially have a longer life, but is more expensive and would require more space. Doyle advised that both elevators are ADA compliant and meet building code. The current lift is not ADA compliant, but is grandfathered. Mayor Grenier expressed his concern about the historic value of the building and that changing the structure will cause it to lose character. Doyle assured the Council that the project could be done in a way that it would look like it was a part of the original building. The Council requested Doyle provide a computer generated image to show the building as it would look with the elevator installed. Councilor Theberge asked about emergency exit from the elevator in case of a power failure and was advised it would have a battery backup to allow the elevator to return to the ground floor in that event. Doyle advised that the maintenance costs would be less for the LULA than the 2100 lb hydraulic elevator. Mayor Grenier suggested that City Manager Wheeler look into grants that may be available to assist the city with the cost, such as the CDBG, or Rural Development. The Council asked Eric Grenier if the building's historic value would factor into the grant funding and E. Grenier advised it would depend on the funding source and may require an impact statement. Doyle advised that elevator installations have been done successfully in other historic buildings in the state.

Ten-Year Plan Project Options

The Council reviewed the options available for consideration by North Country Council for the NHDOT Ten-Year Plan. Pamela Laflamme sent a memo outlining the potential projects for consideration, which include the Route 110 Urban Compact Project, the Hutchins/Bridge Street Intersection, Cleveland Bridge to Phase I of Route 110, and Downtown in conjunction with the snowmelt feasibility study. Councilor Rozek also suggested that removing the defunct railroad tracks from Main Street, High Street, and Pleasant Street should also be considered. Councilor Rozek mentioned that it would be worth

contacting the railroad to see if they would give permission for the city to pull them up. Mayor Grenier advised that he would like to see option 3, Cleveland Bridge to Route 110, be considered, followed by Route 110. Councilor Higbee agreed, stating that Cleveland Bridge to Route 110 would finish off the main entrance to the city. Councilor Otis asked about bridges and City Manager Wheeler advised that is under a different program. Councilor Otis also suggested that the replacement of the box culvert on Coos Street be included in the capital plan.

Councilor Rozek moved to urge the City Manager to apply for the Cleveland Bridge to Phase I of Route 110 project, followed by the Route 110 Urban Compact Project; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried.

Councilor Higbee advised he would advocate for the projects at the meeting of the North Country Transportation Commission.

Other

Public Works Director Eric Grenier advised that Bemis Street paving is done and that they will be working on the joints on the Mason Street bridge on Thursday. They will be starting after the morning traffic, around 9:00 am, and hope to be finished by the time school gets out. They will be shutting down the bridge and using equipment from Berlin Water Works to grind the pavement on each side of the bridge joints and then repave. Grenier advised the paving plants will be closing down on November 9, so this is a priority before winter plowing.

Non-Public Session

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

The Council discussed legal matters.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Morgan Allain to come out of non-public session. All voted in favor.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Morgan Allain to seal the minutes until the City Manager determines they can be released. So moved, the motion carried.

Non-meeting

Councilor Higbee moved with a second from Councilor Morgan Allain to enter into a non-meeting per RSA 91-A:3 II (b) Collective Bargaining. All voted in favor.

Councilor Higbee moved with a second from Councilor Morgan Allain to end the non-meeting at 7:34 pm.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 pm. So moved, the motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Shelli Fortin
City Clerk