

**City Council Work Session  
June 10, 2019**

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

Others present: City Manager Jim Wheeler, Public Works Director Eric Grenier, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Brownie Scouts and their leaders; Mr. Baker, Mr. Schruender, Ms. Roy regarding Sewer Abatements; Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Daily Sun and public

Mayor Grenier called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

**Brownie Girl Scouts Proposal**

Several Brownie Scouts, Girl Scouts and leaders were present. Mayor Grenier led a round of applause for the group for participating in the Cleanup Day that was held in May.

**Proposal for Book Exchange**

Wednesday Belanger presented a proposal for the Girl Scouts to put a free library kiosk on city property. The Little Library will have a cool design and promote recycling books. The Troop will build, install and maintain the free library. They will add flowers to the base. Mayor Grenier asked that the Troop coordinate with Terry Letarte on location for the Little Library.

Councilor Remillard moved to authorize the Brownie Scouts to work with the Recreation Department to locate a Little Library on city property; Councilor Higbee seconded and at the request of Mayor Grenier, Ms. Belanger declared the motion passed and tapped the gavel.

**Sewer Abatement Committee**

Mr. Wheeler noted that the Public Works Director has the authority to make a change on sewer bills if there is a clerical effort. Any other issues with bill go to the City Council who are guided by policy and ordinance.

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| 1) <b>Donald Baker</b><br><b>Property: 20 Ramsey St.</b> | <u>Amount Billed:</u> \$1,056 for 159 HCF<br><u>Last Year's billing:</u> \$105 for 16 HCF<br>*BWW confirmed that \$429.00 was abated on the Assessment portion of the bill |
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Reason for Request: Failed pipes burst. Water in cellar and top floor with many repairs.

Sewer Abatement Committee Decision: Mr. Baker stated that a freeze up caused ruptured pipes in the basement. The building was empty when the freeze up occurred. There was six inches of water in cellar which he stated, went into the ground. Councilor Remillard moved to approve an abatement that would equal a sewer bill at the five year historical average for the property; Councilor Rozek seconded and the motion carried.

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| 2) <b>Dennis and Karen Thompson</b><br><b>Property: 186 Church St</b> | <u>Amount Billed:</u> \$1,195 for 180 HCF<br><u>Last Year's billing:</u> \$26 for 4 HCF |
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Reason for Request: Summer seasonal home, very little water usage last year. This bill is substantially higher than normal.

Sewer Abatement Committee Decision: There was water consumption until the plumber shut things off. Councilor Rozek moved to deny the request; Councilor Remillard seconded and the motion carried.

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| 3) <b>Donald and Katherine Couture</b><br><b>Property: 302 Church St</b> | <u>Amount Billed:</u><br><u>Last Year's billing:</u> | \$432 for 65 HCF<br>\$335 for 51 HCF |
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Reason for Request: Leaking circulator pump.

Sewer Abatement Committee Decision: Councilor Rozek moved to deny the abatement request; Councilor Morgan Allain seconded and the motion carried.

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| 4) <b>Daniel Schruender</b><br><b>Property: 20 Houle St</b> | <u>Amount Billed:</u><br><u>Last Year's billing:</u> | \$325 for 49 HCF<br>\$250 for 38 HCF |
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Reason for Request: Low income, financial hardship.

Sewer Abatement Committee Decision: Mayor Grenier explained that the Committee grants abatements for extraordinary circumstances and the request does not have any of those circumstances. He suggested that Mr. Schruender work out a payment plan with the Finance Department. Councilor Remillard moved to deny the abatement; Councilor Rozek seconded and the motion carried.

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| 5) <b>Emile Vendette</b><br><b>Property: 167 Norway St</b> | <u>Amount Billed:</u><br><u>Last Year's billing:</u><br>*BWW confirmed that \$1,170.00 was abated<br>on assessment portion of the bill | \$2,915 for 439 HCF<br>\$217 for 33 HCF |
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Reason for Request: Elderly resident with unknown sump pump issues during the last quarter of 2018.

Sewer Abatement Committee Decision: The bill has been paid to avoid interest charges. Councilor Remillard moved to deny; Councilor Rozek seconded. In discussion, the committee asked for more verification. Councilor Remillard withdrew her motion; and Councilor Rozek withdrew the second. Councilor Remillard moved to send a letter asking for more information within 21 days on specific repairs, and indicating where the water from the sump pump goes; Councilor Rozek seconded and the motion carried.

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| 6) <b>Rita Leclerc</b><br><b>Property: 425 Coos St</b> | <u>Amount Billed:</u><br><u>Last Year's billing:</u> | \$498 for 75 HCF<br>\$250 for 38 HCF |
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Reason for Request: Shut off valve to water spigot was not working.

Sewer Abatement Committee Decision: Councilor Rozek moved to abate ½ of the increase; Councilor Morgan Allain seconded and the motion carried.

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| 7) <b>Carlos Cernuda</b><br><b>Red Baron Holdings, LLC</b> | <u>Amount Billed:</u><br><u>Last Year's billing:</u> | \$2,397 for 361 HCF<br>\$381 for 58 HCF |
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**Property: 467 Burgess St**

Reason for Request: Two out of three vacant rents with a major water leak. Unable to get plumber there because of bed bug infestation. Had to wait until Presidential Pest Control took care of it until the plumber went in. Lots of water damage.

Sewer Abatement Committee Decision: Councilor Remillard moved to deny the request; Councilor Rozek seconded and the motion carried.

- 8) **Normand W. Roy** Amount Billed: \$1,872 for 282 HCF  
**Property: 1 Alice Street** Last Year's billing: \$420 for 64 HCF

Reason for Request: Leak in hot water heater, and leaking toilet.

Comments: Has a well with meter that serves three properties, but one of the properties is billed separately with an average.

Sewer Abatement Committee Decision: Councilor Rozek asked for more verification including proof of the damage and proof of the repairs or the committee will be forced to deny. Councilor Remillard moved to allow 21 days for proof of water damage; Councilor Rozek seconded and the motion carried

- 9) **Dana Legendre** Amount Billed: \$120 for 18 HCF  
**Property: 683 Fourth Ave** Last Year's billing: \$217 for 33 HCF

Reason for Request: Water was shut off for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2018.

Comments: WW Reading on 7/6/18 for 12HCF; and reading on 10/5/18 was 6HCF.

Sewer Abatement Committee Decision: Councilor Higbee moved to deny; Councilor Rozek seconded and the motion carried.

- 10) **Francine Boyer** Amount Billed: \$438 for 66 HCF  
**Property: 80 Eighth Street** Last Year's billing: \$473 for 72 HCF

Reason for Request: Thinks there might be a problem with the meter. Also a financial hardship with limited income.

Sewer Abatement Committee Decision: Councilor Remillard moved to deny; Councilor Morgan Allain seconded and the motion carried.

- 11) **Donna Silk** Amount Billed: \$910 for 137 HCF  
**Property: 8 Perkins Place** Last Year's billing: \$46 for 7 HCF

Reason for Request: Frozen and cracked outside spigot and expansion tank on water heater failed.

Sewer Abatement Committee Decision: The Committee asked for additional information. Councilor Rozek moved to delay the decision; Councilor Remillard seconded and the motion carried.

- 12) **William Glover** Amount Billed: \$1,361 for 205 HCF

**Property: 106 Prospect St**

Last Year's billing: \$401 for 61 HCF

Reason for Request: Broken water pipes, unusually high bill. Requesting an extension of the payment due date.

Sewer Abatement Committee Decision: Councilor Remillard moved to have Finance work with Mr. Glover on a payment plan; Councilor Rozek seconded and the motion carried.

13) **Jean-Paul Michaud**

Amount Billed: \$1,129 for 170 HCF

**Property: 568 First Ave**

Last Year's billing: \$434 for 66 HCF

Reason for Request: They have been upgrading/fixing the plumbing and it would be a financial difficulty paying such a high bill.

Sewer Abatement Committee Decision: Councilor Otis moved to deny the request; Councilor Remillard seconded and the motion carried

### **Other**

Mr. Wheeler said that he received notice of the Fire Chief's intent to retire. He asked the Council for authorization to seek applicants. Councilor Rozek moved to take the action necessary to fill the fire chief position; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried.

### **Non Public Session**

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

Councilor discussed an offer on 155 Willow Street which is a vacant lot. It would make sense to offer it to the abutters.

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

Councilor Rozek moved to offer for sale to abutters 155 Willow Street, Map 120; Lot 14 by sealed bids with agreement to join the lot to their property; Councilor Remillard seconded and the motion carried.

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

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

Councilor Rozek moved to seal the minutes of the discussion in non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (e) Pending Claims as releasing the would render action taken ineffective; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried.

Councilor Rozek moved to adjourn; Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried. The meeting ended at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Susan Tremblay  
Administrative Assistant

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