

Memo

To: Mayor and Council
cc: Department Heads
From: Pat MacQueen
Date: March 15, 2010
Re: Manager's Report

Our-Time Access Safe Haven grant withdrawn

We received word this week from Marie Dubreuil the Program Manager of Our Time Access that she is withdrawing the request for the \$400k Safe Haven grant which she had previously asked the City to apply for. I have attached a copy of that email for your information.

Budget Inn Sign

All of the appeal periods for this sign have expired and the State Traffic Division of the NHDOT is now getting estimates for the removal of the Budget Inn Sign on Glen Avenue at Diana Street. Hopefully, after about three years of State DOT process, the sign will finally be coming down in the next couple of weeks.

USDA Rural Development Grant Application

Attached is correspondence from Senator Gregg's office acknowledging USDA RD correspondence regarding our loan/grant application for assistance for our upgrades to the WWTF in Berlin. These improvements are necessary because of the 32 year age of the plant, the addition of the BOP-FCI and future growth. We are expecting to hear something on this grant in the next few weeks.

Value Engineering RFQ's

In response to our Request for Qualifications, we have received three proposals from engineering firms to perform a Value Engineering review of the proposed improvements to our WWTF. Value Engineering is being required by NHDES and USDA RD for our WWTF improvements because the amount of the project is over the threshold of \$10M. Value Engineering is a process whereby the original design is peer reviewed by another group of engineers in a fairly rigorous process with an eye to finding better more cost-effective ways to accomplish the project. There is certainly a cost to the VE process because both a new engineer and the existing engineer participate in the process. However, the savings achieved for the project are often several orders of magnitude larger than the VE cost which is why USDA and NHDES are requiring the process.

EFSEC Pre-hearing conference, site visit and hearing

The EFSEC Pre-hearing conference was held this past Thursday in Concord. Attorney Peress and Councilor McCue attended that meeting. Attorney Peress expressed some concerns about the scheduling of the process which he expressed to the Commission.

Don't forget that the EFSEC Site Tour is tomorrow at 2pm at the site and the Public Informational Hearing is tomorrow evening at 7pm at the BJHS.

Census 2010

Attached is a letter from the US Census Bureau. The letter indicates that they are setting up Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QAC) so that residents can have their census questions answered. One of these will be at the Berlin Senior Center at hours stated in the letter. The other will be at the NH Employment Security Office. These QAC's will be open during the hours listed in the letter from March 19th to April 20th.

BEMS Financial Statements

I have attached for your information this past years financial statements from Berlin Emergency Medical Services which provides by contract the City's ambulance service.

LGC Regional Dinners

This year there will be two LGC regional dinners in this area. One will be in Jackson at the Eagle Mountain House on May 6th, and the other will be in Bethlehem at the Inn at Maplewood on May 12th. There is a social hour beginning at 5:30pm with the dinner at 6pm and the registration deadline in one week prior to each event. The flier is attached.

Dedication of Berlin State Offices

The dedication of the new Berlin State Office Building at 650 Main Street will be held Friday, April 9, 2010 at 11am. Refreshments and a tour of the building will follow the dedication.

Legislative Matters

- HB 1335, which establishes a local option for lowering interest rates on delinquent property taxes will be voted on by the full House this Wednesday. Being a local option, the bill should not be a problem for municipalities as no municipality has to do what it doesn't want to.
- HB 1544, which authorizes the establishment of energy efficiency and clean energy districts and allows municipalities to lend money to property owners for qualified energy improvements has been voted as ought to pass by the House Municipal and County Government Committee. This is a complicated local option bill which some municipalities will likely experiment with.
- SB 492, which extends the pole tax exemption, is still out there. However, it has been amended by the Senate to shorten its extension from four years to two years. It also will now have another study committee. It now moves on to the House. This just goes to show how exceedingly bad and unfair legislation can literally stay on the books for decades if the right forces are behind it.
- Stream Crossing Rules. NHDES has proposed significant changes to stream crossing rules which will likely affect most NH municipalities. Staff is reviewing these to determine the likely impact on us.