

Memo

To: Mayor and Council
cc: Department Heads
From: Pat MacQueen
Date: April 19, 2010
Re: Manager's Report

EFSEC Data Requests

The so-called data requests which Public Counsel and the City of Berlin have submitted to Laidlaw for response are attached for your information.

DRA Review of Assessing

On Tuesday April 6th, Sam Green of NHDRA met with the Board of Assessor's to go over our assessing practices. The NH Assessment Standards Board is required to review municipal assessing practices every five years to ensure that they meet certain standards. He will be doing that in Berlin over the next year and ultimately providing the City and the State with a report on our assessing practices.

Attached is correspondence from DRA asking us to verify information with respect to their annual attempts to equalize local assessments throughout the State. You will note that they determined that the median assessment ratio for land, buildings and manufactured housing in Berlin for the tax year 2009 is 121.5%. With the revaluation that is underway now, an attempt will be made to bring this back to around 100%. This will obviously lower residential property values in Berlin by 20% or more and will drive the tax rate up substantially. However, this by itself does not mean that the typical homeowner will pay any more in property taxes.

Rural Development State Director visit

On Friday of last week, Molly Lambert the recently appointed new State Director for USDA Rural Development stopped in to visit with Mayor Grenier, Pam Laflamme, Andre Caron and I. She replaced Jolinda Leclerc and her offices are in Montpelier, VT. This agency is instrumental in major funding initiatives for Water Works, Wastewater and Housing in Berlin. Currently we are applying for a large loan/grant from RD for improvements to our WWTF.

ATV Group Meeting Wed 4/14

The ATV Group met this week to catch up on developments and prepare for the opening of the trails on May 25th. Everyone agrees that this date seems way late, but the State sets the date and everyone sort of has to go along with it. While there have not been any major enforcement or complaint problems with the trails since opened last year, there was agreement that there is still a lot of educating that needs to be done.

Bids

Bids have been opened at the Airport for a snow blower, a snow plow, as sander and some pavement construction. These bids are being reviewed by the Airport Engineer, AMEC for recommendation to the Berlin Airport Authority. The funds for all these projects is 100% available for the FAA so there will be no local airport funds involved.

A bid was also opened for a PWD refuse packer. Those bids are also being reviewed for an award recommendation.

Court Decision in Pisani Matter

Attached is the Superior Court's decision in the Pisani matter on Main Street. The Court upheld the decision of the ZBA which denied the proposed use which had been approved by the Planning Board.

Annual Dog Clinic

Attached is a note from the City Clerk which reviews the annual rabies clinic conducted by the Beagle Club each year. This was held last Saturday. City employees Kris Davis and Betty Domino volunteered their time to work at the clinic to register Berlin dogs, working from 1pm to 6pm and registering 129 dogs and bringing in \$921.50. Great work Kris and Betty!

Bag the Butts for Earth Day

The New Hampshire Youth Network members will be out in force cleaning up communities across the state between 4/17 and 4/24 in their first statewide cleanup effort. Attached is information on this effort provided by Laura Viger which is intended to encourage youth between 11 and 18 to care about and act upon matters that impact breathing: tobacco use, air quality and the environment.