

Memo

To: Mayor and Council
cc: Department Heads
From: Pat MacQueen, City Manager
Date: December 5, 2011
Re: Manager's Report

BOP Conference Call

We have continued our conference call sessions with BOP representatives in Washington and locally about every other month. Now that the funding for the opening of the prison has been authorized, the pace will pick up. However, they made clear that it will be another 3-4 months before they begin to bring in inmates to the prison and then it is likely to take another 9-months or more to get the prison up to it operating strength.

We have both emphasized the need for good communications both ways during this period to ensure that we can handle the growth in the sewer use and at the same time carry out the improvements that have to be made to the WWTF over the next two years in order to both serve the prison, upgrade certain aspects of the facility both for normal growth and to overcome equipment which is out of date.

Bartlett School Purchase and Sale Agreement

The purchase and sale agreement for the sale of the Bartlett School expired on November 15th. Notice has been given by the City to the prospective purchasers (White Mountains Suites) of the expiration and the fact that the \$5,000 security deposit will be kept by the City. No response has been received to date from the White Mountain Suites.

Auditors

The auditors after two delays have arrived this week to review our books. They should be here for approximately two weeks.

Pam's Downtown Meeting

The Berlin Main Street Program, White Mountains Community College, and the Planning Department have been working together for several months trying to determine the need for retail incubator space in downtown. They have visited the Hannah Grimes facility in Keene to see how they blend retail sales space with incubator space in their downtown and will be visiting the WREN facility in Bethlehem next week. Funders have been approached to determine the ability to fund such a project in downtown Berlin and there seems to be strong support for such a project but funding is dependent on the actual need. Last week a focus group was held here at City Hall with individuals who have been working on small business plans or who have been selling their product at the Farmer's Market to see what is needed to get them into space in downtown. WREN will also be sharing a feasibility study they conducted earlier this year with the group to help get a better picture of the incubator market in Berlin and the surrounding area.

GLHA Tax Meeting in Gorham

On Friday a session was held in Gorham with the City's attorney Chris Boldt and utility appraiser Skip Sansoucy with 'Great Lakes Hydro America's (Brookfield Renewable Power, LLC) Attorney Matt Upton, their Manager, Tom Mapletoft and their appraiser Steve Traub. The abatement case is for the tax year 2010 and is before the Board of Land and Tax Appeals which required that this sort of exploratory settlement hearing be held prior to the Board's first hearing of the case which is not yet scheduled.

There was a certain amount of exchange of information which went on during this session, but frankly because GLHA has not yet provided basic financial income information to the City's appraiser, the whole thing becomes a sort of cat and mouse game of GLHA asking why our appraiser appraised the property the way he did with our appraiser responding that he had no choice but to make certain assumptions because GLHA hasn't provided basic financial information which is critical to a proper valuing of the property. This somewhat frustrating process is required to be gone through in BTLA rules and it does allow for the possibility of opening up doors for settlement, but ultimately it allows for discovery to be produced which forces the other party to provide all the information necessary to produce a proper appraisal. Suffice it to say that if GLHA holds to their current position on values, the City should proceed with the acquisition of the three hydros at the earliest opportunity.

McGee Street and Kent Street I&I Bid Opening

Bids for the McGee Street and Kent Street project were opened last Thursday. Four bids were received with apparent low being in the amount of \$893,120 to a high of \$1,148,825. The Engineer's estimate on this job was \$902,000. Most of the sewer and I&I projects we have been doing lately have been well below the engineer's estimate. Unfortunately, this one was almost right on the money which is better than being higher than the engineer's estimate.

Wright-Pierce has done the due diligence review of the apparent low bidder and finds no reason not to recommend them. However, NH DES has to review everything and provide authorization to award the contract before we can award it.

Notre Dame Mold Remediation

Due to the fact that Notre Dame HS has been boarded for the past several years in order to contain lead and PCB based paint, a substantial amount of mold has built up in the building over the years which now has to be removed. NH DES has agreed under a previously appropriated ARRA grant to fund the removal of mold containing and generating materials such as mostly corkboard and sheetrock like materials. The cost of this project is estimated at \$62,300. The work will begin on December 12th and will last ten days.

Delay of Closing on CPD WWTF Land

You will recall that the closing for the re-acquisition of the Clean Power Development 11.5 acres of land which surrounds the City WWTF was delayed, having originally been scheduled for November 22nd. It occurred this past Wednesday morning. The City is now again the owner of that land around the WWTF

AVH NH's #7 Best Large Company to Work For

Attached is a very nice article on AVH as a great large company to work for. This article is from NH Business Magazine and speaks very highly of Berlin's own regional hospital facility.

PWD Monthly Report

Attached.

Manager's Time-keeping

Attached.