

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Monday, January 6, 2020

Mayor Grenier called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 7:48 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Public Hearing

Mayor Grenier opened the Public Hearing at 7:48 pm for Resolution 2020-01 Transfer of Firing Range Land to AVFG Club.

Bobby Rodrigue of 324 Main Street in Berlin, president of the AVFG Club, advised that he is in full support of the Resolution. Rodrigue expressed his appreciation to the Mayor and Council for their due diligence in this endeavor. Rodrigue stated that this transfer will provide many good things for the community in the years to come.

Mayor Grenier closed the Public Hearing at 7:50 pm.

Regular Meeting

a. Pledge of Allegiance

b. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Grenier, Councilors Remillard, Otis, Morgan, Gentili, Higbee, Rozek, Berthiaume, and Theberge

Absent: None

Also present: James Wheeler, Susan Tremblay, Pamela Laflamme, Shelli Fortin, Councilor-Elect Eastman, Bobby Rodrigue, Mitch Dumoulin, Paul Lafleur, Richard Laflamme, Jamie Welch, Gina Welch, and Barbara Tetreault, Berlin Daily Sun.

c. Councilor Remillard moved, with a second by Councilor Otis, to accept the minutes of the December 16, 2019 Regular Meeting and Work Session. So moved, the motion carried.

Disbursements:

Disbursement Summary Draft #1854 start date 12/17/2019 end date 01/06/2020 for a total cash disbursement of \$1,738,395.44. Councilor Theberge moved with a second by Councilor Berthiaume to accept the disbursement summary and pay all bills as recommended by the Committee on Accounts/Claims. So moved, the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS –

Richard Laflamme of 128 Jasper Street advised that Bob Chapman is interested in tearing down the Princess Theater building. City Manager Wheeler advised that he was aware of that and has been in touch. Mr. Chapman can bid on the property if he is interested. Mr. Laflamme also noted that he feels the Council beats everything to death and asks the same questions. He stated that they would be more productive if they would ask and then move on.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Council Committee Reports - There were no Council Committee reports.
2. Resolution 2020-01 Transfer of Firing Range Land to AVFG Club (tabled 12/16/2019)

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty

A RESOLUTION authorizing the transfer of land consisting of approximately 14.9 acres identified on Milan Tax Map 42 and known as Lot 2-F-1A to the Androscoggin Valley Fish and Game Association (“AVFGA”).

Resolved by the City Council of the City of Berlin as Follows:

Whereas, the land is a subdivided portion of the land donated to the City by the Conservation Fund as authorized by Resolution 2019-08; and

Whereas, the land to be transferred is also shown on a minor subdivision plan recorded at the Coos County Registry of Deeds as Plan No. 4462; and

Whereas, the receipt of the donation of land under Resolution 2019-08 also anticipated the subdivision of a portion of the donated land to be transferred to the AVFGA; and

Whereas, consistent with Resolution 2019-08 use of this land by the AVFGA shall primarily include outdoor recreational uses and safety training for outdoor sportspeople; and

Whereas, the City will transfer the portion land to the AVFGA for the price of one dollar (\$1.00); and

Whereas, this transfer is deemed to be in the best interest of the City because it enables the AVFGA to continue its valued service to the public on the historical site they have operated and it reduces the City's liability due to the site containing a firing range and the potential environmental issues that have been associated with firing ranges.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved by the City Council of the City of Berlin as Follows:

That, the City Manager is authorized to transfer a portion of land consisting of approximately 14.9 acres identified on Milan Tax Map 42 and known as Lot 2-F-1A to the Androscoggin Valley Fish and Game Association ("AVFGA").

This Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after passage.

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to remove this item from the table. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to read Resolution 2020-01 by short title for a second time. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, to read Resolution 2020-01 by short title for a third time. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second by Councilor Morgan, that Resolution 2020-01 be passed. So moved, the motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

3. Letter from Theodore Lacasse

Mr. Wheeler,

As a taxpayer of the City of Berlin I believe that the Berlin city manager should be more involved in overseeing the property abatement process. Since the start of Mr. Carberry Landfill operations, more that 1 million dollars in property tax abatements (as recorded in the minutes) has been granted to property owners. As example, one property owner was granted a \$10,000 per year abatement for 10 years. This in itself comes to \$100,000. The reason for the abatements: they live to close or the smell is unbearable. I have also read in the newspaper that the City of Berlin appropriated \$280,000 to rehabilitate Hutchins Street on which the trash is hauled to the landfill. Cars and pickup trucks do not damage city streets like 100,000-pound 3 axle trucks and trailers do, yet Mt. Carberry does not pay taxes to the City of Berlin to help pay for this road repair.

Therefore, I am asking the city manager to start negotiating with AVRRDD to eliminate all tipping fees for Berlin at the landfill. I feel that if they don't co-operate, we should protest all new expansions at the landfill in the future. I wonder if we are subsidizing the towns in the district and also North Conway, Glen, Jackson, Plymouth, Manchester, Nashua and other towns and cities. If so, this has to stop.

I am hoping for a successful conclusion to this serious conditions that exists.

Respectfully submitted,

Theodore Lacasse
Taxpayer

Councilor Remillard moved, with a second from Councilor Berthiaume, to accept the communication from Mr. Lacasse and have the City Manager send a letter advising that the issue will be an agenda item at the next Council Work Session. So moved, the motion carried.

4. City Manager's Report

1. The three new loaders were delivered to Public Works on Friday 12/13/19. The two salt trucks were delivered 12/19/19. At present, one truck has been fitted with and is operational with a salt box. The other salt box installation is underway but has been hampered by other equipment issues requiring attention. Notably, both of our aged snow blowers are currently in the garage for repairs.
2. We have received the yearly insurance certificates from the State for allowing recreational use of City property for snowmobile trails. Certificates of Insurance were received for both the City and for the Airport.
3. The Assessing Standards Board (ASB) will be holding a public forum at the White Mountain Regional High School, 127 Regional Road, Whitefield on **Thursday, January 30, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.** The snow date, if needed, is **5:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 6, 2020** at the same location. The purpose of the forum is for the ASB to receive public input regarding assessment issues and to inform the public about positive and negative attributes that contribute to the overall valuation for property tax assessment purposes. ***Selectboard members and other municipal officials involved in the assessment process are encouraged to attend this public forum.***
4. The Public Utilities Commission will be reviewing and voting on a Settlement Agreement on Wednesday of this week which will PSNH, Burgess Biopower, Commission Staff and the Office of Consumer Advocate have entered into. The parties have filed a joint motion for approval of the agreement with the PUC. In short, if approved, the agreement will lead to the three year extension on the implementation of the cumulative reduction factor cap.
5. Burgess Biopower's plans to build a greenhouse on their site are continuing to move forward. While they have had some rudimentary scheduling issues which has put off their site plan application, they hope to be ready for site plan in February or March.
6. The "Mountain View", which is a newsletter publish by the Randolph Foundation, recently issued the attached article about the revitalization of the Nansen Ski Jump.
7. There are two recent Union Leader articles attached: one is regarding the Downtown Reconstruction Snow Melt Project and the other is regarding the Brown School project.
8. The Public Works monthly report and Berlin Ambulance monthly report are attached.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Higbee to accept the City Manager's Report and place it on file. So moved, the motion carried.

5. Mayor's Report

Mayor Grenier commended the Nansen Ski Club on the Nansen Ski Trails. The Mayor stated that the conditions are near perfect and it is a beautiful area for cross country skiing. Mayor Grenier stated that it is a disservice to not purchase an annual pass. Mayor Grenier congratulated Councilor Higbee and the Ski Club on a wonderful job.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second from Councilor Morgan to accept the Mayor's Report and place it on file. So moved, the motion carried.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS –

Bobby Rodrigue of 324 Main Street in Berlin stated that he was remiss for not recognizing the City Manager and staff for their time and attention given to the matter of the land transfer.

7. Council Comments –

Councilor Remillard asked about the Hillsboro Street clean up and City Manager Wheeler advised that the report for health, safety, and code enforcement has been completed and they are waiting on the attorney to review.

Councilor Theberge stated that he heard parts were not available for the snow blower at the Public Works Department, and asked if they should purchase a new snow blower to go with the new John Deere loaders. City Manager Wheeler advised that the Council will see this request as part of the budgeting process.

8. Adjournment

At approximately 8:09 p.m. Councilor Rozek moved with a second by Councilor Higbee to adjourn the regular meeting. So moved, the motion carried.

A True Record, Attest:

Shelli Fortin
City Clerk

Note: Minutes are unofficial until they have been accepted by the Council by motion.