

MAYOR'S REPORT

March 30, 2012

Judging by the recent weather we've had lately, you couldn't begin to guess that spring is only a week old. That's ok however, I'll take all the sun and warmth that comes our way now. Public Works employees will be very busy here in the next few weeks sweeping and cleaning roadways to remove sand and debris. The street sweeper can be loud, dusty and dangerous. Please, use caution when this equipment is near you. Our PWD employees can't always see and hear people because of noise and dust.

By now it has been reported that the City of Berlin will roll out a new recycling effort soon. The City Council has a target roll out date of July 1st. We are in the process of re-writing the ordinance that deals with the handling and disposal of solid waste. Be aware that this new effort will be taken seriously by the city. There could be punitive measures up to and including citations and fines, and for repeat offenders, the loss of the privilege of curbside trash removal by PWD. The idea obviously is not to "punish" anyone for non-compliance, but rather begin to separate and remove recyclables from the waste stream. We will be putting forth a very intensive and informative campaign to re-emphasize the importance of recycling. Currently, Berlin as a whole is doing a poor job overall in its efforts. There could be as much as \$100,000 in savings and revenue increases if every Berlin citizen makes an honest effort. I know we can do it and we will provide the tools and education to get the job done.

I want to thank Berlin's members of the Coos County delegation for passing the FY 2012 Coos County operating budget. It was not an easy budget to pass considering the additional amount of money needed to be raised by taxation. Our frail and neediest residents deserve to live in an atmosphere of love, acceptance, and respect. Our two county run nursing homes time and time again are highly recognized by the experts on the level of care given to our residents. My sincere heartfelt thank you goes to our county employees for their pride and excellence in the performance of their jobs. To Representatives Gary Coulombe, Robert Theberge, Marc Tremblay and Yvonne Thomas, thank you also for the work you do for Berlin in Concord.

Speaking of Concord, there has been a concerted effort in the House to force PSNH to divest of all of its generating assets. One of those is the J. Brodie Smith Hydrostation Project in Berlin. Over the years, PSNH has been an excellent

corporate citizen here. They are deeply involved in the Moving Downtown Forward initiative, and have funded multiple economic efforts here in Berlin. Let's not forget the hundreds of thousands of dollars PSNH spent to permit the Berlin Station Biopower project. Truth be told, Smith Hydro and the Goebel Street subsation together has a tax value of a bit over \$60M. That represents roughly 17% of Berlin's taxable valuation. That is why I have made two trips to Concord to testify in opposition to HB 1238. The language of the bill seems to be written by PSNH's competitors and the stranded costs associated with the divestiture would leave us all with sharply higher electric rates as well as higher property taxes in Berlin.

The City Council is elbow deep in the FY 2013 municipal budget process. The City Manager's recommended budget eliminates 4 full time positions and reduces another to part time. Even after that, the proposed tax increase is a bit over \$4 per thousand. This will be a difficult year as they always are, but this year a tax increase seems unavoidable. The City Council and I will work as hard as we can to keep any increase to the bare minimum.

Lastly, to all of the residents who supported our new state champion BHS basketball team, thank you. To Coach Picard and all of the student athletes, thank you for a job superbly done!! The Notre Dame Arena also will be making another sizeable investment this summer. We have ordered and will install a new state of the art evaporative condenser to the ice plant. The new unit will replace one that was installed shortly after NDA was rebuilt in 1969. The installation will be completed by local experts Chris Hansen and Rick Lambert of Nordic Construction, LLC. I want to thank Chris and Rick for really taking on this project and really shows what community pride is all about!!

Until April,



Paul Grenier