

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Monday, March 4, 2013

Mayor Grenier called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 7:32 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers. The pledge of allegiance to the flag preceded roll call. Present: Councilors Remillard, Otis, Morgan Allain, Benski, Higbee, Rozek and Théberge. Councilor Nelson was absent. Also present: Pat MacQueen, Patty Chase and the press.

Minutes, Previous Meeting

Councilor Theberge moved with a second by Councilor Morgan Allain to accept the minutes of the February 18 Regular Meeting/Work Session; February 25 Work Session. So moved, the motion carried.

Disbursements: Disbursement Summary Draft #1685 start date 2/22/2013; end date 3/06/2013 has a total cash disbursement of \$1,189,315.09. Councilor Remillard moved with a second by Councilor Otis to accept the disbursement summary and pay all bills as recommended by the Committee on Accounts/Claims. So moved, the motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – No Comments

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Council Committee Reports. No reports

NEW BUSINESS

2. Ordinance 2013-03 Amending the City of Berlin Code of Ordinances, Chapter 4 Buildings & Building Regulations; Sec.4-7 Fees by Adding the Appropriate Fee for Mechanical Permits as Indicated. (1st read)

Councilor Remillard moved with a second by Councilor Otis to table the ordinance and schedule a public hearing on March 18. So moved, the motion carried.

3. City Manager's Report
GLH Mediation Session

A mediation session was held on Tuesday February 19th at City Hall. City Attorney Chris Boldt, Utility Appraiser George Sansoucy and I attended for the City. Great Lakes Hydro had their attorney, their appraiser and reps from Brookfield in attendance. In anticipation of a hearing before the BTLA which has still not been scheduled, the BTLA ordered the parties to get together to see what if anything could be worked out. Some information was exchanged and there was agreement to exchange more information, but not settlement was reached at that time.

Fairpoint Abatement Application

Attached is a copy of a property tax abatement application which came in today from Fairpoint Communications. The City Board of Assessors will be the first step in that abatement application process.

PWD Snow Issue

Public Works has been hit pretty hard by the snow winter thus far and particularly in the last month. It seems that the treatments day and night have been almost continuous. PW is trying to pull together some data on it which will be reported to the Council in the near future.

HEB PSNH meeting

On Wednesday February 20th, the City met with representatives from PSNH and HEB relative to the need by PSNH to upgrade the substation currently at Community Field to handle the load in and around Berlin. One possibility discussed was expanding at the existing site. Other possibilities were discussed as well.

Shaheen Conference Call thurs 2-28

On Thursday February 28th at the request of Mayor Grenier I sat in on a phone conference call with Senator Shaheen's office and other municipal and county reps from across the state to talk about the possible impacts of the Federal budget sequester which has now gone into effect. I have attached my notes from that phone call for your information.

Housing

115 Mason (the remaining part of the house in the small park where the Laundromat used to be) has been razed. The staff is working on recommendations for the completion of the small park there which will be brought to Council in the near future. Bids are due on March 14th for the sale of nine properties.

DMV Audit

I have attached a copy of a NH Division of Motor Vehicle Audit that was completed this past December for your information.

CM Recruitment

All six candidates have been scheduled for the interviews to held of Friday and Saturday the 5th and 6th of April. Two candidates had found other jobs. Two candidates from the initial paring we believe are still available should the need arise. Three are from a distance and the remainder are from New England.

Legislative Matters

Rooms and Meals: According to the NHMA Legislative Bulletin, the Rooms and Meals tax distribution to cities and towns had a catch-up formula that was suspended four years ago. The intent of this growth formula was to gradually increase the municipal/state sharing of this distribution to the statutory apportionment of 40% municipal and 60 percent state. The municipal portion reached a high of 29% in 2010 when the state suspended the formula and now that share is about 25%. The Governor's budget includes an additional \$5M for Rooms and Meals in the 2nd year of the biennium but it is not yet clear whether that is a one-time increase in the distribution, or a restoration of the catch-up formula.

Manager's Time Keeping Attached.

Mayor Grenier asked now that the 115 Mason Street building has been razed, if the City Manager could have the Public Works Director look into cutting that sharp corner by possibly doing it in-house and what the estimated cost would be. The City Manager will inquire and let Council know.

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

Councilor Theberge asked the City Manager to elaborate about PSNH needing to upgrade their substation. The City Manager replied they need to increase in size and might either expand their existing site or look for a new location. Councilor Theberge asked if we still use the tennis courts across from the substation. Mr. MacQueen replied we do and since PSNH is looking for a bigger footprint, hopes they find another solution.

4. Mayor's Report - Proclamation: Red Cross month.

Mayor Grenier attended the annual Chamber of Commerce dinner meeting where he had a brief discussion with Governor Hassan. He gave hats off to the Chamber for bringing state and local leaders together which was nice to see. Many City Councilors and employees were there representing the City. He thanked everyone who officially represented the City which shows we are a community who really cares.

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

5. Public Comments: No comments

6. Council Comments: No comments

7. Adjournment: There being no further business before the Mayor and Council at this time, Councilor Rozek moved with a second by Councilor Morgan Allain to adjourn the regular meeting. So moved, the motion carried and Mayor Grenier declared the regular meeting closed at approximately 7:48 p.m.

A True Record, Attest:
Debra A. Patrick, CMC
City Clerk