

**CITY OF BERLIN, NEW HAMPSHIRE**  
**Minutes of Council Budget Work Session of 3/27/13**  
**Council Conference Room**  
**6:30 pm**

Members:

Mayor Grenier  
Councilor Higbee  
Councilor Theberge  
Councilor Rozek  
Councilor Otis  
Councilor Morgan-Allain  
Councilor Nelson  
Councilor Benski

Staff:

Pat MacQueen, City Manager  
Patty Chase, Finance Director  
Michael Perreault, City Engineer  
Henry Noel, Pollution Control Manager  
Ron Lemonie, Public Works  
Bryan King, Public Works  
Raymond Hood, Public Works  
Norm St.Onge, Public Works  
Diane Fortier, Public Works  
Mike Ross, Public Works  
Robert Fortier, Public Works  
Claude Frenette, Public Works  
Don Hood, Public Works  
Lucien Couture, Public Works

Mayor Grenier called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor Grenier welcomed everyone to the budget meeting and City Manager Pat MacQueen gave an overview of the Street Lighting Budget. The highest expense noted is the cost of electricity. The City Manager spoke about a potential plan in reducing the street lighting but it would take an initial investment of between \$65,000 and \$70,000 in order to implement. It would take approximately eight years to recoup that initial investment so is isn't feasible at this time to proceed.

Mayor Grenier asked if the City has brokered for the best rate and the City Manager affirmed that the City has done so.

Councilor Theberge inquired about the cost of a street light and the City Manager responded that it is an approximate \$100,000 expense.

Michael Perreault, City Engineer, began his budget using a power point presentation.

Mr. Perreault first gave an overview of the Berlin Pollution Control Facility. The facility is thirty eight years old and is currently going through a multimillion dollar upgrade. The original plant was designed to treat 2.6 million gallons per day but has handled up to 11 million gallons during heavy rains. The new upgrade will increase the plants ability to process an additional 3 million gallons per day.

Mr. Perreault shared that in 2008 a full time position was eliminated but in 2011 the crew size was back to six. This was due to the Bureau of Prisons expansion and treatment upgrade. He gave data on the Energy and Chemical Costs that are a major expense but necessary in order to treat the

sewage appropriately. Mr. Perreault also explained that there is a Pollution Control employee that is trained to repair boilers and this employee has actively maintained City boilers at City Hall, Court House, Fire Station, Police Station, Recreation Department, Water Works, Airport and the Public Works Garage.

City Manager MacQueen explained that the Pollution Control Facility is a separate fund that raises its own revenue in order to operate.

Mr. Perreault also reported that the facility has started treating AVRRDD's leachate this current year and quarterly revenue has been received.

Mr. Perreault then began reviewing the Public Works requested budget. He began by reviewing statistics regarding personnel levels for the last forty seven years. He indicated that from 1963 to 1972 the average number of employees was 57 and the current staffing is 27. He then reviewed the budget history for the last ten years. He outlined the many responsibilities that the Public Works Department attends to which include: Maintaining over sixty miles of streets and sidewalks, maintenance and repair of 122 vehicles, drainage systems, sewer systems, cemetery care, snow plowing and removal, street openings to name a few.

Solid Waste was the next budget item to be reviewed. Mr. Perreault shared that there are 3,600 locations and about 40 commercial properties which are tax exempt that this department services. The solid waste crew transports approximately 4,100 tons of waste per year to AVRRDD's district landfill. This department also provides post closure monitoring for the City's two landfills located on Cates Hill and the East Milan Road.

The diesel/gasoline expenses were reviewed with Mr. Perreault explaining that these line items were under budgeted last year. He spoke about the cost of salt and the rising prices. Mayor Grenier asked if the City uses mined salt and Mike affirmed that this was what they use. Mr. Perreault mentioned that his crew is careful to use the correct mix of sand and salt in an effort to keep costs down.

Mr. Perreault then started on the Parks budget. The Parks department maintains the many City Parks which were listed in the power point presentation.

Councilor Nelson asked if there would be any retirements this year and Mr. Perreault said there were none expected. Councilor Nelson asked if charging fees for the various programs that the Public Works Department assists at, such as River Fire, has been considered. Mr. Perreault agreed to review this possibility for additional revenue.

Mayor Grenier expressed his concern regarding the increasing costs and the declining federal and state revenues.

City Manager MacQueen then reviewed the Public Works Capital Improvement Budget. There was some discussion regarding a new Fuel Distribution System that must be placed by 2015. The Mayor asked what the estimates were and Mr. Perreault said the expense would be between \$250,000 and \$300,000. There was some discussion about dividing that expense over a three year period.

There was also discussion around the need for new equipment. Mr. Perreault is requesting vendors to provide a budget price and a lease purchase agreement price.

Councilor Rozek requested that Mr. Perreault explore purchasing gasoline from a local vendor. The Mayor suggested that the City bid out the fuel farm and both Mayor Grenier and Councilor Rozek encouraged exploring other avenues for obtaining City fuel.

With no further questions the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.