

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Monday, August 5, 2013

Mayor Grenier called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 7:41 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, Nelson and Theberge. Councilor Rozek was absent. Also present: James Wheeler, Pam Laflamme and the press.

Minutes, Previous Meeting

Councilor Remillard moved with a second by Councilor Otis to accept the minutes of the July 15 Regular Meeting/Work Session. So moved, the motion carried.

Disbursements: Disbursement Summary Draft #1696 start date 7/17/2013 end date 8/06/2013 has a total cash disbursement of \$1,963,943.49. Councilor Nelson moved with a second by Councilor Morgan Allain 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. ATV Committee Report: Councilor Theberge reported that the committee held a debriefing meeting after the festival. The Downtown Block Party went well even though it rained and parking went smoothly. Police Chief Morency was pleased that there were only minor incidents to report.

Mayor Grenier agreed it was great and all involved should be congratulated. They worked hard for a year to put this together. The Chamber of Commerce and ATV Club should be commended for a job well done. He heard no negative comments. The eyes of world on us and this thing will explode in the future. The Chamber, Downtown people and Citizens Bank were exceptional dealing with the large attendance along with local law enforcement and the Fish & Game Department. They are already busy planning for next year.

Councilor Benski asked what the final attendance numbers were compared to last year. Councilor Nelson said it was estimated that there were at least 2500 in the park. Downtown went well and restaurants were busy compared to the over 500 last year. The attendance has at least tripled but they have no good tracking tool to count actual numbers. The event has skyrocketed and word of mouth will make it bigger.

Councilor Remillard moved with a second by Councilor Otis to accept/file the report as presented by Councilor Theberge. So moved, the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

2. Resolution 2013-16 endorsing Androscoggin, Oxford & Coos Counties Corridor Coalition. (1st read)
Councilor Remillard moved with a second by Councilor Otis to table the resolution and schedule a public hearing on August 19. So moved, the motion carried.
3. Resolution 2013-17 authorizing acceptance of a grant offer not to exceed \$329,175.00 to the Federal Aviation Administration through the NH Department of Transportation to replace an above ground petroleum storage tank at the Berlin Regional Airport and appropriating such funds to the Airport Fund to be used for the purpose of the grant where the total project cost is not to exceed \$346,500.00. (1st read)
Councilor Remillard moved with a second by Councilor Otis to table the resolution and schedule a public hearing on August 19. So moved, the motion carried.
4. City Manager's Report

Fire at 162 Washington St. Caused by Lightning Strike & Other Storm Damage

On July 17th the Berlin Fire Department responded to a single family dwelling at 162 Washington Street for a structure fire reported at 8:40 pm. An initial response was put in motion by on duty department personnel and a general alarm was sounded to summons additional personnel to assist in fighting the fire. Damage was to the front dormer attic area and firefighters were able to isolate the fire from the rest of the structure preventing fire spread throughout the dwelling. Due to the quick response, there was little water damage and occupants were allowed to move back into the dwelling.

In addition to the fire, Public Works responded to several issues from this storm. There were two large downed trees on Forbush Ave. resulting in the need for barricades and causing damage to a sidewalk. There were trees on lines and a broken power pole in the Jasper St. area resulting in the need for barricades. There were smaller trees and branches in the parks and cemeteries.

Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) City Management Team Meeting

We are actively scheduling a group of administrative employees for a presentation by Jane Hubbard of Hubbard Consulting LLC. Ms. Hubbard assisted the City in rewriting the City's Emergency Operations Plan. The meeting is informational in nature and is intended to bring awareness to department heads and other personnel that the emergency operation plans exists and what roles and responsibilities they have in the execution of the plan. The emergency operations plan consists of sixteen emergency support functions. A City department head may be responsible to provide primary resources or support resources. These roles provide coordination and allocation of resources from their respective departments. Most department heads have been active in the writing of the emergency plan. Some departments have no primary or support function, nonetheless, they have expertise in areas that will benefit in emergency operations. These would include but not necessarily be limited to Finance, Code Enforcement, Housing, Clerk's Office, Library and Human Resources. The plan specifically outlines the responsibility of department heads to train their personnel in their primary or support function(s). Throughout the year, the Emergency Management Team will meet and discuss training needs intended to meet the goals of the plan.

Public Works

- The PHII WWTP upgrade remains on schedule.
- The I&I project on Twitchell Lane and Hutchins Street remains on schedule. The sewer line design for Hutchins St. is complete. We are working on the engineering details for the Hutchins St. road and sidewalk construction.
- Working on specifications for the purchase of a vacuum/jet truck.
- Working on Rotary Park Details boat launch project details.
- Working on Sweden St. retaining wall.

State Highway Block Grant

The City has been provided the NH State Block Grant that will be available to Berlin in the FY 2014 Year. Payments to the City will be as follows:

July 2013 Actual -	\$58,804.86
October 2013 Actual -	\$58,804.86
January 2014 Actual -	\$39,203.24
April 2014 Estimated -	\$39,203.25
TOTAL -	\$196,016.21

This total, which is subject to change in the last quarter is slightly higher than the municipal budget amount of \$189,102.00. See attached.

OHRV On-Highway Connector Permit Issued to DRED for Jericho Lake Road

This permit was effective July 17, 2013. A copy is attached.

Capital Improvement Plan

City Department Heads are currently working on the annual revision to the Six Year Capital Improvement Plan. The first draft of capital plans will be finalized in the next few weeks. The plan will be submitted to the Planning Board for their approval and recommendation to the City Council for final approval sometime in the Fall.

Housing

Final demolition and clean-up of 148 Pleasant St. will be completed this week.

Following is the status update of 31 Properties taken by Tax Deed in 2013:

Of 12 land parcels, 2 have been repurchased.
Of 8 multi-family homes, 1 has been repurchased.
Of 9 single family homes, 3 have been repurchased.

In addition to the 6 properties under action above, the status of 15 properties with buildings including 7 multi-family, 6 single-family and 2 commercial is as follows:

7 Multi-Family:

(1st three - Berlin Realty Trust)

616 Third Ave- Court has ordered two remaining tenants to leave - one out this weekend, remaining tenant out on Aug. 7.

110 York - One tenant remaining - went to court Thursday - awaiting judge's decision.

212 Willow - Prior owner/owner's representative claiming he resides there - hearing scheduled on Aug. 8th.

511 Goebel - One tenant remaining - court last Thursday - awaiting judge's decision.

827 Western - Tenants are rehabilitating 538 Burgess St. - will be out by Aug. 30.

1051 Main St. - Property vacant as of Jul. 15. Will be assessing and securing next week.

630 Rockingham - Property vacant at tax deeding - was secured immediately.

6 Single-Family: All vacant

79 Seventh – secured.

127 Prospect – secured.

613 Western - burned property, environmental assessment conducted.

376 Burgess - need to inspect and re-secure.

422 Champlain - need to inspect and re-secure.

306 Church St. - need to inspect and re-secure.

2 Commercial:

234 Main St. – secured.

320 High St. - secured and environmental assessment conducted.

Finally, there are 10 land parcels pending further action.

BHS Backers Homecoming Planning

The BHS Backers submitted a request for a route closure for the Berlin High School 2013 Homecoming Festivities on September 13th. The intent is to follow the same route as last year from the 12th Street Bridge to the Northern Forest Heritage Park. This route was followed for the first time last year and with the culmination of the bonfire at Heritage Park, it generated a lot of positive feedback. See attached.

Notice of Drawdown of PSNH Smyth Hydro

PSNH is planning its annual drawdown of the Smyth Hydro Facility from September 16, 2013 through September 29, 2013. The drawdown is conducted for annual and capital maintenance work on the dam and head works facilities. See attached.

Ray Burton NH Airport Day

Ray Burton will be flying into the Berlin Airport at 4 pm on August 23rd. This visit is part of Councilor Burton's annual North Country Air Tour. Councilor Burton participates in this annual tour to specifically highlight and engage with the airport assets of the North Country. All are welcome to attend.

Coins Collected from Bickford Place Water Fountain

Coins collected from the Bickford Place Water Fountain by the Public Works Dept. recently totaled \$29.61. While the amount is a few dollars shy of putting us on Easy St., we imagine that the money purchased many wishes made for the benefit of the Citizens of Berlin.

Mayor Grenier asked if anyone can now live at the 538 Burgess Street property. The City Manager will check into the status of that property since they may still have some time to make the necessary upgrades. He will check to see where it currently stands.

Councilor Theberge regarding Capital Improvements mentioned that they previously discussed the Public Works Garage for the quality of keeping heat in and new windows but he sees nothing going forward at this time. He did mention that there is grant money out there for solar systems that could make the Public Works Garage energy efficient.

The City Manager replied that the Public Works Director has recently worked with a contractor for a layout for the windows which are a first priority.

Councilor Theberge inquired about the status of the I&I project on Hutchins Street between Wood and Bridge Street. Last year the reason they did not complete the edge to edge paving was because the I&I drainage was destroyed. They had a camera there and saw roots were going through.

The City Manager explained the replacement sewer system has been designed and that is being presented to the contractor who is currently doing the I&I project as a change order. We expect to move forward with the I&I new sewer work in that section which will start in a couple of weeks. That work will be done this year and the road will be made passable but there might be some more work to do in the spring.

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

5. Mayor's Report

Appointments: Police Commission: Steve Griffin, three year term set to expire 8/31/2016.

Cemetery Trustee: Kristia Davis, three year term set to expire 8/31/2016

Councilor Nelson moved with a second by Councilor Higbee to accept the Mayor's nomination of Steve Griffin on the Police Commission and Kris Davis on the Cemetery Trustees as presented. So moved, the motion carried.

Mayor Grenier spoke to Mr. Donovan who works for the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad who told him that they applied for a Federal Government Grant since they have 19 miles of rail in NH and VT but mostly in NH. The Mayor would like to send a letter to the NH Congressional Delegation to go on record that the Berlin City Council supports the grant application. The City Manager agreed to draft the letter of support.

Councilor Nelson moved with a second by Councilor Higbee to accept/file the Mayor's Report. So moved, the motion carried.

6. Public Comments: No comments

7. Council Comments:

Councilor Remillard remarked that the ATV Festival had an outstanding turnout and along with the Catholic Church activities, the Police Department kept it well organized. They even involved the Bishop with the ATV's and are to be complimented because without them we would have had problems.

Councilor Theberge added that on Saturday after the Blessing of the ATV's they invited the Bishop to go through the mud and the Bishop was a good sport and went through with a girl.

8. Adjournment:

There being no further business before the Mayor and Council at this time, Councilor Higbee moved with a second by Councilor Nelson to adjourn the regular meeting. So moved, the motion carried and Mayor Grenier declared the regular meeting closed at approximately 8:11 p.m.

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