

PUBLIC HEARING – December 16, 2013

Mayor Grenier opened the duly advertised public hearing portion of the meeting at approximately 7:37 p.m. to hear public comments on the following subject matter:

Ordinance 2013-10 No Parking 709 Western Avenue. No Comments.

There being no one wishing to speak for or against the subject matter, Mayor Grenier closed the public hearing portion of the meeting at approximately 7:38 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Monday, December 16, 2013

Mayor Grenier called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 7:39 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, Nelson and Theberge. Also present: James Wheeler and the press.

Minutes, Previous Meeting

Councilor Remillard moved with a second by Councilor Otis to accept the minutes of the December 2 Work Session and Regular Meeting; December 9 Work Session. So moved, the motion carried.

Disbursements: Disbursement Summary Draft #1705 start date 12/03/2013 end date 12/16/2013 for a total cash disbursement of \$1,563,756.00. Councilor Theberge moved with a second by Councilor Nelson 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. Traffic Safety Committee Recommendations:
#2. School Street Parking. Lt. Prosecutor Buteau recommended waiting until a curb cut is made to determine whether “no parking” will be needed at 411 School Street, the Safety Committee concurred.

#3. Dead End Sign Request on Champlain Street. In a letter, Mr. John McKenna is asking for a dead end sign at Champlain Street to protect his privacy. The Safety Committee recommends denying this request

Councilor Rozek moved with a second by Councilor Higbee to accept the recommendations of the Traffic Safety Committee on items 2 and 3 as presented. So moved, the motion carried.

2. Ordinance 2013-10 Amend the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 15, Traffic & Vehicles, Article III. Stopping, Standing & Parking, Sec. 15-69. Prohibited at all times in designated places by adding “No Parking, Vehicles will be Towed” signs on either side of the driveway at 709 Western Avenue. (tabled 12/02/2013)

Councilor Nelson moved with a second by Councilor Theberge to remove the ordinance from the table at this time. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Nelson moved with a second by Councilor Theberge to retable the ordinance until the January 6, 2014 meeting. So moved, the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

3. Ordinance 2014-01 Amending the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 15 Traffic and Vehicles, Article I. in General. Sec. 15-11. Permits for Parades and Processions. (1st read)

Councilor Remillard moved with a second by Councilor Otis to table the ordinance and schedule a public hearing on January 6, 2014. So moved, the motion carried.

4. Resolution 2014-01 Amend the City of Berlin Guidelines for the Administration of General Assistance (Welfare Guidelines). (1st read)

Councilor Theberge moved with a second by Councilor Morgan Allain to table the resolution and schedule a public hearing on January 6, 2014. So moved, the motion carried.

5. City Manager's Report

Friday Night Fire on Main St.

The Fire Department responded to a structural fire on 12/13/2013 at the former Princess Theatre originally constructed in 1913. Fortunately, there were no injuries or fatalities. The Berlin Fire Dept. handled the entire incident without mutual aid. As you know, the effort was conducted in freezing temperatures. Assistance was provided by the Police and Public Works Departments. The State Fire Marshal's Office along with the Fire and Police Department are currently conducting an investigation to identify a cause. Meanwhile, the City has initiated the 115B process to ensure that the building is dealt with as quickly and as possible.

Real-estate Closings Initiated on Notre Dame and Community Field Properties

The closing documentation for both of these property transfers was predominantly completed last week. There are a few remaining issues to be completed by the attorneys working on the finalization of the process. For all intents and purposes, the process is approximately 95% complete and there is no reason to not expect full completion.

Housing Updates

Demolitions:

1051 Main St. – ESA (Environmental Site Assessment) has been completed on 1051 Main St. and due to extensive asbestos clean-up will go out to bid.

376 Burgess - ESA completed and minimal asbestos - Acadia Environmental will do Asbestos clean-up in January.

Demolition Bids for both will go out in early January

Grants:

Working on applications both an EPA Brownfields assessment grant \$200K, and a CDBG \$500K grant, to continue Berlin Neighborhood Revitalization. - Both grants are due in January

Property Sales:

Bids are due on December 19 for:

- Land – 320 High St.
- 616 Third Ave
- 110 York
- 306 Church
- 827 Western
- 630 Rockingham
- 127 Prospect

First Large Snow Storm of the Season

The first large storm occurred on Saturday night into Sunday morning. The Public Works Director reports that all in all, snow fighting activities have gone and are going well. There were some snow removal operations during the day today, full snow removal activities are scheduled to start in the downtown in the early morning hours of Tuesday.

Education Tax Warrant for 2014

The City has received the Education Tax Warrant from the DRA for tax year 2014. The amount to assess is \$703,225. Please see the attached warrant.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes from Berlin Housing Authority

The Commissioners of BHA have presented the City with a payment in lieu of taxes in the amount of \$9,354.84. Please see the attached letter provided to the Mayor and Council which recognizes the many municipal services that the BHA benefits from.

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

Mayor Grenier asked if the State Education Tax Form matched the number given by the DRA in November. The City Manager replied it is less due to the utility values going up and that this is the number for the upcoming budget.

Councilor Theberge asked if the Holiday Center was affected by the Friday night fire since they appeared closed. The City Manager did not know why they were closed but did not think the fire affected that building.

Councilor Remillard added that she spoke to the Holiday Center personnel and luckily there was no water damage and that the ribbon only ties to the end of their building, it does not block the entrance.

6. Mayor's Report

Mayor Grenier suggested that at the January 20 Inauguration Meeting because all incumbents were reelected and there is not any unfamiliarity with each other, they could think about what Council Committees they want to be on so they could actually take care of that issue that night. The Airport Authority and Planning Board representative are not appointments by the Mayor but a Council Election and there are the other committees to think about. Councilors could decide if they want to stay on a committee or if they want to step down, it would be a good time to do so.

7. Public Comments – No comments

8. Council Comments – No comments

9. Adjournment:

There being no further business before the Mayor and Council at this time, Councilor Rozek 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 7:54 p.m.

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