

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Monday, March 17, 2014

Mayor Grenier called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 8:14 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers. The pledge of allegiance to the flag preceded roll call. Present: Councilors Remillard, Morgan Allain, Benski, Higbee, Rozek, Nelson and Theberge. Councilor Otis informed the Mayor he would be absent. Also present: James Wheeler, Pam Laflamme and the press.

Minutes, Previous Meeting

Councilor Remillard moved with a second by Councilor Morgan Allain to accept the minutes of the March 3 Work Session and Regular Meeting and March 10 Work Session; Budget Meeting. So moved, the motion carried.

Disbursements: Disbursement Summary Draft #1711 start date 3/04/2014 end date 3/14/2014 for a total cash disbursement of \$811,986.18. 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 – No Reports

NEW BUSINESS

2. Communication from Ellen Tavino re: sidewalks

Ms. Tavino stated she had to walk in the road since the sidewalks are not plowed. She requests that sidewalks around Berlin be made passable for the safety of the citizens.

Councilor Rozek moved with a second by Councilor Nelson to accept the communication and place it on file. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Theberge said a possible alternate route for snowmachines could be the tracks from St Pats to the mill. It would tie in with the Success and Jericho trails and down to the Big Apple for fuel and food.

The City Manager replied the big obstacle at the moment, which might clear up, is the North American Dismantling property with environmental issues that are being addressed.

Councilor Theberge noticed most sidewalks when he goes out of town are plowed down to the ground and can be used to travel as-is. The City should clear a path between Pleasant Street to Rite Aid.

Councilor Nelson said the alternate route is on the other side of the street which is kept clean. Although she supports public safety, she supports snowmobiles to be able to go to town, not re-routing down a track when there is a perfectly good sidewalk on the other side of the street.

Councilor Benski asked if home owners in other cities clear the sidewalks in front on their homes. Also, does the City of Berlin clear every sidewalk? The answer was no due to lack of funds.

Councilor Remillard suggested since Councilor Theberge did so good with the ATV group, would he meet with the snowmobile group to look for a solution?

Councilor Theberge is willing to do so. He is not sure if there is a grant out there to make an extension like they did in Errol although it is very narrow between Pleasant and Main Streets. He would like to see a study done to find out what is feasible and what can be done in connecting.

Councilor Benski concurred that the citizen has the right to use the other side of the street.

3. City Manager’s Report

Tax Deeding and Liening Status from the Finance Department

As of March 17, 2014, there are 66 properties that will be mailed “Impending Tax Deed Notices” on March 27, 2014. As of March 17, 2014, the amount of the 2013 outstanding taxes to be liened on March 31, 2014 is \$850,408.68. We do expect this amount to come down over the next couple of weeks. Last year the amount liened was \$790,247.00.

Winter Budget Update from Public Works

- As of March the winter overtime line items is over by \$3,700 not including the storm of last week.
- As of March, the sand tonnage (3600 tons) has exceeded last season’s total usage by 1300 tons. This line item is \$5,200 over budget.
- As of March, our salt tonnage (1700 tons) is slightly over last seasons’ total usage (1680). There is \$27,000 left in this line item for this season.

Overall the budget is 74% expended at 75% of the fiscal year.

Pollution Control Report

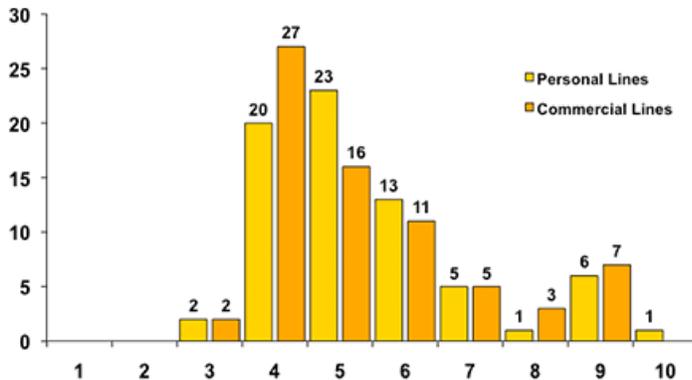
Attached, please find a report from Henry Noel, Superintendent. Of particular note in the report is the large volume of equipment and systems that are coming online and within the control the treatment plant staff as a result of the upgrade project.

Building Code Effectiveness Grading by Insurance Services Office (ISO)

Working on behalf of insurance companies, the ISO evaluates building code enforcement departments around the country. The ISO evaluated the City back in 2000 and did so again at the end of 2013. They use a grading scale of 1 to 10, 1 represents an exemplary commitment to building-code enforcement. By the ISO evaluation, you will see that the City’s progress has been in the residential segment. Theoretically, this improvement should lead to lower premiums for one to 2 family residential properties.

Building Classification	2000	2013
1 and 2 Family Residential	6	8
Commercial/Industrial	5	5

Below is a chart taken from the ISO website which indicates how municipalities are graded across the state. New Hampshire - **Distribution of Communities by BCEGS Class**
Number within Classification



Retrieved from <http://www.isomitigation.com/bcegs/1000/graphs/NH.html> on 3/17/14

North Country Council Representatives Meeting – Building a Sustainable Economy for the North Country. (held on February 27, 2014 at Gorham Town Hall)

Attached for your benefit are excerpts from the North Country Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, CEDS that were presented at this meeting.

NHMA Legislative Bulletin Excerpts and Updates

SB 367 – Increase in Road Toll for Transportation Funding

“On Thursday (March 13, 2014), with virtually no discussion, the Senate voted 14-9 to pass **SB 367**, as amended by the Senate Ways and Means Committee, which will raise the road toll (gas tax) by approximately 4.2 cents beginning July 1, 2014. This will be the first road toll increase in 23 years and has been the subject of lengthy debate in the legislature over the past few years. This **NHMA policy bill** will provide approximately \$3.8 million per year in additional highway block grant funding to municipalities for local roads and bridges. The bill will also fund an additional \$32 million each year to the Department of Transportation for reconstruction, resurfacing or replacement of state-owned roads and bridges. The bill now heads to the Senate Finance Committee for a hearing next **Thursday, March 20 at 9:00 in State House Room 103** and it will be up for another Senate vote after that committee’s review.”

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

Councilor Rozek stated that they saved a little on salt but he doesn’t know if it is such a good thing.

According to City Manager Wheeler, they cut back on salt due to the extreme cold because salt won’t work below a certain temp.

Councilor Rozek cautioned that we need to be careful about the snowmobile trails that run through the City because if we eliminate them, the snowmobilers will go somewhere else. We need to carefully weigh out the need for alternative routes.

4. Mayor’s Report

Re-Appointment: Board of Assessors, Kem Rozek three year term set to expire 3/31/2017. Councilor Higbee moved with a second by Councilor Theberge to accept the Mayor’s nomination of Kem Rozek to the Board of Assessors. So moved, the motion carried.

5. Public Comments – no comments

6. Council Comments

Councilor Rozek mentioned that he and another dedicated Councilor came to the budget meeting last Wednesday since no one informed them that the meeting was canceled. He asked that in the future, could someone text him to keep him informed.

Councilor Rozek mentioned the letter to the editor Mike Young wrote last week regarding snow removal on his street, the equipment used and how long the process took. Councilor Rozek asked the City Manager to investigate this matter. The point is that they work hard and it is a long winter. It would be good if there is a possibility they could look at the efficiency used to run this equipment and how to maximize our dollars.

Mayor Grenier agrees we need to follow up on the matter to get the facts.

The City Manager read the letter, immediately began the inquiry and will provide Council with the actual facts regarding the situation.

7. Adjournment: There being no further business before the Mayor and Council at this time, Councilor Rozek moved with a second by Councilor Theberge to adjourn the regular meeting. So moved, the motion carried and Mayor Grenier declared the regular meeting closed at approximately 8:37 p.m.

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