

**City Council Work Session
January 20, 2026**

Present were: Mayor Cone, Councilors Korzen, Qualls, Morency, Valerino, Higbee, Plourde and Theberge. Councilor Grenier was absent.

Others present: City Manager Phillip L. Warren Jr., Dir. Of Strat. Initiatives and Asst. City Mgr. Pamela Laflamme, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Finance Director Holly Larsen, Library Director Ann Brungot, Chief of Police Jeff Lemoine, Deputy Chief of Police Nathan Roy, SAU3 District Educational Services Administrator Tammy Fauteux, Councilor-Elect Robin Lavertu, Amy M. Poirier, Eamon Kelley, Mark Evans, Debra Foss, Denise Bergeron, Suzanne Wasileski, Lisa Connell, Berlin Sun, Paul Robitaille, Berlin Sun and Members of the Public.

Mayor Cone opened the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

Capital Improvement Program

Mr. Warren presented the 2027-2032 proposed Capital Improvement Plan. The first page of the document is a recap of all the departments followed by each individual departments including Police, Fire, Administration, Public Works, Parks & Rec., Library, School, Wastewater Treatment Plant and Airport. He reminded Council these aren't expendable budget items, they reoccur over the 5-year period. It is a road map to fund capital improvements through the budgetary process. This is required under the statute that governs planning boards.

He discussed the East Milan Road Landfill. It was discovered a few years back that the gas that normally occurred from the items in that landfill had migrated off site. The City has been working with DES to come up with a program to mitigate the issue. The cost of this program is \$600,000 for installation and between \$30,000-\$50,000 annually to maintain it. The City is under a consent order for this, and it has to be done within the next year. In addition, when the RAISE grant was submitted, the plan was that Berlin Water Works was going to provide in kind assistance in the amount of approximately \$900,000 to assemble and put together the heat loop that was going to be under the street. The heat loop has been removed from that grant. The \$19,500,000 is still there, but the City would now have to come up with approximately \$900,000 to match the grant funds. He strongly recommends when going through the budget process that it's considered to acquire debt for the approximately \$1,500,000 to address the two items mentioned.

2026 Statistical Revaluation Contract

Mr. Warren is presenting the contract this evening as it's his understanding that this needs to be done in the upcoming budget year. This amount will need to be included in the FY2027 budget, and the contract needs to be approved in order to lock this in for a full statistical revaluation starting July 1st, 2026. He is prepared to include it in the FY2027 budget, but wanted to make sure the Council is 100% in support of this so the contract can be executed, and they can start the revaluation in July 2026. Councilor Higbee commented that the City would be losing money continually if it doesn't move forward the revaluation due to the equalization ratio. Councilor Valerino moved to support the 2026 full statistical revaluation contract. Councilor Higbee seconded and the motion carried with all in favor.

At 6:49 p.m., there being no further business in Work Session, Mayor Cone moved on to the Regular Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Danielle Rioux
Executive Assistant

*Minutes are unofficial until they have been accepted by the City Council by motion.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – Tuesday, January 20, 2026

Regular Meeting

Mayor Cone called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 6:49 pm.

a. Pledge of Allegiance

b. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Cone, Councilors Qualls, Higbee, Plourde, Morency, Valerino, Korzen, and Theberge.

Absent: Councilor Grenier

Also present: City Manager Phillip L. Warren Jr., Dir. Of Strat. Initiatives and Asst. City Mgr. Pamela Laflamme, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Finance Director Holly Larsen, Chief of Police Jeff Lemoine, Deputy Chief Nathan Roy, Library Director Ann Brungot, District Educational Services Administrator Tammy Fauteux, Roland Berthiaume, Janet Tremblay, Councilor-Elect Robin Lavertu, Lisa Connell, Berlin Daily Sun and other members of the public.

c. Councilor Theberge moved, with a second by Councilor Korzen, to accept the minutes of the January 5, 2026, Regular Meeting and Work Session. So moved, the motion passed.

Disbursements:

Disbursement Summary Draft #2001 with a start date of 01/06/2026 and an end date of 01/20/2026 for a total cash disbursement of \$2,711,657.86. Councilor Theberge moved, with a second by Councilor Qualls, to accept the disbursement summary and pay all bills as recommended by the Committee on Accounts/Claims. So moved, the motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Roland Berthiaume, of 46 Franklin Street, thanked the Council for their time and effort. Mr. Berthiaume noted that he was a firefighter with the City of Berlin for 25 years, and brought a binder which was used for a study of the Efficient and Effective use of Resources at the Fire Department. Mr. Berthiaume noted that the Fire Department providing EMS services came out of this study and has so far been very successful. Mr. Berthiaume suggested that to save money in other departments, this outline could be used to see how we do what we do better, for the services we have to provide. Mr. Berthiaume advised that this study brought labor and management together, and the integration of EMS was successful because of that.

Janet Tremblay, of 15 Countryside Avenue, shared a safety concern for the lights by the bridge. Ms. Tremblay noted that they took a very long time to change today, almost 10 minutes, and that cars were passing her and could have caused an accident. City Manager Warren responded, stating that he watched them for about 30 minutes after he received her report and did not observe any issues. However, the lights work with a camera system and sometimes the weather affects them negatively. City Manager Warren noted that if the system detects a fault, they will automatically set to flash. When asked who services the traffic lights, Mr. Warren stated that he does any initial troubleshooting, but they do have a traffic engineering firm to contact if they cannot be reset.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Council Committee Reports

There were no Council Committee Reports.

RECOGNITION OF MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

INAUGURATION CEREMONY

Swearing in Ceremony by: Shelli Fortin, City Clerk

Mayor – Elect Robert Cone

Councilors – Elect

Robin Lavertu
Peter Morency
Richard Plourde
Robert Theberge
Brian Valerino

School Board Members

Amy Poirier
Mark Evans
Debra Foss
Eamon Kelley

Library Trustees

Denise Bergeron
Suzanne Wasileski

NEW BUSINESS

1. Resolution 2026-01 NH State Council of the Arts Grant (1st read)

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second by Councilor Qualls, to table the Resolution and schedule a public hearing for February 2, 2026. So moved, the motion carried.

2. City Manager's Report

1. We received a refund check from NH Interlocal Trust, our former health insurance risk pool administrator, in the amount of \$53,249.
2. Deliveries of salt for ice control have been delayed due to a supply issue with the vendor. Many communities are going through the same, we have not been as negatively affected due to the size of the salt shed and proactive ordering when supplies are depleted. As of this report, deliveries have resumed. We are awaiting approximately 30 truckloads from previous orders and will probably need an additional 15 truckloads to bring us back to a comfortable amount.
3. The recycling truck that was replaced through the DES grant has been rendered inoperative; this was part of the grant conditions. We are awaiting some requested information from the manufacturer of this truck – once received we will apply for reimbursement.
4. Wright Pierce is conducting sewer connection inspections inside homes in the City. There has been a concern from some homeowners that this program was not an official city project as well as concerns about what will happen if a deficiency is found during the inspection. These inspections are to educate the contractor on what conditions exist at sewer connections and what should be done in future projects to eliminate inflow and infiltration of the sewer system. This activity is part of our operational permit requirements. The goal here is to ensure that only sewage flows to the treatment plant and that the storm drainage system is completely separate from the sewer system.

Councilor Korzen asked if homeowners can refuse the inspection by Wright Pierce, and City Manager Warren advised that they can. However, if a deficiency is found, they can require entry.

Councilor Korzen asked about the problem with the lights at the bridge. City Manager Warren advised that it is a sporadic issue, not a systemic issue. Mr. Warren advised that having the traffic engineering firm come to look at them would cost money, and this problem is a common issue.

Councilor Valerino moved, with a second by Councilor Korzen, to accept the City Manager's Report and place it on file. So moved, the motion passed.

3. Mayor's Report

Mayor Cone noted the loss of Councilor Grenier from the Council, and commended his highly distinguished career in local government, stating that he is a staple in the community. Mayor Cone stated that Mr. Grenier was an archive of what Berlin has been and is now.

4. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

7. Council Comments

Councilor Morency thanked the North Country State Representatives for killing HB314, which would have affected the logging industry. Councilor Morency advised the bill for retirement contributions did not pass, but they will try again.

Councilor Valerino noted that he recently had to contact emergency services, and noted that Berlin EMS and the Berlin Police Department did a phenomenal job.

8. Adjournment

On a motion by Councilor Higbee, seconded by Councilor Qualls, the Council voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 pm. So moved, the motion carried.

A True Record, Attest:

Shelli Fortin
City Clerk

Note: Minutes are unofficial until they have been accepted by the Council by motion.