

## **City Council Work Session January 5, 2026**

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

Others present: City Manager Phillip L. Warren Jr., Dir. Of Strat. Initiatives and Asst. City Mgr. Pamela Laflamme, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Chief of Police Jeff Lemoine, SAU3 District Educational Services Administrator Tammy Fauteux, Crystle Dickinson, Bernie Martel, Anthony Valliere, Lisa Connell, Berlin Daily Sun and Members of the Public.

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

Councilor Grenier moved to add an item under other to discuss opposition of HB314. Councilor Higbee seconded, and the motion carried with all in favor.

### **Jeanne Robillard, Tri-County Community Action Program**

Ms. Robillard asked to come in front of Council this evening to discuss the Brown Company Building that is owned by Tri-County CAP. The board are currently deciding if they will keep the Brown Company House or not. Above all if they were going to convey it or sell it, she wanted to let Council know as a courtesy. They are looking to make the best and highest possible use of that building to benefit Berlin residents because of its historical significance. A few years back most of the historical artifacts that were there were conveyed to the Historical Society. Councilor Theberge questioned funding that was allocated to repair this building in the past. Ms. Robillard responded she was not aware of funding for this building. She does recall funding that was allocated to repair the church. Councilor Higbee as a previous employee of Tri-County CAP stated he doesn't recall any funding or plans to repair the Brown House. The biggest concerns when he was working there were that the sills were rotting, and the back of the building was sinking. He's not sure what the condition of the building is now, but 20 years ago, it needed sill work around the garage out back as it was sinking into the earth. Ms. Robillard stated they've had facilities go over the building and it was determined it needed roof work, furnace work, exterior work and more. Mayor Cone thanked Ms. Robillard for letting the Council know of Tri-County Cap's intentions.

### **Recreation Commission Interviews**

Mayor Cone advised Recreation Commission interviews would be held this evening with three candidates.

### **Bernie Martel**

Mayor Cone invited Mr. Martel to introduce himself and state why he is interested in this position. Mr. Martel commented he's been involved in sports his whole life. Mostly hockey, soccer and running. He's been in the area for 27 years now. He likes the area, he likes hiking, he coaches soccer and basketball. His life has pretty much been sports. Now that he is retired, he would like to bring back fun in sports, have kids enjoy being healthy and play sports. He would like to see the Recreation Center coordinate with the schools and come up with something more creative and keep the health of our kids. Councilor Theberge asked Mr. Martel if he has any children of his own that take advantage of the Recreation Center. Mr. Martel responded yes, he has two children that play basketball and attend the Recreation Center. Councilor Theberge asked Mr. Martel if he uses the Recreation Center for his coaching activities. Mr. Martel responded yes, he does. Councilor Grenier thanked Mr. Martel for all the volunteer work he does.

### **Crystle Dickinson**

Mayor Cone invited Ms. Dickinson to introduce herself and state why she is interested in this position. Ms. Dickinson commented she is currently employed with CCFHS, she has a business degree and is working towards her human resources degree. She is big into football and currently sits on the Board of the Berlin Gladiators football. She helped rebuilt the program from what it was to what it was this year which was a big success. She holds the chair for the fundraising committee and raised over \$25,000 for football. She is now working on getting the cheer program set up through the recreation dept. and the Gladiator football is also a recreation program. It's personal to see this program succeed in such a small community. The children need to be the focus, and we need to do what we can to keep them off the street, keep them active and proactive. She is a big believer in keeping the children busy and out of trouble. Councilor Theberge asked Ms. Dickinson if she has children of her own involved in the Recreation Center. Ms. Dickinson responded that yes, she does. Her son plays football and has been in the league for two years and goes to the Recreation Center five days a week. Her daughter is a part of the cheer program. Her children were also part of the summer program. Councilor Plourde asked Ms. Dickinson if she grew up in Berlin. She stated she's been in Berlin for 26 years.

### **Anthony Valliere**

Mayor Cone invited Mr. Valliere to introduce himself and state why he is interested in this position. Mr. Valliere commented he was born and raised in Berlin. He is now raising his three children ages 4, 7 and 9 here in Berlin. The recreation department played a huge role for him growing up here. He went through all the rec programs between soccer, basketball and hockey. He also was employed, as a student through the parks program and did field work for multiple summers. He's always enjoyed being part of it and also been part of the North Country soccer league since its inception in 2005 as a sophomore in high school. He's been coaching in this league for a long time and within the last 5 years he took over and now runs the North Country league through the rec program. He is very involved with the recreation dept. and is familiar with it. He is currently the assistant principal at the Berlin Middle School, so he is still plenty involved with the youth. He coached the varsity soccer program for 10 years. He knows the value of rec programs in a world where youth sports are focused on travel teams. You need feeder programs to make sure that those things are supported and also for the people that can't go and travel all these places.

### **Other**

#### **HB314 Discussion**

Councilor Grenier stated he's been following this bill through the NHMA biweekly reports. He explained that HB314 would restrict the city from paying dues to NHMA. If this bill was to pass it would destroy the ability of the NH Municipal Association and NH Association of Counties from lobbying the legislature and make sure that when there are bills that are to the detriment of the City or County Government. It would preclude these two layers of government from lobbying. NHMA helped the city and the County when the mills closed and also helped get landfill gas to the mills. They played a critical role in helping with that. They also helped the city when Burgess was going through their permitting process because of the benefits that the City of Berlin was getting once the construction was complete and operational. NHMA also gives free legal advice to the City on a number of topics that are very important such as zoning and planning. They also help educate new zoning board and planning board members. He feels the city should take an official position in opposition of HB314. Mr. Warren commented this will also affect the NH Public Works Association and other groups.

Councilor Grenier commented that Berlin's dues for this vast service is \$7,533. Councilor Valerino asked Councilor Morency, who is also a State Representative, what his opinion is. Councilor Morency commented he has a Zoom call tomorrow to discuss this bill. His biggest concern with this is that sometimes NHMA has a different position than they have but they're representing everybody. He is concerned with losing lobbyists for any organization, losing that voice. We know more than anybody that what happens here doesn't always get to Concord. Councilor Korzen commented that he feels this bill

states that our tax dollars shouldn't be paying lobbyists. How does this connect to these organizations. Are our tax dollars paying these organizations. Councilor Grenier responded that the NMHA dues for every community are based on population. Part of the revenue that NHMA takes in is to lobby the legislature on behalf of its member communities. Councilor Theberge commented that the Coos County Commissioners sent a letter in opposition to HB314. Councilor Higbee commented that NHMA, in addition to lobbying, also offer free training for municipal officials which are very beneficial in educating officials on 91-A, right to know laws and much more. They also send out monthly magazines which contain lots of great information. Councilor Plourde commented that just with the legal advice NHMA offers, we can't really afford not to support them. Councilor Grenier moved to send a communication to all State Representatives and the Speaker of the House voicing opposition to HB314. Councilor Valerino seconded, and the motion carried with majority in favor. Councilor Morency abstained.

### **Non-Public Session**

At 7:10 p.m., Councilor Grenier moved with a second from Councilor Valerino to enter into Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3 II; (d) Consideration of the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community. So, moved, the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

The sale of a City owned property was discussed.

At 7:32p.m., Mayor, Council and Staff came out of Non-Public Session. Councilor Grenier moved to seal the minutes of the non-public session until the issue at hand has been executed; Councilor Korzen seconded, and the motion carried unanimously by roll call.

At 7:33 p.m., there being no further business in Work Session, Mayor Cone recessed before moving 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 – Monday, January 5, 2026**

### **Public Hearing**

Mayor Cone opened the Public Hearing on Resolution 2025-30 CDBG Homeland Security Grant SWAT-SOU PD at 7:41 pm. There were no public comments. The hearing was closed at 7:42 pm.

### **Regular Meeting**

Mayor Cone called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 7:42 pm.

#### **a. Pledge of Allegiance**

#### **b. Roll Call**

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

Absent: Councilor Qualls

Also present: City Manager Phillip Warren, Jr, Director of Strategic Initiatives Pamela Laflamme, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Police Chief Jeffrey Lemoine, District Educational Services Administrator Tammy Fauteux, Theodore Bosen, Nathan Richard, Crystle Dickinson, Anthony Valliere, Bernie Martel, other members of the public, and Lisa Connell, Berlin Daily Sun.

c. Councilor Theberge moved, with a second by Councilor Korzen, to accept the minutes of the December 15, 2025, Regular Meeting and Work Session. So moved, the motion passed.

#### **Disbursements:**

Disbursement Summary Draft # 2000 with a start date of 12/16/2025 and an end date of 01/05/2026 for a total cash disbursement of \$1,057,049.72. Councilor Theberge moved, with a second by Councilor Korzen, to accept the disbursement summary and pay all bills as reviewed and approved by the Committee on Accounts/Claims. So moved, the motion passed.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Theodore Bosen, of 13 Bisson Road, asked the Council to urge the State Delegation to bring back the Interest and Dividends Tax. Mr. Bosen noted that this used to bring \$180 million to NH cities and towns, of which Berlin would receive about \$2 million, and shared that this information is available from the NH Policy Institute. Mr. Bosen noted that the top 1% of wage earners would pay about half of the tax, and everyone would benefit. Mr. Bosen stated that his property taxes have tripled. Mr. Bosen stated that the State needs to rebuild the pie as they have downshifted costs to municipalities, and they need to reverse what has been happening.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **1. Council Committee Reports**

There were no Council committee reports.

#### **2. Resolution 2025-30 Homeland Security Grant SWAT-SOU PD (tabled 12/15/2025)**

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Five

A RESOLUTION authorizing the Berlin Police Commission to apply for and receive grant funds in the amount of \$10,757 from the Homeland Security Grant Program Award-SWAT/SOU specific equipment Grant Program.

Resolved by the City Council of the City of Berlin as Follows:

WHEREAS, it is the mission of the Berlin Police Department to provide community-oriented law enforcement, designed to protect life, property and maintain order, while assuring fair and equal treatment for all and to continually enhance the training and expertise of each member of the police force; and

WHEREAS, the Homeland Security Grant Award-SWAT/SOU provides match-free funding to law enforcement agencies to enhance public safety; and

WHEREAS, this grant program is open to applications on a quarterly basis to help fund various projects and equipment purchases.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Berlin, NH, that the Berlin Police Commission is authorized to apply for and receive grant funds from the Homeland Security Grant Program. Said funds granted to the City of Berlin will be used for the purpose of purchasing public safety equipment during Fiscal Year 2026. Be it further resolved that the City Manager is authorized to sign the grant documents and execute all things necessary to effectuate the grant.

This Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after passage.

Councilor Grenier moved, with a second from Councilor Valerino, to remove Resolution 2025-30 from the table. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Grenier moved, with a second from Councilor Valerino, to read Resolution 2025-30 for a second time. So moved, the motion carried.

Councilor Grenier moved, with a second from Councilor Valerino, to read Resolution 2025-30 for a third time. So moved the motion carried.

Councilor Grenier moved, with a second from Councilor Valerino, to pass Resolution 2025-30. So moved, the motion carried.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. City Manager's Report**

1. Attached is the November 2025 Activity Report for the Police Department.
2. Attached is the December 2025 Real Estate Transfer Report.
3. Attached is the December 2025 Fire Department Activity Report.
4. Attached is the November 2025 EMS financial analysis.
5. As of this report, we have expended approximately \$97,960 on salt and approximately \$24,212 on overtime for snow and ice control. Both salt and overtime are budgeted amounts. We used a fair amount of material to fight the recent ice storm.

City Manager Warren added that the EMS revenue total is as of November of 2025. Mr. Warren also noted that the largest portion in the payor mix is from Medicare.

Councilor Grenier asked about the Miscellaneous Government line in the Payor Mix in the EMS Financial Analysis and was advised it is from the state prison facilities.

Councilor Grenier noted that he hopes the Council will be in support of updating property values, as the rapid increase in residential values has left property owners subsidizing utilities. Councilor Grenier noted that the City needs to get closer to an equalization rate of 100% so that utilities pay their fair share.

Councilor Korzen asked if the \$97,000 spent on salt was more than budgeted, and City Manager Warren advised that this is the year-to-date amount. They have expended between 36-38% of what was budgeted.

Councilor Korzen asked about the Payor Mix, and if this is based on collection or billing. City Manager Warren advised it is what was collected, and he will try to get more information on the amount collected compared to the amount billed.

Mayor Cone noted that out of 144 EMS calls for service, they only had one request for Mutual Aid, which is impressive.

Councilor Grenier moved, with a second by Councilor Valerino, to accept the City Manager's report as presented and place it on file. So moved, the motion carried.

## **2. Mayor's Report**

Mayor Cone nominated Anthony Valliere, Crystle Dickinson, and Bernie Martel for the Recreation Commission.

Councilor Grenier moved, with a second by Councilor Morency, to accept the Mayor's nomination of Anthony Valliere to the Recreation Commission for a three-year term to expire January 31, 2029.

Councilor Grenier moved, with a second by Councilor Valerino, to accept the Mayor's nomination of Crystle Dickinson to the Recreation Commission for a two-year term to expire January 31, 2028.

Councilor Grenier moved, with a second by Councilor Valerino, to accept the Mayor's nomination of Bernie Martel to the Recreation Commission for a one-year term to expire January 31, 2027. Plourde – recuse

Mayor Cone advised that the terms were staggered to provide for continuity on the Commission.

Councilor Korzen moved, with a second by Councilor Grenier, to accept the Mayor's report as presented and place it on file. So moved, the motion carried.

## **3. Public Comments**

Nathan Richard, of 301 Denmark Street, advised that he recently had a medical emergency and stated that the staff from the Fire Department was great and he felt very comfortable. Mr. Richard also congratulated the three new Recreation Commission members and noted that he is willing to volunteer to help.

## **4. Council Comments**

Councilor Grenier thanked the BPW employees for a job well done in the recent ice storm.

## **6. Adjournment**

On a motion by Councilor Higbee, seconded by Councilor Grenier, the Council voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 pm. So moved, the motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Shelli Fortin  
City Clerk

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