

City Council Work Session April 6, 2026

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

Others present: Assistant City Mgr. Pamela Laflamme, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, Library Director Ann Brungot, Chief of Police Jeff Lemoine, Deputy Chief of Police Nathan Roy, Health & Welfare Administrator Angela Liberty, Police Commission Chair Diana Berthiaume, SAU3 District Educational Services Administrator Tammy Fautoux, Paula Kinney of Androscoggin Valley Chamber of Commerce, Laura Boucher of Granite United Way, Margo Sullivan of A.V. Home Care Services, J'Nay Smallwood of Tri-County CAP, Nicole Gross of North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency, Sarah Swift of Feeding Hope Food Pantry, Amy Meunier of NHS, Lauren Fullerton of Conway Area Humane Society, Executive Councilor Joseph Kenney, Matthew Plache of White Horse Recovery, Lisa Connell, Berlin Daily Sun and Members of the Public.

Mayor Cone opened the meeting at 6:49 p.m. and apologized for the delay.

Recovery House Proposal

Matthew Plache, Executive Director at White Horse Recovery distributed revised [Recovery House Plans](#). It's been revised from a two-story building to a one-story building. He introduced Tony Fallon, also present this evening. He is the architect that designed the plans and is also Chair of the White Horse Recovery Board. Mr. Plache discussed funding opportunities for this project and advised he needs to submit an application by the end of this week. He is looking for a commitment from the City that this property can be made available for the purpose of this project. He discussed visiting the building at 60 Pleasant Street and advised the plan would be to tear it down, due to its poor condition, and build a new building. The proposal is to put up a one-story building, including sixteen beds, about 4100 square feet. It will be about 100 yards from the Recovery Center which has been operating since 2023. There are three full time peer support staff at the Recovery Center that provide services to the men that will be living in the Recovery House. The men staying there will be in full recovery and staying there from 9 to 18 months. While they get services they will be expected to get jobs and work in the community. There are no recovery houses in Coos County, this is needed.

Councilor Qualls asked if they would be accepting Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT). Mr. Plache responded yes, they would. Councilor Morency asked if this would be male, female or mix. Mr. Plache advised it would be for males only. Councilor Morency commented he is fully behind this proposal. Councilor Plourde questioned the staffing hours. Mr. Plache responded there would be one full-time paid staff there during the day. There is also a room in the plans for a peer leader who would be present at night staying there. There are also three full-time staff 100 yards away at the Recovery Center. The proximity to the Center makes it easier to be on site and provide services. Councilor Qualls asked what the cost would be to stay at the Recovery House. Mr. Plache advised they are looking at an average cost of \$220/week and this includes the services provided. This is intended to be low-income housing according to the NH Housing Finance Authority. There is some funding available to individuals coming out of a 30-day residential treatment that have no jobs or means to pay.

Councilor Lavertu departed the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Councilor Morency asked if they would collaborate to help these individuals get back in the workplace. Mr. Plache stated they would collaborate with businesses. They work with the Recovery Friendly Workplace, they've recruited businesses last year to become recovery friendly workplaces. Mr. Plache commented he needs a commitment or an option from the City to get access to this property. Ms. Laflamme confirmed that Mr. Plache is asking if the city is in a position to donate or offer for sale the building to White Horse Recovery so they can then submit their proposal. Councilor Morency had requested the public's input so the item was added to the work session agenda for discussion and public comments will be welcomed during the regular meeting. Councilor Korzen asked if there are outstanding taxes on this property. Ms. Laflamme stated this property was taken by tax deed back in 2022 and the last time she verified the taxes owed were around \$67,000 but the building is in terrible condition including issues with the roof that is caved in. It would likely be a teardown if the city kept it which

would cost around the same amount that is owed for taxes. Mayor Cone commented they would discuss this item under other.

Abatement Recommendations

Ms. Laflamme discussed the following abatement recommendations received from Ms. Monica Hurley, Assessing Agent:

South Avenue (Map 112 Lot 61) Ms. Hurley recommends approving the abatement application for the 2025 tax year and reducing the assessment from \$36,100 to \$9,000, as the taxpayer is stating the new lot created by subdivision in 2025 has ledge, topography issues, is steep and would only be good for parking. After reviewing similar lots along South Avenue and Haskell Street, Ms. Hurley applied the same topography and limited use adjustments to the land value of the subject. Councilor Higbee moved to approve the property abatement as presented. Councilor Valerino seconded, and the motion carried with all in favor.

545 Sixth Avenue (Map 111 Lot 156) Ms. Hurley recommends approving the abatement application for the 2025 tax year and reducing the assessment from \$82,200 to \$43,800, as the inspector noted the property is missing a bathroom, kitchen, heating source and has no plumbing. Councilor Valerino moved to approve the property abatement as presented. Councilor Morency seconded, and the motion carried with all in favor.

207 Willard Street (Map 119 Lot 174) Ms. Hurley recommends approving the abatement application for the 2025 tax year and reducing the assessment from \$142,300 to \$86,600, as the inspector noted the property was gutted due to extreme damage from frozen pipes bursting and confirmed the interior condition. Councilor Valerino moved to approve the property abatement as presented. Councilor Morency seconded, and the motion carried with all in favor.

17 Noury Street (Map 138 Lot 6) Ms. Hurley recommends denying the abatement application for the 2025 tax year as they requested a full inspection and the property owner denied the request. Councilor Morency moved to deny the property abatement as presented. Councilor Higbee seconded, and the motion carried with all in favor.

385 South Avenue (Map 112 Lot 71) Ms. Hurley recommends denying the abatement application for the 2025 tax year as they requested a full inspection which the property owner scheduled an appointment, but then promptly cancelled. Councilor Higbee moved to deny the property abatement as presented. Councilor Morency seconded, and the motion carried with all in favor.

758 Kent Street (Map 133 Lot 60) Ms. Hurley recommends denying the abatement application for the 2025 tax year as the municipal abatement application specifically states in Section E (1) "Statements such as "taxes too high", "disproportionately assessed", or "assessment exceeds market value" are insufficient." The burden of proof is upon the taxpayer to demonstrate that the property is over assessed by using comparable properties or providing a recent fee appraisal. Councilor Morency moved to deny the property abatement as presented. Councilor Valerino seconded, and the motion carried with all in favor.

Budget:

Outside Agencies

Ms. Laflamme commented that NHMA and North Country Council are membership driven. Their dues are based on population and equalized valuation. She discussed some of the services they offer. Representatives from different Outside Agencies were present this evening. They presented their requests to Council and discussed their services. The presentations were as follows:

Androscoggin Valley Chamber of Commerce – Paula Kinney & Diana Berthiaume

Ms. Kinney advised the requested amounts are the same as last year. She presented two requests, one for \$1,500 which is used for marketing to promote the area and events, and \$3,000 for the "ATV Weekend Celebration". The regular membership dues are \$818. She discussed how the Chamber's works year-round to market our community and successful events such as the ATV weekend, the Riverfire and Wingzilla which brings thousands of visitors to our City. When the City partners with the Chamber, those funds are leveraged by the State of NH through the JPP

(Joint Promotional Program) tourism marketing grant. Ms. Berthiaume commented that the funds allocated from the City are matched by the State. Councilor Morency asked how they are doing with recruiting help. Ms. Berthiaume responded it is hard to find commitment for what they do. Some of the people that help are starting to age so there are concerns, but they always manage to find people to help.

Northern Human Services – Amy Meunier

Ms. Meunier advised the requested amount is \$11,000. Traditionally they request \$1 per resident to support unfunded mental health services, but this year they've increased the request gently above the per capita due to changes in insurance coverage for so many and the increased need among our shared community members. The mental health center serves approximately 700 individuals from all surrounding areas including 500-550 Berlin residents. About 250 are children. This takes up a little over 1000 hours of their staff time. They do a lot of things in the community with the hospital, nursing homes and school system. They work in collaboration with the Police Dept. and any other agency that needs education on mental health or any support in those areas. Councilor Theberge asked if they've increased their request to surrounding communities as well. Ms. Meunier responded yes they did.

A.V. Home Care Services – Margo Sullivan

Ms. Sullivan advised they are asking for flat funding this year at \$19,500 to support services for seniors, debilitated and frail adults so they might live safely and independently at home. They are a non-profit home care provider licensed with the State of NH, DHHS, Bureau of Adult and Aging Services. Their services include nursing, LNA bath care, homemaking, and respite. They manage State allocated grant funds, and work with other payors such as VA and Choices for Independence for those recipients of care. They also offer a new service for families who suffer with dementia/Alzheimer with additional background. She discussed what last year's allocated funds were used for. They delivered 17,500 visits in Berlin resulting in 33,134 hours of care. They have over 200 clients. They were able to collect over \$51,000 from people in Berlin through donations and small fees charged to help support their services. Even with the funding from the city, they still suffered a loss of \$85,000 to try to provide the services. Councilor Korzen questioned the status of the population they serve, if it's changed. Ms. Sullivan responded A.V. Home Care has been providing services since 1975, serving Berlin and Gorham. In 2019, they took over the County which increased the population served. Health & Welfare Administrator Angela Liberty commented that a lot of the elderly use this service to prevent homelessness in the City of Berlin.

Tri-County CAP – J'Nay Smallwood

Ms. Smallwood advised they are requesting \$23,563 which covers all services offered. She discussed the many services offered in Berlin. Last year they served over 1824 individuals and 1059 households. They provided over 64,913 services in Berlin equaling \$3,382,728.

Granite United Way – Laura Boucher

Ms. Boucher advised the requested amount is \$2,800 and is to help support local agencies and programs they partner with in the community that serve some of the most vulnerable people. Connecting people with donors is what United Way does. She gave examples of services provided by partnering with some of the local agencies. She commented that the traditional campaign struggled again this past year. She also runs a free income tax site for lower income clients in the community, part of the community networking group called Androscoggin Valley Community Partners, she also facilitates the Berlin Downtown Day of Caring with the Berlin Main Street Program which is coming up May 15th.

Feeding Hope Food Pantry – Sarah Swift

Ms. Swift advised the Feeding Hope Food Pantry is a ministry of Harvest Christian Fellowship and opened in 2010. They are seeking a larger amount this year, and this is mainly because they've lost funding that was applied for previously that falls in a gap year. They have reached out to other agencies for support like United Way, USDA and the NH Food Bank. So far this year, they have serviced about 2,200 families and most of them from Berlin. They have provided over 128,000 pounds of food in the past year. They've also been working with the Androscoggin Valley Community Partners networking group. They've also seen an increased need for toiletries and personal products and have found ways to provide. They've also been able to provide winter clothing by partnering with local businesses and agencies. They were able to raise funds that were not designated for food as

they need to repair the floor in the food pantry. Councilor Morency asked if other communities have been contributing. Ms. Swift responded they've been getting more involved with other communities now. They did receive help from the Town of Milan and the Taproot program. Councilor Korzen asked about food insecurities in the area and how things are trending. Ms. Swift responded that at this time people are still trying to recover from some of last Fall's issues with the loss of SNAP benefits, but in general the trend has been steady.

Second Chance Animal Rescue

No representative present.

Berlin Main Street Program

Ms. Laflamme advised a representative was here earlier but had to leave for previous commitment. Their request letter is included in the packets, but they wanted to make a few points of addition. Business outreach is number one for them, this coming year they've been working a lot with the city and the city's Economic Development Board and the Chamber of Commerce to reconceptualize downtown areas to improve community appearance. They are trying to do more events downtown on a regular basis. They've indicated they want to support more artwork in the empty store front windows to brighten things up. They're also working with a couple groups to bring back Super Sunday which was loved by people who have been in the area for a long time. They've also been working with Granite United Way to lead the Day of Caring. They're still doing beautification projects out of the downtown core; they do the Riverwalk and the landscaping out on Route 110. They work and pay Northern Human Services staff to help take care of areas in the downtown throughout the year and the Christmas decor.

North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency – Nicole Gross

Ms. Gross advised they are a non-profit organization dedicated to delivering compassionate home health, hospice, and long-term care services throughout 51 towns in Coos and Northern Grafton County. Their mission is to improve lives by caring for patients and families as they navigate their healthcare journey at home. In 2025, for Berlin, they visited 104 patients and made 8,312 visits for home health, hospice and long-term care. She discussed the types of services provided and how the city's financial support assists in providing different services.

CASA

No representative present.

Hundred Nights Inc.

No representative present. Ms. Laflamme advised that the representative that was supposed to attend had to be in Concord.

Conway Area Humane Society – Lauren Fullerton

Ms. Fullerton discussed services provided to both the city and residents. In 2025, forty-six Berlin residents made the difficult decision to surrender their pet to the organization. These people were facing eviction, job loss, medical issues, housing restrictions, all situations where they had to choose between keeping their pet and keeping their footing in life. Those forty-six animals required nearly \$40,000 in medical and daily care before they could be adopted to new families. They are requesting \$15,000 and it is based on the need to continue caring and serving the residents of Berlin. They are requesting funding from all the towns they serve under contract. This will help the organization be more sustainable long term. The City of Berlin represents nearly 30% of the owner surrenders with an average cost per animal of \$857.21. Councilor Valerino discussed a positive personal experience with the Conway Area Humane Society and thanked them for their services.

Housing/Health/Welfare

Ms. Liberty discussed the budget presentation that was linked to the agenda which included budget figures and what the department is actively doing to represent the city. She directed Council to the welfare graph included in the presentation where it compares the adopted budget to the activity over the last several years. She was able to keep the line items lower for general assistance and that is due to working closely with different local agencies. Most of the line items have remained the same. The increases are mostly housekeeping items including retirement and health insurance. Councilor Korzen commented that he noticed that the requested amounts are close to what is being spent. He questioned if the amounts requested are enough to cover expenses. Ms. Liberty stated she is trying

to be fiscally responsible knowing what is expected for this budget. She commented she can't tell what will be spent in any given year as she doesn't know how many individuals will come in and what services they will need. Councilor Korzen asked if the city is mandated to offer these services. Ms. Liberty responded that yes, it is State Law that the municipality must provide such program.

Library

She discussed the FY27 Library budget presentation that was linked to the agenda. There's an increase of 6.51% from the FY26 budget. Most of the increase is based on union contracts. She talked about the different services and programs offered and the resources available at the library. She invited everyone to come visit the library and discuss some of its history. Mayor Cone commented there are pictures included in the presentation for capital improvement target areas, but he did not see any capital improvements for the library in the budget. Ms. Brungot stated the last time they had a building evaluation was 2019. There was an updated cost received in 2021-2022, but she believes it would be higher due to being so far past the evaluation. Mayor Cone asked Ms. Brungot to send him a copy of the evaluation done in 2019. Councilor Theberge asked if anything has been done to improve the building. He feels that it will get worse if the issues are not addressed. Ms. Brungot responded that she agrees with Councilor Theberge that if the repairs keep getting delayed it will get worse. The brick around Kelly Park is starting to fall down. There weren't any allocations for CIPs last year, the previous year and there are none for this year as well. Councilor Theberge commented the Council needs to work with the City Manager to address these issues as it will get worse and cost more money.

Other

Councilor Morency moved to add item 3a. under new business of the regular meeting to discuss the Recovery House Proposal. Councilor Higbee seconded, and the motion carried with all in favor.

At 8:13 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 – Monday, April 6, 2026

Regular Meeting

Mayor Cone called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at approximately 8:13 pm.

a. Pledge of Allegiance

b. Roll Call

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

Absent: Councilor Lavertu

Also present: Director of Strategic Initiatives/Assistant City Manager Pamela Laflamme, City Clerk Shelli Fortin, District Educational Services Administrator Tammy Fauteux, Executive Councilor Joseph Kenney, Matthew Plache, Tony Fallon, Joshua Whitehead-Millar, Richard King, Lindsay Spates, Christian Judson, Paul Guerin, Thomas Sutton, 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 March 16, 2026, Regular Meeting and Work Session, and the March 23, 2026, Budget Work Session. So moved, the motion passed.

Disbursements:

Disbursement Summary Draft #2006 with a start date of 03/17/2026 and an end date of 04/06/2026 for a total cash disbursement of \$1,617,038.78. Councilor Theberge moved, with a second by Councilor Morency, to accept the disbursement summary and pay all bills as recommended by the Committee on Accounts/Claims. So moved, the motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Lindsay Spates, of 420 Coos Street, read a prepared statement:

"I am here to address a significant, missed opportunity for our community's cleanliness. I have personally contacted NH The Beautiful, and they have confirmed that the City of Berlin has not requested assistance or free cleanup supplies in over six years. They are ready to provide free bags available for pickup in Lancaster.

I am formally offering to pick up these supplies myself at no cost to the city, provided the City meets me halfway for a Neighborhood Cleanup Weekend on May 9th and 10th. I am asking the Council to authorize a one-time Public Works sweep to collect these blue bags and provide at least one central roll-off dumpster for residential debris.

Furthermore, we need targeted enforcement in our public spaces. Our on-leash dog park has become a primary example of neglect, where owners frequently let dogs off-leash and fail to clean up waste. I am calling on the City to direct Code Enforcement and the Police Department to prioritize these areas. We need to hold negligent owners accountable under City Ordinance Chapter 12 to ensure our parks remain safe and sanitary for everyone.

The bags are waiting in Lancaster, and I am willing to do the legwork. All the City needs to do is provide a signature, the disposal, and the enforcement. I'd like to know if the Council will authorize Public Works to coordinate with me so we can take some pride back in our residential wards.

Thank you for your time."

Richard King, of 107 Jericho Road, shared concerns about the proposed electric school bus, including that it may not start in cold weather and safety if it was to catch fire. Mr. King also noted that the non-profit agencies requesting funds from the City are all worthy causes, however the Council needs to keep the taxpayers in mind as the money comes from them. Mr. King noted that he looked at the area that the school is requesting additional lighting for, and agrees that it is dark in that area. Mr. King also asked what the cost for the City would be with the White Horse Recovery House proposal, and was advised there was no cost for the City.

Joshua Whitehead-Millar, of 15 Peavey Lane, spoke concerning the proposed recovery house, noting that Berlin loses a lot of people to other areas as there is no help here for recovery.

Richard King, of 107 Jericho Road, spoke again asking about the Biomass tax payment. Mr. King noted that the City takes homes if taxes are not paid, and could do the same with businesses.

Christian Judson, of 473 Forbush Avenue, shared concerns about the electric school bus, including it being able to make it up steep hills. Mr. Judson also noted a safety hazard on East Mason Street by Sinibaldi's Restaurant, and suggested removing two parking places to improve visibility. Mr. Judson stated that Berlin needs recovery housing; however, stated that he hopes the City sells the building rather than give it away.

Thomas Sutton, who works at the bus garage, stated that the school is desperately in need of a bus, and the electric bus is affordable with the grant. Mr. Sutton noted that buses are parked indoors, so starting them in cold weather is not an issue. Mr. Sutton stated that the bus will be on a mostly flat bus route, so hills will not be an issue, and will be charged after the morning run to be ready for the afternoon. Mr. Sutton noted that they have done extensive research on the electric bus.

Tony Fallon, architect for the proposed White Horse Recovery House project, thanked the City for their support so far. Mr. Fallon noted that this topic touches everybody. Mr. Fallon stated that it is common knowledge that those in recovery make tremendous employees.

Paul Guerin, of 583 Burgess Street, stated that it was nice to hear from the non-profit agencies, and he is not opposed to helping people, but stated that the more taxes residents have to pay out of their pockets, the more they will have to look for help for themselves. Mr. Guerin asked the Council to keep the taxpayers in mind when setting the budget.

Executive Councilor Joseph Kenney spoke in support of the White Horse Recovery House project, stating that White Horse has proven themselves in both Carroll and Coos County. Councilor Kenney noted that Berlin is trying to build industry and will need a workforce. Councilor Kenney stated that this project would be an investment in families, the workforce, and the community of Berlin. Councilor Kenney noted that he will try to help in any way he can, and advised that \$1 billion will be invested under the rural health program in nursing homes, childcare centers, health care centers, and perhaps housing recovery facilities.

Matthew Plache, of White Horse Recovery, noted that they are not asking the City for any money. They are hopeful that the costs for the construction of the housing will be covered by Federal grants and loans from NHHFA, along with money from the opioid settlement funds. Mr. Plache advised that the current building is unsafe and will need to be torn down. The estimated cost for the project is \$1.8 million. Those receiving help by living in the house will pay rent. Mr. Plache stated that they are just looking for an option to acquire the building from the City, if they receive their funding.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Council Committee Reports

There were no Council Committee Reports.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Resolution 2026-04 SRF Authorization (1st read)

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second by Councilor Qualls, to table the Resolution and schedule a public hearing for April 20, 2026. So moved, the motion carried.

Assistant City Manager Pamela Laflamme advised the Council that the grant is coming up quickly and noted the terms of the loan. Ms. Laflamme advised that this loan will be repaid with sewer funds.

2. Resolution 2026-05 Electric School Bus (1st read)

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second by Councilor Valerino, to table the Resolution and schedule a public hearing for April 20, 2026. So moved, the motion carried.

3. Resolution 2026-06 Diesel Truck School (1st read)

Councilor Higbee moved, with a second by Councilor Valerino, to table the Resolution and schedule a public hearing for April 20, 2026. So moved, the motion carried.

3a. White Horse Recovery House Proposal

Councilor Qualls noted that she fully supports this project, and that she has worked both personally and professionally with White Horse Recovery and they have been fabulous.

Councilor Morency noted what addiction has done to our community and stated that the City is now settling with the last six companies for the Opioid lawsuit. Councilor Morency noted that the City has agreed to be recovery friendly, and we now have an opportunity to do something. Councilor Morency noted that the City gains nothing by keeping the property, and to allow it to be used for such a cause would be a blessing to the community.

Councilor Korzen noted that many people have come to the City with plans, however they have all fallen to the wayside. Councilor Korzen noted that White Horse has been succeeding, and the City should support them. However, Councilor Korzen noted there is a stigma associated with giving property away, and asked what the land value is since the building will need to be demolished. Councilor Qualls suggested that giving the building is part of the City's obligation as a recovery friendly city to provide a service. Councilor Korzen agreed that it would be an investment. Assistant City Manager Pamela Laflamme noted that the land is valued at \$18,300.

Councilor Valerino moved, with a second by Councilor Morency, to add a non-public session at the end of the meeting agenda to discuss land matters. So moved, the motion carried.

4. City Manager's Report

There was no City Manager's Report.

5. Mayor's Report

a. Appointment to Planning Board – C. Sawyer

Mayor Cone & City Council:

After moving to Berlin last fall, the beauty of the surroundings and the kindness of its people, among other things, have been deeply appealing to me. In fact, on my first week here, my neighbors (one of them the newly elected state rep for Coos County, Marc Tremblay) insisted on introducing themselves and helping me move. They've been invaluable to me since then; helping plow my driveway without me having even asked, looking out for my packages, and offering me insight into the community and the best ways to get things done. Despite the rough winter, Berlin has very much stolen my heart, and I intend on being here for a very long time, probably until the end of my life.

A brief background on me: I'm a remote worker who's attended several council and planning board sessions, recognizing the value in community members engaging in their local democratic processes. I don't have a formal education in the sense that I am a high school dropout, so education is one of my priorities as I feel intimately aware of how that system can fail our young people.

There're a couple of catalysts that got me interested in these meetings; one of them is the political headlines that seem relentless and unavoidable no matter how much we try to ignore them for how negative and polarizing they can be.

Another is my love of reading; reading nonfiction and, more recently, political philosophy has been really enlightening for me. One of the books I've read recently, called "The Social Contract", opened my eyes to what the point of all of this is. A lot of people my age don't get involved in these processes, believing government to be an autonomous machine that "just works" and that they have no power over, something to complain about repeatedly. I don't want to live that way; whether we realize it or not, this entire system doesn't have to exist. It was built on the backs of people much greater and wiser than us, and we have a duty to fully commit to these processes, in mind and soul, for them and for posterity.

I digress. I'm interested in a three-year alternate seat on the Planning Board. Please feel free to reach out with any questions you may have, I'm happy to engage however I can. I am told the term would run through April 30, 2029.

Sincerely,

Clarence Sawyer

Councilor Morency moved, with a second by Councilor Higbee, to approve the Mayor's nomination of Clarence Sawyer as an alternate member of the Planning Board with a term to expire on April 30, 2029. So moved, the motion passed.

b. Traffic Light Request from Berlin School Board

Dear Mayor & Council,

In response to comments by parents and staff we are requesting that the city consider adding streetlights to the ends of Willard Street and Madison Avenue. Willard street is currently missing a streetlight on the last pole at the school entrance (Pole 304 33). Madison Avenue has no streetlights on the last three poles entering the high school parking lot (Poles 303 25, 26, 27).

The school is currently working with Eversource to add additional lights inside the parking lot at the end of Madison Ave.

The lack of lights poses a safety risk for students, staff, and visitors. This problem becomes especially noticeable during basketball events when parking overflows onto the city streets. There is a significant risk that a visitor could become injured in that scenario.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

On Behalf of The Board,

Eamon Kelley
Vice Chair
SAU3 School Board

Mayor Cone advised that he agrees that the lack of lighting is a safety risk.

Assistant City Manager Pamela Laflamme advised that she has put in a work order with Eversource for a cost estimate. The City does have several spare fixtures to be mounted on poles, and noted they are working to move forward with this request at the least expensive cost. On a suggestion by Councilor Korzen, Mayor Cone agreed that this could also be forwarded to the Traffic and Safety Committee for review.

Councilor Valerino moved, with a second by Councilor Higbee, to accept the Mayor's report and place it on file. So moved, the motion carried.

6. Public Comments

Janet Tremblay, of 15 Countryside Avenue, asked what the 2026 budget will look like and if this will raise taxes. Mayor Cone advised they are currently working on the 2027 budget, and will hold a public hearing at the end of May to present the budget and receive comments.

7. Council Comments

Councilor Korzen noted that he is struggling to compare numbers in the budget, especially with what was spent last year, and asked that more clarity be provided.

Councilor Korzen also asked about the Biomass tax payment. Assistant City Manager Pamela Laflamme requested that this question be deferred to the City Manager and Finance Director to address. Councilor Korzen noted that the Council should come up with a reasonable, defensible, responsible budget.

Councilor Theberge stated that he was also going to ask about the Biomass payment, and stated that he cannot find it in the budget and requested clarification.

Councilor Valerino noted the construction of the new tennis courts at Horne Field, and stated that the stumps that are left are a safety concern. Councilor Valerino suggested that they be ground down before anyone gets hurt.

Councilor Valerino noted the “No Turn on Red” sign that is at the intersection of Mason Street and Pleasant Street, and suggested that it be removed since there are no buildings on the corner lots to obstruct view. Councilor Valerino suggested that this be looked at by the Traffic and Safety Committee.

Councilor Morency asked why the City was using Gorham’s garbage truck. A public works employee advised that all three of the City’s trucks were down and in need of repair. They were able to borrow Gorham’s truck, instead of picking up the trash with loaders.

8. Non-Public Session

Councilor Korzen moved, with a second by Councilor Theberge, to enter non-public session at 9:04 pm under RSA 91-A:3 II (d). So moved, the motion carried by roll call vote with all in favor.

The Council discussed city owned property and the proposed recovery house.

Councilor Korzen moved, with a second by Councilor Qualls, to enter into a purchase and sales agreement with White Horse Recovery, for the property at 60 Pleasant Street, in the amount of \$5,000.00. So moved, the motion carried by roll call vote with Councilor Theberge opposed.

Councilor Korzen moved, with a second by Councilor Valerino, to leave non-public session at 9:14 pm. So moved, the motion carried by roll call vote with all in favor.

9. Adjournment

On a motion by Councilor Higbee, seconded by Councilor Theberge, the Council voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 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.