

MANAGER'S REPORT

Belfast City Council Meeting

Tuesday, January 4, 2011

7:00 P.M.

TO: Mayor Walter Ash Jr. and Honorable Members of Belfast City

Council

FROM: Joseph J. Slocum, City Manager

DATE: Thursday, December 30, 2010

Agenda items:

10.B Request from the Hiking Biking and Pedestrian Committee for a Council Member to become a member of the Committee.

The Committee has made this request to facilitate communication with the Council. Article 6 Section 8 of the Charter authorizes the Council to establish Boards, Commissions and Committees, which it may determine are needed from time to time. That section further states that City Council members and City employees shall not constitute a majority of any Board, Commission or Committee. It also states the City Council members or City employees should not service the Chair of City Committees.

The primary responsibility of any Committee is to take a focused look at one or more issues and report back to the Council with their recommendations. In essence they review, report and recommend a direction for the Council. There is no requirement that the Council follow any particular Committee recommendation. Indeed, the Council reviews Committee recommendations against a far wider backdrop of the City as a whole.

10.C Consideration of the recommended 2011 Harbor Usage Fees.

The Harbor Committee has recommended these fees in accordance with Belfast Code of Ordinances Section 30-33. There is a copy included in your packet.

The only significant change for 2011 is that all waterfront property owners who have a mooring in front of their property will now pay the same mooring fee that all other mooring owners pay. In the past the City had a practice of not charging a mooring fee to waterfront property owners. The Harbor Committee discussed this matter at length and by majority vote has recommended that all mooring owners be charged same fee. The Harbormaster oversees all moorings and spends time every year monitoring them, reviewing inspections etc. There will be a representative of the Committee at the meeting to answer any questions that you may have.

10.D Consideration of the recommended Charter Boat Contracts for 2011.

Every year the City enters into a variety of these arrangements with a variety of Charter vessels offering a variety of ocean based recreational opportunity to the general public. This is an important part of the City's active working waterfront. Many of these are very reasonable in prices and they attract business dollars to broad variety of Belfast businesses.

The list of Charter boat contracts proposed for 2011 is same as that of 2010 with a single exception. The exception is with Belfast Bay Cruises who read be running a larger boat at 72 feet which can carry up to 149 passengers.

There is a specific list of all proposed charter contracts for 2011 in your packet along with a narrative prepared by Katherine Messier, Belfast Harbor Master. The Harbor Committee also supports these proposed charter contracts.

10.E Update from Bruce Mailloux, RSU #20 Superintendent of Schools on next years budget.

Belfast City Council has scheduled a work session on the 2011-2012 City budget for January 11th. As a precursor to this work session we have invited the Superintendent of schools to update the Council on what the City might be looking at in terms of budget impacts relating to school operations.

Taxpayers of Belfast receive a single bill for their property taxes. 11% of that bill goes to the County budget; 55% goes to the schools and 34% represents the City municipal expenses in this existing budget.

Everyone is concerned about the ramifications of State action upon municipal property taxpayers. Last year the City lost over \$200,000 in state municipal revenue sharing and road support. Everyone is concerned with how the State's continuing fiscal crisis is going impact upcoming municipal budgets and local school budgets.

10.F First reading of proposed amendments to the city code of ordinances, chapter 30, read activities, to define who is considered to be sure for property owner for more and permits.

State law says that if you have 100 feet of waterfront that the harbormaster must try and accommodate your request to locate a vessel in front of your property if they can be done so safely. In Belfast we have always had a practice of doing our best to accommodate you waterfront property owner regardless of the amount of their waterfront property.

The Harbormaster has met with the City attorney who has determined that the proposed amendments simply bring the City into conformity with the State language in defining a shorefront owner.

At the Council meeting there will either be a letter from the City attorney or he will be there in person to help explain this. He has indicated in a draft statement to the Council that the language change in the Ordinance does not change the existing rights of waterfront property owners in Belfast.

10.G Consideration of a request to declare certain sections of Front Street as Slum and blight areas.

City Economic Development Director, Thomas Kittredge, is making this request so that the City can qualify for the opportunity to apply for an infrastructure Grant to improve this area. Prior to the meeting the City Council conducted a duly noticed public hearing on this issue.

The two sections involved are between the footbridge (now named Veterans Bridge) to the Maskers Theatre and from Main to Spring Streets.

I have spoken to some of the neighboring businesses in these areas and they were not traumatized by this proposed designation. We need to do this to qualify for the potential Grant

10.H Consideration of a request to apply for a Community Enterprise Grant to make streetscape improvements for certain areas of Front Street determined to be slum and blight areas.

If the Council makes the designation of slum and blight in the previous agenda item then we need the Council to vote to apply for \$150,000 Community Enterprise Grant. There is further information on this Grant in your packet.

10.I Consideration of a request to identify the specific scope of streetscape improvements that the City will propose to make for designated slum and blight areas on Front Street.

In order to complete the Community Enterprise Grant application, the City must propose specific streetscape and infrastructure improvements for the two areas along Front Street in question. Attached in your packet are four separate options proposed by City Planner Wayne Marshall for your consideration. We need to identify the majority preference of the Council.

10.J Request by the City Manager to conduct an executive session to discuss legal rights, litigation etc. under 1 MRSA Section 6 E and also I economic development under 1 MRSA section 6 C.

There is a real possibility that this will be unnecessary but it is posted as a precautionary effort.

10.K Signing of Council Orders and housekeeping items.

That is the end of this agenda. Happy New Year Belfast. Have fun but be safe in however you enjoy the holiday.