

# Mayor: Dump Crisp

City attorney no longer a Berlin resident so Coulombe won't sign his vouchers

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**BERLIN**—The fact that city attorney Jack Crisp no longer resides in Berlin became an issue last night when Mayor Yvonne Coulombe said she will refuse to sign his billing vouchers because he is not a resident of the city.

Coulombe said since a recent newspaper article revealed that Crisp now lives in Franklin, she has received 22 phone calls from citizens upset that the city attorney does not live in Berlin.

In response to questions from councilors, City Manager Mitchell Berkowitz said Crisp still owns property here, pays taxes, and maintains a local office.

Councilor Paul Grenier noted that while in theory he agrees with Coulombe, Crisp represents the city in some ongoing cases and switching lawyers would cost the city additional money. He suggested the city allow Crisp to finish those cases while awarding new legal work to an attorney that

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is a resident.

Grenier, however, also noted that the authority to hire and fire the city attorney rests with the city manager. When the council decided to discuss the issue further at a future work session, Berkowitz urged that Crisp be asked to attend. The city manager called the residency issue bogus and said the council was really seeking to evaluate Crisp's performance.

Councilor Jeffrey Young asked if the city will be billed for Crisp's travel time to Berlin as well as the time spent in session with the council. Berkowitz

said in the past the city has not been billed for travel time and he expects that arrangement is still standing.

The council agreed to set up a time to discuss the issue with Crisp.

After the meeting, Berkowitz said state law does not allow municipalities to require residency as a condition of employment unless there is a valid reason for doing so. City firefighters, for example, are required to live within a certain distance of the fire station.

The city attorney is not considered a city employee since his services are contracted and he is free to maintain a private practice.

The council last night agreed to em-

agreement for emergency ambulance services with the town of Gorham.

The agreement allows each to provide the other with back-up service.

Grenier said he had hoped for an agreement that would establish a single carrier for the two communities and allow Berlin to reduce the \$200,000 annual subsidy it presently pays to Berlin Emergency Medical Service.

Berkowitz said the trial period will allow the communities to gather data that could be used to look at that option in the future. He suggested the council approve the mutual aid agreement and then, in the future, set up study committees including Berlin, Gorham, Milan, Shelburne, and Randolph. His suggestion was