



September 5th, 2018

Residents and Neighbors,

I want to thank our City Staff for their efforts to increase communications. We will be installing additional microphones in City Hall chambers so that those watching and listening to our meetings can understand what members in the audience are saying. Additionally, city staff have been increasing the number of press releases for construction and city initiatives on the City website, Facebook page, and on Front Porch Forum.

Appointments to City Council Committees saw another large boost this past month. I want to thank all of those who have stepped up to volunteer with our city committees:

- Linda Couture to the Recreation Committee
- Mike Jarvis to the Recreation Committee
- Jess Plemons to the Recreation Committee
- Kelly Ross to the Recreation Committee
- Renita Marshall to the Transportation Advisory Committee

I have introduced discussion of a Teen Center in the Wheelock building on Main Street. This will require grant applications, site evaluations, agreements with other organizations as well as support from the residents. It will take some time to implement, but I feel this is a worthy cause to support the youth in our community. I will also be presenting this to the Recreation Committee and working with groups from Spaulding High School for more input for programming.

Another worthy cause was my Mayoral Proclamation for Patriotism Week. We realize that each generation must work to maintain our freedom and to enjoy rights and liberties provided by our country. The City will sign an Employer Statement of Support of the Guard and Reserve during this week and have presentations from the VFW, American Legion, Legion Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion and Fraternal Order of the Elks in remembrance and support of our Veterans.

Council has also had discussion on regulation of retail operations dealing with precious metal resale and pawn shops. Councilor Higby and Chief Bombardier presented on six organizations in the City of Barre that perform these functions and the issues around theft and resale of these items. Neither the Councilor or the Chief reached out to the businesses affected, which should be performed prior to future discussions.

Council has also had discussion regarding installation of surveillance cameras for city property. Councilor Boutin noted that 92% of those responding on the Barre City Fan page, including over 1,000 votes, were in favor of this initiative. There needs more definition on if this should it be limited to City Parks and Playgrounds and understand what the cost of such and initiative would be, which Councilor Boutin will be looking into further.

Council was invited to the August 23rd meeting with the Planning Commission for the Universal Development Ordinance. Councilors Boutin and Higby attended along with me with notes from

Councilor Tuper-Giles. The Planning Commission addressed all current issues presented. This two-year process will soon close as the Planning Commission will pass the documentation for public hearings to the City Council.

The City Manager introduced Jody Norway as the new Executive Assistant to the City Manager. We welcome her as the newest member to City Hall.

Councilors continued hearing from the City Department Heads and touring different City facilities:

- Overview Briefing of Buildings & Community Services Department from Director Jeff Bergeron. Jeff also provided a tour of the B.O.R., Civic Center, and Auditorium.

Council Continued to receive other presentations from organizations in the City:

- Spaulding High School Football Team presented their new Rising Tide Program. Coach Lamb and several JV and High School players attended the meeting to discuss their public outreach to the community. They are also reaching out to leaders in the community to speak to the players, which I will be speaking at this month.
- Council had a briefing on potential addition of a K-9 to Police Department. John Lyons of Wilkins Harley Davidson presented alongside Police Chief Bombardier for a fundraiser to support this effort.

Council has seen a few new challenges for us to address:

- We authorized \$5,000 toward annual city tree maintenance from the Semprebon VCF Annuity. The Emerald Ash Borer is an unwelcomed guest and has decimated Ash Tree populations in Vermont. It has been incredibly expensive for communities to clean up the trees and there is a significant percentage of Ash trees in the City. We will be looking at options to help address issues with trees soon.
- We had a preliminary discussion on materials to prohibit, which has started with awareness with plastic bags and straws. Some businesses have already acted to test paper straws. It isn't often known, but shopping bags can often be returned to the stores they come from. I am hoping that this can be discussed further with the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District when they come to speak later this month.
- The ACLU presented a request to rescind Panhandling Ordinance Sec11-10(c). Councilor Batham spoke to removing this section altogether, but Council agreed that we needed to have legal consideration prior to any action.

City Council approved several items including the following:

- Authorize HMGP Storm Sewer Construction Contracts with R.M. Piche Excavating Co.
- Resolution 2018- 06: Water & Sewage Rates Schedule
- Delegate the Vermont League of Cities and Towns voting delegate as the City Manager
- Discussion and Feedback regarding VLCT 2019 Legislative Priorities
- Accept Vermont Council of Rural Development Forum Scholarship
- Authorize HMGP Storm Sewers Construction Phase Services Amendment with DuBois & King
- Authorization to Purchase Used 7.5 Ton Truck Hoist for the Department of Public Works
- Discussion of the voter-approved funding process and policy by the City Clerk

And lastly, there are several new and returning initiatives being discussed:

- Thank you to the voters for your bond vote for improvements at the Waste Water Treatment Facility support during the Primaries in August. The bond passed by an 82% margin with a turnout of (20.1%).
- Neighborhood Watch meetings will be held for the Fairview, Essex and Elmore areas.
- I want to thank Josh Jerome for his time with the Barre Partnership. Josh and I both started on the Barre Partnership Board together. He quickly assumed the role as Executive Director and has implemented several their initiatives.
- Councilor Tuper-Giles started a discussion regarding additional signage in the Downtown for No Smoking. This was discussed but will be coming back up on a future agenda.
- I met with Trow and Holden for train noise issues. If you live or work in the downtown, you will understand some of the difficulties that the noise can cause. I have reached out to the State of Vermont who owns the tracks as well as proposed changes with the VLCT Legislative agenda.
- Greenup Day may be in May, but I will continue to do my part. I have been cleaning up the area on the Belt Line that seems to attract debris off from vehicles and have also walked around Main Street with the Barre Pickers through the Rotary Club. This group meets every Thursday at 6pm to help keep our Downtown free of trash and I encourage anyone to come out and show your support with them.
- I was asked to moderate a Legislative forum on September 27th at the American Legion. Please feel free to attend or watch the livestream to learn more about those running for Representative from the City of Barre.
- We will discuss creating an ad hoc committee, standing committee or work group for Tree Stewardship, Community Garden, Green-up and Walking Audit groups. These groups are in addition to the current committee structure as established by the City.
- I was able to attend events for the BCEMS Garden unveiling, the Tender Loving Care Respite House, and recognition of Executive Director Dr. Scott McLaughlin of the Vermont Granite Museum by the Department of Aging and Independent Living for training and support of Creative Workforce Solutions candidates.

Lucas J. Herring
Mayor, City of Barre