



April 30th, 2020:

Residents and Neighbors,

Spring is here, despite some recent snow and being under a Stay at Home order. “April Showers bring May flowers”, but we have seen signs of economic life returning as well with slight turns of the spicket from the Governor. We should continue to see incremental changes over the months of May and June, barring any changes with the flattening of the curve.

Looking at my neighbor’s yards and with pictures on social media, I can see that many residents are taking this opportunity to complete yardwork that they may not have otherwise had time for. The City will still hold the yard waste disposal program to support these efforts and I hope to see Green Up Day still occur at the end of May to help cleanup efforts further.

The City Manager Continues to hold the standing COVID-19 City Response Teams meetings and providing updates to Council. The budget projections improved this month, but we are also hoping for another Federal Stimulus Bill to support municipalities like we have seen for the private sector. Council has not yet been briefed on the potential impact for FY21, as there are still many unknowns for the new budget that starts on July 1st.

Given Council’s recent actions regarding interest and fees, the City of Barre Board of Abatement will be holding ongoing meetings biweekly along with City Council in order to abate these items. It was discovered that these types of actions cannot be covered by the Council and the State Legislature has currently not provided changes to allow that authority. These meetings and abatements are planned to occur until June 30th, 2020 currently.

The volunteer furlough program for City employees was well received. This program is mainly the reason for the improved budget outlook for FY20. As employees do return to work, the State has issued a mandatory VOSHA training that must be taken. All staff that are working also must take this training by May 4th.

Council authorized the pool bid for construction. It was noted previously that the pool would not be open this year, but the City is still in a holding pattern under the current Executive Order for the work to commence. Council also authorized a lease agreement with the State for use of the Civic Center as a medical surge facility, in the event it is needed. Boiler design work in Alumni Hall was also approved.

Council revised the Rules of Procedure Policy, as the previous policy did not allow for executive sessions to occur remotely. Several additional policies will be reviewed over the next couple of months.

Council also held discussion to revise the Salvage Yard and Permitted Vehicles on Private Properties Ordinances. The intent is to be able to provide enforcement for those that are violating current ordinance by having several non-working vehicles on their property. There was further discussion to revise the Vehicle for Hire (Taxi) Ordinance. Both of these items will be back for first and second reading over the next couple of months.

City Council is only scheduled to meet twice in May. Council will trial meeting biweekly as we continue to meet via videoconference. These meetings will be at 7pm on May 5th and May 19th, and agendas found on the City of Barre website. We are scheduled to receive quarterly updates from the Aldrich Library, Barre Area Development, and Barre Partnership.

Council continued to receive presentations from organizations in the City and our neighbors:

- Chief Douglas Brent and Chief Tim Bombardier discussed Emergency Response During COVID-19. This included changes with staffing and responses to best protect staff and ensure availability throughout the crisis.
- Finance Director Dawn Monahan gave an FY20 General Fund Budget Status report. Originally, what looked to be a \$70,000 deficit ballooned due to lost revenue and increased fees due to COVID-19, but the furlough program and other changes are looking to reduce the deficit to closer to \$25,000.

City Council approved several items including the following:

- Authorize Award of Municipal Pool Bid
- Authorize CVSWMD Municipal Services Program Grant Application
- Award Municipal Pool Surface Preparation Bid
- Approval for CVTV USDA Grant Application and Financial Support
- Review Responses to Bond Anticipation Note RFP
- Authorize Lease with VT BGS for Interim Med-Surge Facility at Civic Center
- Ratification of Collective Bargaining Agreement with Local #4-68 of the USW
- Ratification of Abatement of Late Penalties and Interest Charges on Delinquent Taxes and Water/Sewer Bills
- Annual Adoption of the Local Emergency Management Plan
- Approval of DuBois & King, Inc. Alumni Hall Boiler Design Agreement
- Approval of FY21 Grand List Lodging/Tax Bill Issuance Timetables
- Approval of Resolution #2020-02 and \$1.7M Bond Anticipation Note Documents
- Approval of Revisions to the Rules of Procedure Policy

Be safe and be well,

Lucas J. Herring
Mayor, City of Barre