



May 1st, 2019:

Residents and Neighbors,

April was a busy month for the City of Barre as we have been participating in our own Spring-cleaning efforts. Planning, documenting and creating bids for projects to occur this Summer is underway, but several initiatives won't be able to begin until after July 1st to utilize approved funding from the voter approved budget.

Council was given an update on the Summer Street Mural Project. There was a lane shift in Summer Street traffic to allow for preparations to be made on the wall. We were also added to the distribution list to receive updated on the I-89 Exit 6 project that will route additional traffic away from the South Barre exit and the alternate route will be via Main Street.

Following Earth Hour and the National Mayor's Challenge for Water Conservation, environmental efforts continued with the Caps4Cops Scrap Metal Recycle Day from Jason Gould with the Washington County Sherriffs' and removing 3 trailers full of metal to Buldoc's. Additionally, the American Red Cross held it's Sounds the Alarm event where 194 Smoke Alarms, 75 CO Alarms, 3 hearing impaired alarms, and 52 Households made safer through alarms, instruction, and safety plans. Council has also promoted and will be participating in Green Up Day, which the Agency of Transportation assisted with cleaning of Route 62 this year.

Council has already had the discussion needed for this year's appointments. Part of the discussion was the review of committees in place, which DPW Director Bill Ahearn recommended combining the efforts of the Routes and Trails group with the Bike Path Committee for a more encompassing committee. This specific change will be discussed further at the May 8th Bike Path Committee meeting.

Joel Schwartz from Barre Area Development and Jeffrey Tuper-Giles from the Barre Partnership both provided Quarterly Updates. If you haven't noticed already, there have been a few business movements within the downtown and a couple new ones in the works. Efforts are also underway for this year's Barre Heritage Festival.

Staff and the public have been more engaged with the current ordinance process. After warning the Vacant Building and Unified Development Ordinances, we have had members of the public attend meetings to address concerns. Changes were made to the Vacant Building Ordinance and reposted so that it can be brought back to Council in May. The Unified Development (Zoning) Ordinance was sent back to the Planning Commission for review of a few business and land owner changes, which should be back to Council in June.

I requested a Letter of Support of Commuter Rail Service in H.529, the Transportation Bill, from Council. The letter was to add Barre as part of a commuter rail service program being considered. The Legislature may cut out this section of the Transportation Bill completely, which Council should receive an update on when Legislators come back to visit Council Chambers in May.

Council house also done some housecleaning of our current processes. We signed acknowledgement forms for reviewing policies, revamped the way we received press releases from Public Safety to be aware of incidents sooner (including items like the recent train derailment), and are ensuring more information from City Council meetings are provided via the Council Packet and uploaded to our website for public availability.

I was recently able to take a bike ride with Darren Ohl from the Vermont Bicycle Shop and Mark Martin of our Cow Pasture Committee to check out current routes to see how these can be improved in the near future. We reviewed some of the changes from the Routes and Trails advisory group to get their subject matter input to present to the Bike Path Committee. A 10-year list, which includes some of this information, can be found on the City website.

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

- Council received a second Municipal Pool Upgrade Progress Report from the Pool Advisory Group and Consultant John Hickock.
- Amanda Gustin, from the Vermont Historical Society, presented on the new exhibition of *The War of Ideas*, which features war posters from the state's collections from the Civil War through World War II.
- Kerri Foley came to Council to promote the American Red Cross "Sound the Alarm" event. I provided a proclamation to them for their efforts in saving lives.
- Council received an overview of American Legion Post 10 baseball team from Shawn Stabell. After a hiatus of 15 years, players age 15-18 year will play other Legion teams throughout the state during their 22-game season.
- Director Loren Polk of the Aldrich Library gave a PowerPoint presentation on the library, and the board of trustees. The Aldrich Library was recently named one of the 25 most beautiful libraries in the US by home improvement television host Bob Villa.
- The Routes and Trails Advisory Group provided an update and Barre City remains the only Gold Level municipality of the 3-4-50 initiative. A bike/walk audit is an item included for the program not previously addressed but was completed as part of goal setting to make the City more walkable and accessible. Allegra Williams from Local Motion also participated to help create a 10-year plan to work on infrastructure and street improvements to create a livable and walkable community, would increase pedestrian safety and calm traffic.
- Chuck Barney from the Barre Area Veteran's Council reported on replacement American Flags for Main Street and requested the parade route and use of a "rain site" for the Memorial Day Parade.
- The Highgate Kids Summer Program was presented by Isaiah Palmeri and Ryan Burch. They showed a brief video that students created as part of the program.

City Council approved several items including the following:

- Discussion on the Unified Development Ordinance. A special meeting was also held on April 17th to take additional comment from the public. Council approved moving the ordinance back to committee.
- Approval of Amendment #2 to VTrans Finance & Maintenance (F&M) Agreement regarding the Barre City/Barre Town MEGC-M 6000 Quarry St. Intersection Project

- Discussion on Parking related to Agency of Transportation move to the City of Barre
- Authorization to Execute Alumni Hall Heating System Assessment Agreement with DuBois and King, Inc.
- Authorization to Submit USDA Grant Application for New Ambulance.
- Authorization to Submit GHSP Grant Applications for Occupant Protection Patrol, DUI Patrol, Advance Speed Sign.
- Pre-authorization for Manager to Execute FY20 Fuels Contracts. This resulted in the ratification FY20 Fuel Oil Contract with Dead River and FY20 Propane Contract with Irving Energy.
- Mayoral Letter of Support of Commuter Rail Service in H.529 – Transportation Bill.
- Annual Adoption of the Local Emergency Management Plan for 2019 including Delegation of Authority.
- The sale of 5 Second Street was moved from an RFP Process to a sealed bid process.
- Keith Avenue and Pearl Street Bid Solicitation was released on April 15th. Additionally, Council authorized the Manager to Execute Keith/Pearl St Projects Phase Agreement to Dubois & King.

Council has made a couple of additional appointments as we lead up to reappointments in June. The City has begun its recruitment process for current committees, commissions, and boards, as well as discuss if there is a need for any additional bodies of the City needed:

- Aldrich Public Library – Teddy Waszazak
- ADA – Bernadette Rose Term Expires 2020
- Cow Pasture Stewardship Committee – Fabio Balenzo Term expires 2020

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

- The Neighborhood Watch Program has met for 20 different locations regarding organizational meetings. Most recently, the Merchant Street and Currier Park areas met, and this will continue in May with Beckley Street and Highgate Apartments. If you are interested in this program, please feel free to reach out and we can put you in touch with a current group or help to set up a meeting in your area of the City.
- The Unified Zoning Ordinance discussion postponed the first reading until June, once a new recommendation is provided from the Planning Commission. The Miscellaneous Ordinance will be back on the May 14th agenda and several other ordinances are still being reviewed.
- Council removed Charitable Giving (i.e. Donor/Recipient Policies and creation of a City Foundation) from the priority list. They also removed Pawnbrokers/Precious Metals Ordinance discussion per recommendation of Police Chief and Ordinance Workgroup.
- CV Fiber Board members are being solicited for appointment in May.
- The Arbor Day Neighborhood Day Tree Collection will happen again, which will occur on June 1st this year at the B.O.R.
- It was announced that the Downtown Historic Preservation Conference will be June 5th for possible councilperson attendance.
- Richard Swenson is to present for Relay for Life, and the Vermont Granite Museum will be in to discuss opening for the year.

Lucas J. Herring
Mayor, City of Barre