



June 29th, 2019:

Residents and Neighbors,

Council has historically met each Tuesday. Starting in June this year, like last year, we are going through the Summer without meeting on the first Tuesday of each month. Instead, on Tuesday, June 4th, Councilors held Ward meeting in each of their respective Wards. Similar to “Coffee with the Mayor” each month, residents that attended, and input given through public interaction outside or our City Council sessions.

Additionally, through the usage of social media, Council has been able to communicate more with interested residents on items within the City of Barre. For examples, promotion of the Summer Street Mural project was highly viewed and commented on and closure of Prospect Street from Main Street to Brooklyn Street due to a sinkhole, were quickly communicated throughout the City and shared with others outside of the City borders.

Congressman Welch stopped in to discuss the Infrastructure Bill and see other items occurring in the City of Barre. He was able to visit during the Open House for C+W Print and Design in their new location. The Congressman’s staff provided follow up information regarding the Federal Build Grant that may be able to assist efforts for Passenger Rail Service from the City of Barre to Montpelier.

City Council held public hearings and approved changes to the Trash Ordinance. The result brings the City of Barre into compliance with the Act 148 Composting Bill, giving ability to compost locally as well as a mechanism for a composting service to be allowed.

Council also held public hearing and adopted the changes as proposed from the Planning Commission regarding the Unified Development Ordinance. The Ordinance, which officially goes into effect on July 16th, 2019, ends a long conversation with input and changes from several residents, developers and business owners within the City. The changes will allow for “tiny houses” as well as for Spaulding High School to utilize a digital sign similar to what the City of Barre uses.

After additional Councilors were able to visit the Wheelock House, City Council revisited the discussion on sale of the property. Councilor Morey suggested that the sale of the building be terminated, which Council agreed to. Several suggestions were given on the usage of the building that mimicked the discussion from about 5 months ago, but Council decided to hold a public hearing on the use of the space at the Wheelock House on July 9th at 6pm.

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

- Council received a presentation on the Central Vermont Medical Center and changes with Granite City Primary Care merging with Barre Internal Medicine by Anna Noonan and CVMC Leaders. CVMC is looking to expand transportation options prior to the practices merging.
- Amanda Garland presented on behalf of the Tree Stewardship and the Community Garden Committees. Some efforts included adding new trees on Main Street, tree screening between the Waste Water Treatment Facility and Vermont Granite Museum, and addition of raised

garden beds in three areas of the City. This was followed the next day by a Council invite to view the 3 locations of Community Gardens within the City.

City Council approved several items including the following:

- Council accepted Director of Public Works Director Bill Ahearn's recommendation to award the Annual Supply Bids.
- After a brief "bidding war", Council set the compensation for the Clerk/Treasurer as part of the annual review. Councilors expressed their sincere thanks for the efforts and outcomes from Carol Dawes in her roles.
- Council approved three 2019 Bonds Documents for the items approved as part of the March Town Meeting Day Ballot. These included \$2.5 million toward improvements in the City's water and wastewater systems, as well as over \$500,000 toward General Fund Projects.
- City Manager Steve Mackenzie provided an update on the Keith Ave/Pearl St Project Construction to be performed by DuBois Construction Co. Originally it was thought that construction costs would be more than the amount budgeted, but negotiations were able to bring the costs back within the budgeted amount.
- Councilor Waszazak brought discussion of a Historic Plaque for Teddy Roosevelt. Council approved a resolution as a statement of support for the plaque to be placed in City Hall Park commemorating the August 31st, 1912 speech.
- Council reviewed bid documents and approved the FY19 Tax Anticipation Note documents as presented by the City Clerk/Treasurer.
- Approval of the Miscellaneous Accounts Receivable Policy and presented by the City Clerk/Treasurer.
- Approved City Manager Steve Mackenzie's recommendation to authorization to execute Keith/Pearl Street Projects Construction Phase Agreement with Dubois and King.
- Approved of the FY20 Municipal Tax Rate
- Affirm allocation of Semprebon Bequest Funds to Community Garden Committee

Council approved the 2019-2020 Annual Appointments. All committees now have a solid number of committed members to operate, although the effort to reconstitute the Housing Board of Review will be taken up in the Fall of 2019. There are still others looking to be appointed but need to attend a committee meeting and/or come to a City Council meeting prior to appointment. New members appointed in June include the following:

- Planning Commission – Jacob Hemmerick
- Paths, Routes and Trails Committee – Tim Terway

The City continues to hold Neighborhood Watch Organizational Meetings. The Richardson Road to Willey Street Area met in June. Flyers were distributed for the Circle Street Area to meet on July 8th, 2019 at 6pm on the 2nd Floor of Alumni Hall.

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

- June 1st saw another successful tree giveaway through the Arbor Day Foundation for planting at their residence. City staff were able to take the remaining 14 trees for screening between the Waste Water Treatment Facility and the Vermont Granite Museum.
- Exit 6 was closed on June 18th as part of the I-89 Ledge Removal Project, which some of the traffic is now routed through Exit 7 and down Route 62. Exit 6 is expected to reopen in about six weeks.
- City Council will establish the FY20 Priorities. Input from Councilors is being gathered and to be presented and discussed in July.
- The City is ending the year with a projected deficit mainly due to winter storm expenses and police overtime costs. Additionally, revenue sources are down for the B.O.R. while Council also needs to act regarding a leaking Chiller System that produces the ice.
- Council will need to address changes with the water and sewer rate in response to the reconciliation of bills owed to VTrans for the Big Dig Project.
- Several parking pilot projects are underway and more to be considered. The intent is to expand surface parking while calming traffic within different areas of the City. The projects will be piloted through the Barre Heritage Festival and staff is looking for feedback from the public.

Please have a safe and happy Independence Day!

Lucas J. Herring
Mayor, City of Barre