



September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019:

Residents and Neighbors,

Councilors held quarterly Ward meetings this month in lieu of our first scheduled Council meeting. I was able to attend the Ward 2 meeting at the B.O.R., which was hosted by Councilors Boutin and Waszazak.

As follow up on the approved Chiller and Alarm system repair at the B.O.R., Council held a Special Meeting to review the Civic Center Complex maintenance needs. The members of the Civic Center Committee gave a tour to Council and an updated list is to be provided by Director Jeff Bergeron. The City Manager also provided updates on the completed Pouliot Project for stormwater runoff, the Keith Parking Lot and Pearl Street Pedestrian projects, and outstanding water/sewer HVAC and Digester Cover invoices.

I held the last "Coffee with the Mayor" session of the season on September 7<sup>th</sup> with City Manager Steve Mackenzie. These sessions have allowed residents to stop by on the weekend to address concerns that they may not have been able to during normal working hours or a 7pm City Council meeting. This final session recapped several items that will need to be considered as part of the development of the FY21 Budget. Council has also discussed some items during Council and provided to the Manager for consideration.

The City of Barre held a Public Safety Forum September 19<sup>th</sup> at the Barre Elks. Violent and property crime continues to decrease, which can be partially attributed to the addition of the Street Crimes Unit. The Police and Fire Chief both noted that many of the issues they are dealing with are mental health related. The greater Barre area has seen the number of individuals on supervision cut in half over the past 10 years due to changes within the Department of Corrections. There is currently a need for volunteers for the call force at the Fire Department and for the Restorative Justice Panel at the Community Justice Center. The forum was recorded and can be viewed at [CVTV723.org](http://CVTV723.org).

Councilors set a Public Hearing to address traffic concerns in the Merchant Street area. The conversation included input from the residents in the area as well as responses from the Director of Public Works Bill Ahearn. Members of the Traffic Advisory Committee were present to discuss their role in assisting the City make changes based on concerns and suggested changes throughout the City. Residents of Camp Street also attended to provide input on improvements to the process of reconstructing streets.

The City of Barre received 40 trees as part of Green Mountain Power's contributions during climate change week, which will also act as a barrier between the Vermont Granite Museum and the Waste Water Treatment Facility. Large trees that have imposed a danger on Highland and Pearl St. Ext. were both removed.

Barre City and Barre Town held a joint-meeting to review the progress of a marketing initiative by the Imagination Company. James Gilberti and Kristen Smith presented videos and online content that has been produced to date. Members of the Barre Area Development Board, as well as many included in the

video, were present for the update. Additional information for the cost of distributing the content is to occur at a later date.

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

- The Spaulding High School football team presented, which included volunteer activities they are performing within the community. The attended both the City and Town meetings to also say thank you for those serving on the different boards.
- Sue Minter and Jon Valsangiacomo presented on activities occurring at Capstone. Recently, there was a public outreach initiative called "SOAR" to gather input on how Capstone could better serve the community.
- Director of Public Works Bill Ahearn spoke on the status of pocket parks and the pilot parking program. Several areas were successful using temporary structures to indicate proposed changes, which can now be implemented permanently within the City. The next phase will include additional areas where temporary structures will be added.
- Bob Stock from the U.S. Census Bureau presented on the upcoming 2020 Census. There is a need for several people to work part-time to assist in collecting demographic information.

City Council approved several items including the following:

- Authorization to Engage Appraiser for Valuation of Old Firehouse Weathervane.
- Approved the Second Reading for Minimum Housing Ordinance revisions.
- Approved First and Second Reading for Buildings and Building Construction Ordinance revisions.
- Approval of Spaulding High School homecoming parade and bonfire.
- Approved Cemetery Winter Burials rate increase as proposed by Director Jeff Bergeron.
- Reviewed the FY20 Priorities, Ground Rules and Decorum.

The City of Barre continues to hold Neighborhood Watch Organizational Meetings. The Batchelder Street Area, Highgate and Ayers Street Area met in September, while flyers were distributed to the South Main Street and Lower Prospect Street Areas. South Main Street is to meet at 6pm on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, in Alumni Hall on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor. This same location and time will be used for the Lower Prospect Street Area on October 10<sup>th</sup>, Smith Street Area on October 21<sup>st</sup>, and North Main Street Area on October 28<sup>th</sup>.

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

- The City of Barre will be flushing water mains and operating water line blow offs, mainly between September 29 through October 4, 2019.
- The City Council meeting for October 1<sup>st</sup> is cancelled, similar to the first Tuesday meeting throughout the summer.
- On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, the City Manager and I will be attending the Vermont League of Cities and Towns - Town Fair. This conference offers different sessions that may provide information needs to improve on different processes within the City of Barre.
- Council will receive public transit updates from GMT and RCT on October 8th
- The Yard Waste Disposal Program will run from October 12<sup>th</sup> to October 27<sup>th</sup>.
- The City of Barre Housing Forum will be held at Barre Elks #1535 on October 17<sup>th</sup> at 6pm.
- Discussion will continue on the usage of the Wheelock Building. The Barre Partnership moved into the front section and the City is currently soliciting ideas for use of the space.

- Discussion is to continue with the Public Funds Request Policy and several others that are currently with staff for review.
- Council will receive an update from the first quarter financials of the City of Barre budget.
- Salvage Yard and Taxi Licensing Ordinance revisions are currently with staff and are expected to be placed back on the agenda
- Discussion occurred for the approval of Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District but finalized information for approval was moved to the October 22nd agenda.
- Changes with the parking meters, rates, fees and use of additional revenue was discussed and will come back to Council after review by the parking committee.

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It is a beautiful start to Fall, and I hope you all are enjoying the changing of the leaves,

Lucas J. Herring  
Mayor, City of Barre