



January 25th, 2019:

Residents and Neighbors,

I hope the New Year is treating you well. We've already had a large snow storm, followed by rain and freezing temperatures. I am thankful for the City staff that have been ensuring that our Streets and Sidewalks are clear, as well as ensuring that ice jams are broken up so that water flows freely through our rivers.

Similar to our joint meeting with Montpelier, Council held a Special Meeting along with Barre Town on January 2<sup>nd</sup> to receive an overview from the Aldrich Library, Barre Partnership, and Barre Area Development. All three of these organizations receive funding from Barre City and Barre Town, which the joint meeting provided an atmosphere where support and concerns could be heard by both communities and the organizations.

Council has held three Special Meetings to address the FY20 budget, with a 4<sup>th</sup> planned on Monday, January 28<sup>th</sup>. There are several deferred maintenance and infrastructure needs that we are trying to address, in addition to maintaining current operations. We will look to solidify the FY20 budget on the 28<sup>th</sup>, as we need to approve that amount as part of the Town Meeting Day Meeting Warning at our Regular Meeting on Tuesday, January 29<sup>th</sup>.

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, Police Chief Tim Bombardier and I held a "Coffee with the Mayor and Police Chief" event as Espresso Bueno. Many residents stopped by and discussed issues related to the City and Public Safety. I am currently setting up another meeting like this, but with Fire Chief Douglas Brent. More information will be out about this shortly.

The Second of two replacement boilers was installed in City Hall on January 15th. The timing was good, as shortly after this is when we experienced a stretch of cold below zero.

On January 16th, I participated in the Vermont Local Emergency Management Director Course along with our Health Officer Robert "Howie" Howarth. The curriculum provided an overview of the organizational structure formed and resources available during an emergency. Currently, if the City qualifies for support, FEMA would provide a 75% refund of the expenses and the State of Vermont would provide 7.5%. This means the City would still need to find 17.5% of millions in repairs. DPW Director Bill Ahearn is working to update the City's Road and Bridge Standards and Planning Director Janet Shatney is managing the issues surrounding the River Corridor Plan. When these two plans are implemented, the City's share of the expenses would drop from 17.5% to 7.5%. These plans will be worked on in conjunction with the annual Local Emergency Management Plan that will be presented by Fire Chief Douglas Brent.

Council made a couple more appointments, which were to the Planning Commission. Rick Badem and Rachel Rudi will fill vacancies that will allow the Planning Commission to finish it's work with the Unified Development Ordinance, otherwise known as zoning. I thank them both for stepping up to assist the City with this important task.

The City continues to hold Neighborhood Watch Organizational Meetings. During the month of January, due to the cold and the weather, we have focused on the Barre Housing Authority locations. Last night was the last of the following meetings:

- BHA #1 Thursday, January 3, 2019 - 6:00 PM North Barre Manor Community Room
- BHA #2 Thursday, January 10, 2018 - 6:00 PM Tilden House Community Room
- BHA #3 Monday, January 14, 2018 - 6:00 PM Jefferson Apartments Community Room
- BHA #4 Thursday, January 17, 2018 - 6:00 PM Washington Apartments Community Room/Lobby
- BHA #5 Thursday, January 24, 2018 - 6:00 PM Green Acres Community Center

I provided a presentation on allocating the Wheelock House as a Teen Center. Although there was general support of the concept, the current budget situation resulted in no action. Instead, Council voted to list the Wheelock House for sale. If there is no response to the listing, or bidders cannot meet the minimum requirements, Council will need to revisit the usage of the City owned building.

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

- Sara Akers provide information on a fundraiser called the 1st Annual “Boots N’ Balls” Kick Ball Tournament.
- The Agency of Transportation held an Informational Meeting regarding the I-89 Exit 6 (South Barre) Ledge Removal Project. A detour of traffic will be needed that will direct traffic to either Exit 5 or 7 to travel into the City of Barre. The project is planned to start in June and last for 8 weeks.
- Sue Minter, as the new Executive Director, presented on the programs and activities at Capstone Community Action.
- Mark Martin of the Cow Pasture Committee and Darren Ohl from the VT Bicycle Shop presented on Winterfest. The event will highlight sledding, fat bikes rides and provide hot cocoa at the Barre City Cow Pasture on February 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Council was introduced to Mikey, a new K-9 working with the Barre City Policy Department.
- Chief Bombardier presented on the Special Investigation and Street Crimes Units within the City. By reconfiguring the current staff to focus on priority cases, there has been success in arresting and prosecuting individuals.
- Maura Carroll and Karen Horn provided an overview of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, which included Legislative initiatives on behalf of the City and other municipalities.

City Council approved several items including the following:

- Ratification of 2018-2020 FOP (Police) Collective Bargaining Agreement
- Approved financial support for use of Front Porch Forum
- Approval of Coin Drop requests for the Kiwanis Club, American Legion, Special Olympics, Project Independence and Barre Figure Skating Club
- Selected the consultant for Soils Characterization on the Merchants Row Redevelopment project
- Authorized the sale and listing for the City Owned Wheelock House at 135 No. Main Street

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

- Councilor Boutin and Chief Bombardier presented on Cameras in Public Areas. Council elected not to move forward with this initiative at this time.
- Superintendent John Pandolfo from the Barre Supervisory Union gave a “Budget Presentation” although due to Act 46 and legal challenges, the process is moving forward with the newly created Barre Unified Union School District. There was not a need for Charter changes or appointments at this time, as many questions are still to be answered from the legal process.
- DPW Director Bill Ahearn gave a summary of the Water and Sewer infrastructure needs and prepared documentation for a bond. Council will need to vote to place this on the Town Meeting Day Warning.
- Although there are no proposed Charter changes, Council held its First Public Hearing as required.
- Councilor Rich Morey and I have worked on several policies to bring before Council. He will also be revisiting the Coin Drop policy for Council review.
- On February 5th, I will be visiting a maker space at the “Generator” in Chittenden County.
- Also, on February 5<sup>th</sup> at 4pm, GMTA will be holding a Public Meeting at National Life regarding changes in bus routes coming to the City of Barre.
- Jason Gould of the Washington County Sherriff’s will be holding a Scrap Metal drop off event up at the Auditorium on April 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. He has partnered Caps for Cops with Bolduc’s Salvage Yard with the mission of ending the divide between citizens and the Police.
- Next week, Council will be appointing members to the Solid Waste Management Committee. Councilor LePage has offered to sit on the committee from City Council and we are currently in recruitment of a resident from the City of Barre to be appointed.

Lucas J. Herring  
Mayor, City of Barre