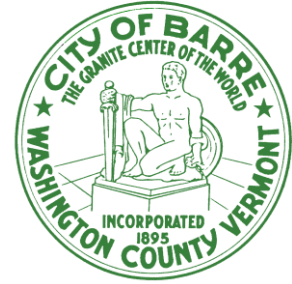


January 29th, 2021



Residents and Neighbors,

City Clerk Carol Dawes led a discussion on Voter Outreach for Town Meeting Day. Considering different options on changing the annual meeting date and/or mailing ballots to all voters, Council elected to coordinate a postcard mailing with Barre Town. This will also support the Barre Unified Union School District and ensure their ballot items are treated in the same manner in each municipality.

Council continued to discuss the FY22 Budget, referencing a draft Capital Improvement Plan along the way. Changes with the School Resource Officer at the BUUSD had an effect on the City budget and staffing levels, but the City can still take advantage of the COPS grant approved by Council. Council also changed the contracted Assessor position into a staff position and need to allocate funds to replace the retiring City Manager. The Manager's 4th Budget draft was reviewed and unanimously approved by Council, which calls for a budget increase is 2.1% over the FY21 budget. The proposed FY22 budget is \$12,836,332, of which \$9,316,073 is to be raised by taxes.

Also approved unanimously by Council were a number of proposed Charter Changes. The memo prepared by the City Clerk detailed the changes that include adding the Finance Director to the list of positions that require bonding, adding a section limiting the display of flags to the City, State and US flags, allowing the City to set speed limits at less than 25 miles per hour and elimination of the position of Constable.

The BOR has remained open for use under the current COVID restrictions. There were 47 rentals over the holidays and ice time has been booked by Northfield and Spaulding High Schools, along with Barre Youth Sports. City Manager Steve Mackenzie reported the Civic Center Auditorium will serve as a vaccination location on Tuesdays and Thursdays for the next several weeks.

As part of the review of the City's response during COVID, Chief Bombardier and Chief Brent spoke of response protocols, keeping the jail open, wellness, vaccines, contact tracing related to ambulance transports, and coordinating personal protective equipment (PPE). Chief Bombardier reviewed metrics on calls for service detailing the past three years, including data on issuing warrants, aggravated assault charges, robberies, sexual assaults, property crime, and violent crime. Chief Brent note that Fire Department staff are busy this time of year with heating issues and chimney fires. There has been a decrease in the number of structure fires. Calls for service provide opportunities for responders to inspect a property for code enforcement compliance, which helps keep properties safe.

Chief Bombardier provided an overview of traffic violations that can be added to City Ordinance. This change would allow the City to collect the municipal portion of any traffic tickets written by City officers, which is now being collected by the Judicial Bureau. He also noted there has been increased criminal activity around the local hotels where the state is housing those who are homeless, creating a higher need for services. A contract was approved by Council to receive funding support for up to 20 hours/week of overtime for local police departments for service calls associated with these locations.

Council reviewed the items remaining on the FY21 Priority list. Follow up from the review was outreach to each committee to gather information on what they are working on and priorities for FY22. This information is to be gathered to include in an overall Strategic Plan for the City. There was discussion on developing charges for the various committees, as well as ensuring all positions are filled as needed.

Council revisited Minimum Housing Ordinance Changes. The proposed changes received Department Head review with most discussion revolving around minimum size of units, the number of people allowed to live in different size units, and who is able to perform plumbing and electrical repairs. The draft has been sent to City Attorney Oliver Twombly for review prior to coming back to Council for first reading.

For the FY20 Annual Report, Council approved the following photos:

- Front cover: North Main Street looking towards City Hall Park, taken by Tracie Lewis of the Barre Partnership.
- Back cover: Robert Burns statue, taken by Heather Duke
- Inside front cover: Rotary Club Summer Street mural, taken by Caroline Earle.
- Inside back cover: Pearl Street Pedway at night, taken by City Manager Steve Mackenzie.

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

- BUUSD Superintendent David Wells, Finance Committee chair Sonya Spaulding, and Finance Director Lisa Perreault. Ms. Spaulding gave a PowerPoint presentation on the district's proposed FY22 budget, noting there is a 4.14% budget increase, and a 6.4% budget increase for the Central Vermont Career Center.
- DPW Director Bill Ahearn reviewed Streets and Sidewalk Reconstruction plans. He spoke of projects deferred due to COVID and is looking to make the available funding go farther by modifying street work with overlays rather than rehabilitations. City committees (including the ADA Committee, Transportation Advisory Committee, and Paths, Routes and Trails Committee) will be utilized to help to gather public input within in the areas of the city.
- Clerk Dawes reviewed the history of the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District, including remaining debt capacity and possible projects included in the current TIF plan. Current projects would need additional funding sources to complete, such as the Merchant's Row project, and a shift of focus from parking would require review by VEPC and several additional resources to implement. Manager Mackenzie will give a comprehensive briefing on the proposed Merchant's Row project at the February 16th Council meeting and further discussion from Council on if other projects should be explored.
- As part of the 2nd Quarter Budget Update, Finance Director Dawn Monahan reviewed the financial update and memo, saying revenues are running slightly ahead of budget and expenses are running slightly behind. Ambulance revenue is trending up for the fiscal year.

Other items approved by Council include the following:

- Approval of 2021 Annual Town Meeting Warning
- Approval of City-Wide Property Re-Appraisal RFP
- Approved Washington County Mental Health Services Ballot Funding Request
- Approved Vermont Center for Independent Living Ballot Funding Request
- Approved revisions to the Social Media Policy
- Approved revisions to the Investment Policy
- Approved Barre Historical Society Better Places Grant Letter of Support

- Approved CARES ACT Funding Request for use of Barre City Auditorium Complex
- Approved Downstreet Housing VCDP Implementation Grant for Transitional Housing
- Approval of Resolution #2021-01 Condemning the Violent Insurrection at the Nation's Capital
- Approval of Employee Assessor Job Description
- Approval of 2021 Certificate of Highway Mileage
- Authorize Manager and Chief to Execute Contract for State Emergency Sheltering Program
- Authorize Manager to Execute WWTF Digester Bid/CA Services Amendment with DuBois & King
- Authorize Submission of SRF Funding Application for WWTF Digester Project
- Authorize DPW Campus Upgrade A/E Agreement Award
- Authorize Gap Funding for WWTF Digester Improvements Project.
- Authorize Engineering Agreement with Dufresne Grp re: No. Main St. PS Upgrade
- Authorize Engineering Agreement with Dufresne Grp re: Water System Chlorine Study
- Accepted Pool Recreation Grant Award of \$10,000 through the VT Community Foundation
- Appointed Paul Charron to the CVPSA Board

Upcoming items in February include the following:

- Assessing Final Errors and Omissions Certificate PVR-4261-E for Filing in the 2020 Grand List
- Assessing Certificate of No Appeal or Suit Pending PVR-4155 for Filing in the 2020 Grand List
- DPW Response During COVID
- Discussion on Plumbing Ordinance Changes
- Approval of \$1.7M Bond Paperwork and Resolution #2021-03
- Discussion on Renew of ChargePoint Contract for Merchant's Row EV Charging Station
- Certification of 2020 TIF Annual Report
- Review and Approval of Policies
 - Dix Reservoir Land Use – Fishing Policy
 - Dix Reservoir Land Use – Hunting Policy
 - Personnel Activity Reports/Timesheets/Timecards Policy
 - Cash Receipts and Procedures
 - General Internal Control Policies and Procedures
 - Credit Card Policy
 - Interfund Activity and Pooled Cash Fund Policy
 - Partial Payment Policy
- Annual Employee Longevity Recognition Program
- Quarterly updates from the following groups:
 - Aldrich Library
 - Barre Area Development
 - Barre Partnership
- Vermont Human Trafficking Taskforce Presentation
- Discussion on Police Ticketing Ordinance
- Discussion of TIF Timeline and Action Plan
- Review Council Onboarding Document

Be safe and be well,

Lucas J. Herring
Mayor, City of Barre