



June 30th, 2020:

Residents and Neighbors,

Although Green Up Day was late in May this year, discussion continued on June 2nd with placement of a tree and plaque that were donated to the City. The paver-sized plaque and tree will be placed at the Brook Street community gardens. Additionally, Barre Rotary and GenRotary continue to clean up our downtown and will continue to do so on Thursdays. I have joined them and welcome others to help.

Council took action and approved language to strongly encourage the use of face coverings. There is no enforcement behind a mandate and only a significant minority of businesses wanted it enforced. Through the month of June, there were also no new cases of the coronavirus reported. Although we may feel safer in Vermont and the City of Barre, we all still need to take caution and follow the CDC guidelines.

There was a great discussion by Council and residents regarding the establishment of a Civilian Oversight and Advisory Board. The half hour agenda item formed a city body that can review police policies, practices, and complaints while also acting as an advisory board to Chief Bombardier. A number of policy suggestions were sent as part of the change for the group to review.

Another discussion around the approval of a new policy to displaying flags in addition to the US Flag, State Flag, and City Flag also resulted in review, but by the Diversity and Equity Committee. The major concern was around a public entity, being the City, showing favoritism to one organization over another in the approval process. The committee review will also be accompanied by a review by the City Attorney.

A brief update was given on the sales of small Barre City parcels. There are larger parcels that the City will look to list for sale, but the general discussion was that these smaller parcels were not likely to result in a sale to anyone because of the size and location.

Council has also tried to resolve a number of disputes this month with a grievance hearing at the beginning of the month, a special meeting to set up an Animal Control Board in the middle, and a settlement meeting regarding the Salvation Army and the Development Review Board at the end. Although these items are a part of normal City business, they are items that do not come up frequently.

On June 30th, Council moved forward with the process to fill Committee Vacancies and Annual Appointments. Most of the positions with the Board, Committees and Commissions have remained full but, with the addition of the Diversity Committee and the Civilian Oversight and Advisory Board, there are 10 additional positions to fill.

City Council agendas have been full of items, including special meetings as noted above. As part of the assessment of the Council Meeting Schedule, Council will move back to meeting every Tuesday, but skipping the first Tuesday of the month. Meetings will continue using Zoom as a videoconferencing tool for the time being.

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

- Barre City Representative Peter Anthony read a joint legislative resolution honoring former City Manager Arthur Ristau, who passed away earlier this year.
- Barre City Representatives and Washington County Senators provided a Legislative Update. They noted most of their time has been spent mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The delegation is working on allowing the removal of a railroad trestle from the north end of the City, where it's frequently involved in local flooding. They have worked on revisions to the property tax adjustment forms to make them more user-friendly, extending tax filing deadlines to mirror the IRS, and a moratorium on evictions during COVID-19. Representative Anthony noted funding to support the City's Mental Health worker didn't have support.
- A rental rehab working group has been formed, led by Eileen Peltier of Downstreet, to prepare Landlords for any available federal funding through recently passed bills.
- DPW Director Bill Ahearn spoke to the \$76,000 available for paving projects through FY21, and the list of streets that would be repaved included portions of Hill Street, Blackwell Street, Parkside Terrace, and Prospect Street.
- VT Department of Liquor and Lottery is offering provisional outside consumption permits to allow license holders to expand their outside service area under the current ACCD regulations limiting restaurants and bars to outside service only. You will see several local establishments have been issued provisional permits and have expanded outdoor seating.
- Cathleen Grant from CVSWMD stated they received a \$500,000 grant towards the construction of a regional hazardous waste collection facility located in the Barre/Montpelier area. She noted the July 1st recycling law changes to divert food scraps from landfills.
- Finance Director Dawn Monahan presented on the \$500,000 shortfall in FY20 due to Covid. Expenses have been reduced through a combination of staff furloughs and purchasing freezes that will offset most of the budget difference.
- The City Manager discussed the City Hall Phased Re-Opening Plan, but concepts are not currently available. There was discussion on ensuring that the public was aware of the changes that the Manager would be taking.

City Council approved several items including the following:

- Abatement of Late Penalties and Interest Charges on Delinquent Water/Sewer Bills through the end of June.
- Approval of Continued Parking Meter/Ticket/Enforcement Moratorium through August
- First and Second Reading on the Salvage Yards Ordinance
- First and Second Reading on the Regulation of Vehicles Permitted on Private Property Ordinance
- Award of Cemetery Mower Bid (BCS Director)
- Approval of June 20th SHS Senior Celebration Main Street Parade
- Appointment of Animal Control Committee
- Authorization of AHS Base and Transitional Housing Grants for the Barre Community Justice Center
- Ratify Manager's Authorization to Purchase 2020 Police SUV Interceptor Vehicle
- Approval of Assessor's Request to Set FY21 Grand List Lodging Date as July 15, 2020
- Authorize State Bid Purchase of Fire Department Pick-Up Truck

- Award of Pool Municipal Pool Amenities Bid
- Award of City Hall Asbestos Insulation Removal Bid
- Approval of Agreement with See.Click.Fix
- Approval of FY21 Tax Anticipation Note Documents
- Review/Acceptance of Annual Financial Management Questionnaire for VT State Auditor
- Approve Resolution #2020-03 re: Federal Emergency Aid to Vermont Municipalities
- Renee Badeau BOR Plaque Request
- Annual Council Appointments, including Jason Broughton to the Public Art Committee
- Approve Resolution #2020-05 re: Condemning Systemic Racism and Policy Brutality
- Authorize Purchase of Replacement Police Department APHIS System
- Approval of Manager's Vacation Roll-Over Request

Upcoming items in July include the following:

- Manager's Update on FY21 Budget Adjustments
- Council Approval of FY21 Municipal Property Tax
- Council has received word the City has been awarded a \$250,000 COPS grant that will provide funding for additional officers. Council will need to accept 2020 COPS HIRING PROGRAM (CHP) Grant
- Pending FEMA Grant confirmation, HALO Purchase Authorization
- Presentation from Scott McLaughlin at the Vermont Granite Museum Update
- Appointments to the Diversity and Equity Committee
- Appointments to the Civilian Oversight and Advisory Board
- Planning Director discussion on a Food Vendor Ordinance
- Approval of Resolution #2020-07: VT Revolving Loan for WWTF
- Authorization to Execute VT SRF Loan RF1-253-2.0 Agreement & Bond Forms
- Approval of Grants Management Policy
- Approval of Procurement Policy
- Approval of Investment Policy
- Financial Director Preliminary FY20 Year-end Financial Status Assessment
- Review Council Priorities for FY21 and Preliminary Discussion on the Barre City Strategic Plan
- Complete Streets/Smart Streets Plan
- 5-year Water and Sewer Budget
- Athena Leadership Award Nominations
- Planning Commission is will be reviewing the City Plan on July 23rd

I wish you all a safe Independence Day!

Lucas J. Herring
Mayor, City of Barre