



July 30th, 2020:

Residents and Neighbors,

A year ago, I was able to write about the Barre Heritage Festival and the events in the downtown. Although we were able to provide fireworks this year, Main Street remained open and we have a Statewide mask mandate that is going into effect instead. Last year we were addressing a \$100,000 emergency chiller system repair for the B.O.R., but now find ourselves addressing a \$500,000 revenue shortfall.

In an effort to help restaurants stay open, Cornerstone Pub & Kitchen owner Keith Paxman proposed establishing Food Truck Thursdays in Currier Park. Council accepted the idea that will allow three trucks to vend and 12 picnic tables to be set up in the park.

Council discussed the Cops Hiring Program Grant and, after discussion on the need for two new officer positions, the grant was approved. Some of the benefits noted with additional staff included reduced overtime, providing additional services to the City and a decrease employee burnout. A resolution to support the Barre City Police Department was discussed, but ultimately sent to the Civilian Oversight and Advisory Board for review.

Council received a new favorable projection on the FY20 budget. The current numbers show a surplus for the end of the year, but this will not be finalized until an audit is completed in October. This was presented prior to the discussion on the FY21 budget as another projected shortfall is to occur. After the City Manager made a number of revisions, he accepted others from Council to ensure that the tax rate increase was not greater than what voters approved in March. A final change was made to support level funding of the Aldrich Library and Barre Partnership, while significantly decreasing the amount on money provide to Barre Area Development. The tax rate will be established at the August 5th meeting.

Council spent a large amount of time in July interviewing those interested in different bodies of the City. With the establishment of the Diversity and Equity Committee and the Civilian Oversight and Advisory Board, nearly 20 people have submitted letters of interest to be new appointments. Council will make decisions on these appointments at the August 5th Council meeting.

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

- Scott McLaughlin spoke of the Vermont Granite Museum reopening and efforts they are taking to address the coronavirus to allow for safe attendance.
- Elaine Wang presented on free virtual energy visits on behalf of the Barre City Energy Committee. I was able to share my recent involvement in the process and several Councilors agreed to sign up for the program.
- Loren Polk provided an update from the Aldrich Library and the limited reopening that is soon to occur.
- Joel Schwartz provided an update for Barre Area Development and discusses efforts, including the wrapping of a Bellavance truck, for promotion through their marketing initiative.

- Tracie Lewis gave an update for the Barre Partnership, which included the farmer's market in the Pearl Street Pedway and fireworks during the typical Heritage Festival weekend.

City Council approved several items including the following:

- Approval of Resolution #2020-07: VT Revolving Loan for WWTF
- Approval of Edward Jones Resolutions re. Investment Accounts

Upcoming items in August include the following:

- The Parking Moratorium will end, and enforcement will resume on August 3rd.
- The City Staff Furlough Program has ended. City Hall will continue to remain closed to the public, but staff will be available by appointment and can still be reached by phone, email, and mail.
- Council will discuss nominations for the Athena Leadership Award, to support a young woman working or living in Barre City at the August 10th meeting.
- Rick DeAngelis will be presenting on behalf of the Good Samaritan Haven.
- To coincide with the "Masks on VT" campaign Vermont Emergency Management will provide 25% of Barre City's population, or over 2,000 cloth face coverings. More details on this program will be provided by Deputy Chief Aldsworth.
- Councilors will provide an updated timeline on their items as part of the FY21 City Council Priorities.

Be well,

Lucas J. Herring
Mayor, City of Barre