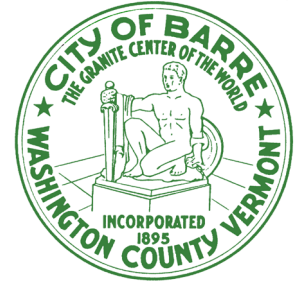


November 25th, 2020:



Residents and Neighbors,

Thank you to everyone that participated in this year's November elections. In the City of Barre, over 3,800 people participated! And a special thank you to all of the volunteers and staff that worked at the polls to ensure that voting in person was safe and ballots were counted in a timely manner.

Barre City has seen a surge in cases of the coronavirus in November, which is a trend across the State and Nation. Please keep us all safe this Thanksgiving and continue to follow the guidelines as provided in the Governor's Executive Order and CDC Guidelines. The Vermont Department of Health added several additional testing dates for the clinics held at the Barre Auditorium. City staff attended Agency of Human Services zoom conference on the current COVID spike in Washington and Orange counties. AHS is putting together public relations kits to help communities get the word out about how to slow the spread. City Manager Steve Mackenzie spoke to City Hall's re-closure due to the Covid Outbreak. The opening of the B.O.R., which was pushed back to November 8th, was extended to November 30th.

Federal Reserve Bank of Boston President Eric Rosengren and Governor Phil Scott announced that the Greater Barre region was the recipient of a \$300,000 grant as part of the Working Communities Challenge. The goal of the Barre group is to lower the rate of single female head of households in poverty by 15% in 10 years. As part of the grant application, there is a requirements for a local match of \$15,000 over the initial three-year program, which Council approved.

After several readings, which were required due to each of the small changes that were requested during the hearings, Council adopted revisions to Chapter 3 in City Ordinance regarding Animal and Fowl. These changes will allow for dogs in City Parks and designated areas in cemeteries away from stones and allow for dogs to be off leash in the Cow Pasture. Additional discussion on fowl resulted in the Council creation of a Task Force to discuss poultry and farming practices within the City. Council is currently soliciting for volunteers to be on this committee to work with the Health Officer and make recommendations back to City Council.

Council also approved Chapter 11 in City Ordinances regarding Offenses and Miscellaneous Provisions. Language was added referring to the current process for open fires and allowing street art, as well as cleanup language around positions names and times that parks and playgrounds are open. There was discussion on enforcement of items in City ordinance, which may provide officers to enforce more of the location regulations.

As part of the budget development and review, Chief Bombardier spoke to areas of the budget under the Police services. Although the Police Department budget shows a decrease, the overall services have a combined expense increase of 1.67% from items in Meter Enforcement and Dispatch Services. BCS Director Jeff Bergeron noted savings in fuel costs across the different facilities, but revenues are also down due to facilities rental. The main cost drivers are staff and the projected increase of summer temporary work with the City pool scheduled to reopen in the Summer of 2021. Planning Director Janet Shatney noted that the increases in Planning and Assessing were also related to staff costs, but also an

increase in software licensing. There is an intent by the City Manager to review the contracted Assessor's position in order to fund a full-time position.

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

- Presentation by Bethanee Syversen on Human Trafficking
- Cody Morrison provided an update on the status of the Barre Rock Solid Marketing Program

Other items approved by Council include the following:

- Ratification of 10/27/20 application for FY21 VTrans Grants for Stormwater Purposes
- Sno-Bees Annual Request for VAST use of the Cow Pasture Trails
- Barre Thunder Chickens Club – Trail Use Request
- \$45,000 donation from the Semprebon Annuity to the Barre Opera House
- BCJC Sub-Recipient Agreements regarding VTDOC: Grant #03520-1492 and -1496
- Resolution #2020-11 in recognition of Corporal Robert (Henry) Duhaime
- Approval of the Flag Policy on November 10th, which revisions were needed and approved on November 24th
- From the Flag Policy, Resolution #2020-12 was adopted approving flying the Black Lives Matter flag in December and the Thin Blue Line flag in January.
- Accept the resignation of Michael Smith from the Central Vermont Public Safety Authority
- Appointment of James Ward to the Central Vermont Public Safety Authority
- Appointment of Thom Lauzon to the Planning Commission
- Appointment of Robbie Strachan as the Deputy Health Officer

Upcoming items in December include the following:

- Citywide Reassessment Request for Proposal
- Continue Department Head Budget Conversations
- Presentation of the FY20 Audit
- Follow up discussion on Minimum Housing Ordinance changes
- Brusa Trust donation to supplant the traditional Dollar Drop due to the coronavirus
- Approve revisions to the Grants Management and Social Media Policy
- Acceptance of Stowe Street as a Municipal Street

Have a safe and Happy Holiday Season!

Lucas J. Herring
Mayor, City of Barre