



December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019:

Residents and Neighbors,

Council started review of the FY21 Budget this month, with meetings on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. There were presentations given at the first meeting, including Chief Bombardier on the possibility of adding additional police officers and Rep. Anthony's request for funding a mental health officer. The second meeting focused on a line by line review of budgeted items over the past couple of years to make sure that each area was listed appropriately. Council will meet again on January 4<sup>th</sup> to continue the discussions and receive feedback on questions raised from these sessions.

The City of Barre welcomed the Agency of Transportation during an event held at the Barre Auditorium on December 4<sup>th</sup>. Gift bags that were created from the Barre Partnership and Barre Area Development, filled with items from merchants in the downtown, were provided to the employees. There were speakers from BADC, the Barre Partnership, the City of Barre and State of Vermont along with a video presentation.

City Council held its Annual Dollar Drop on December 7<sup>th</sup>. The proceeds, which amounted to over \$4,000, were used to fund the BCEMS Holiday Fund. Councilors were joined by City Manager Steve Mackenzie and Officer Fleury to wrap gifts purchased through this fund. The gifts were presented by Officers Fleury and Murphy to students from the school.

Council received an overview from a core group of participants in the Working Communities Grant Application process for the greater Barre area. There was input from several business, education, nonprofit, social services and municipal organizations to break down silos and work to bring residents out of poverty. Council approved the grant application that will focus on single women households with children to remove barriers to employment and services. The initial grant application is a \$15,000 planning grant, which, if accepted, allows the group to apply for a \$300,000 implementation grant.

Robert Hutchins and other members from Barre Area Development showcased the "Barre Rock Solid" marketing initiative on December 11<sup>th</sup>. They attended the December 17<sup>th</sup> Council meeting seeking placement of an article for the Town Meeting Day ballot. There was discussion on the use of a Downtown Improvement District for the funding request to receive legal review. The request will come back before Council on January 2<sup>nd</sup> at a special meeting for consideration.

Planning Director Janet Shatney and the Planning Commission recommended the second amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance. This amendment was to change the zoning map for a portion of Ayers Street back to commercial use. The amendment will allow 802 Coffee to move their roasting and production operations to 17 Ayers Street, and will also allow 15 Ayers Street to continue its redevelopment as a respite house.

Due to John LePage's resignation from City Council, the City of Barre City held the Ward III Caucus at the Alumni Hall on Thursday, December 19th at 7:00 P.M. With a 10-9 vote, residents of Ward III elected Samn Stockwell to the seat, which will be filled until Town Meeting Day in March of 2020.

Council members, along with over 30 businesses in the City of Barre, participated in "Ugly Sweater Day". A challenge was offered up from Montpelier Alive to the Barre Partnership on participation. Executive Director Tracie Lewis from the Barre Partnership requested Council participation, which was gladly accepted.

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

- Paul Costello presented on behalf of the Vermont Council on Rural Development. They will be facilitating the Community Visit Program in the City of Barre in the Spring of 2020. There will be a meeting with City Leadership in January, followed by a Community Visit Day in February or March.
- Councilors were updated by City Assessor Joe Levesque on the Status of the Grand List. The Grand list is to increase by \$10 million. Mr. Levesque has hired a part-time assistant to help alleviate the backlog in current permit inspections.
- City Manager Steve Mackenzie presented the Firehouse Weathervane Appraisal by Skinner Appraisal Services. Council accepted the appraisal, which allows for the weathervane to be covered under the Vermont History Center insurance.
- Fred Duplessis from Sullivan and Power Co. presented on the FY19 Audit. The presentation of the final audit in December is the earliest it has been in over a decade and will allow for the report to be included in the City's Annual Report.

City Council approved several items including the following:

- Approval of Barre Sno Bees request for grooming the trail through the Cow Pasture
- Approval of Revisions to the Coin Drop Policy
- Ratification of the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Fire Fighters (IAFF)
- Approval of Resolution 2019-05 regarding a Commercial Cannabis System
- Approval of the Vermont History Center Weathervane Loan Agreement
- Approval of a Letter of Support for the CVSWM Rural Utilities Services Grant Application
- Approval of the sale of 3 Portland Street, 5 Second Street, and 38 Willey Street
- Approval of Revisions to the Cash Collection Handling Policy
- Approval of Revisions to the Capital Assets Policy
- Approval of Revisions to the Fixed Assets Policy

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

- City Council meetings are cancelled for December 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. There is a Special meeting on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, but the next Regular Meeting of City Council will be Tuesday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> Budget Workshop for City Council will be on January 4<sup>th</sup>.
- City Leadership will meet with Paul Costello and Jenna Koloski of VCRD on January 7<sup>th</sup> to start the Community Visit process.
- With a new Councilor on board, City Council will review ground rules, decorum, and review the FY20 priorities.

- Council asked boards, commissions and committees of the City to submit in-person or written quarterly reports on committee activities to stay better connected with their activities. The process for recruitment to these city bodies will begin again in 2020.
- Councilors will receive a presentation by Stephanie Quaranta on this year's Summer Camp Program on January 21<sup>st</sup>.
- City Council will continue review of City Ordinance and Policies. The Planning Commission and Planning Director Janet Shatney will also provide the City Plan for review.
- Manager Steve Mackenzie will be presenting RFPs for planning of the Public Works Campus and Citywide Reassessment.

I wish you all a safe and Happy New Year!

Lucas J. Herring  
Mayor, City of Barre