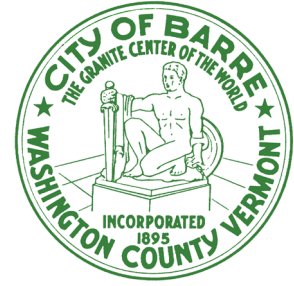


December 29th, 2020



Residents and Neighbors,

Following the surge in coronavirus cases in November, Barre City has seen a significant decrease in December. Although this is good news, we all need to continue efforts to stop the transmission as vaccines make their way to residents here and across the county. Please continue to follow the guidelines as set by the State of Vermont and the CDC.

Although Council was unable to hold its annual Dollar Drop, it was supplemented this year by a Brusa Trust allocation and a number of donations from local businesses. Businesses were also still able to participate in Ugly Sweater Day and residents bring light to their neighborhoods through the House Decorating Contest.

Many people turned out to Council for a discussion on opening of the B.O.R. for the season. With the Governor's current Executive Order, the start of Winter High School sports was postponed until at least the beginning of January, which prevents revenue from rentals to cover the \$6,500 monthly cost to operate. Members from Spaulding High School hockey and Barre Youth Sports provided options for families to rent the ice while remaining in compliance, which staff reviewed and put into effect.

Council received the FY20 Audit from Sullivan and Powers, which was a clean opinion with no compliance issues. It also showed that, despite the revenue losses from COVID, the City finished the year with a slight surplus. Conversations on the FY22 Budget continued with the Fire Department, Finance Department, Manager's Office, Clerk's Office and the Capital Equipment Plan. Council will receive the budget in its entirety for discussion and to warn for Town Meeting Day.

Discussion has started on a speed enforcement program. The successful implementation of speed bumps and tables in neighborhoods cannot be done on State highways. The Manager identified target areas for enhanced signage, use of the speed cart, and additional enforcement. Enforcement items will be discussed further in January.

The Manager provided a response to the Social Media Policy from review with a work group. Several suggestions were presented and will be incorporated for discussion in January. Council established another work group for information technology items to address current software implementations and need for support for City staff.

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

- Planning Director Janet Shatney reviewed the draft RFP and timeline for the city-wide reassessment, which is intended for completion with the April 1st, 2023 grand list.
- Mark Tatro from the Barre Lions Club spoke about their tree sales this year, which helps to fund the vision-related programs through the organization.
- City Manager Steve Mackenzie updated Council on the parcel sale process, as an appraisal has not yet been received for land in East Montpelier.
- Cody Morrison from Barre Area Development reviewed the current Barre Rock Solid marking efforts and noted that there would not be a funding request for Town Meeting Day.

Other items approved by Council include the following:

- The City accept the Barre Opera House donation a number of balcony seats, which a majority of the installations occurred this month.
- Approved placement of Good Samaritan Haven property tax exemption on the 2021 Annual Town Meeting warning
- Acceptance of Stowe Street as a Municipal Street
- Approved Hazard Mitigation Planning Grant Local Share Commitment
- Authorized to submit VOREC Grant Application
- Approved Evident of Community Support Certificate for the 51 Church Street Project
- Approved Errors and Omissions for 81 N. Main Street and 61 Brook Street.
- Appointment of Amanda Gustin to the Planning Commission
- Appointment of Heather Runk, John LePage, Amy Dickinson, Heather Pipino, and Kerri Fredette to the Animal & Fowl Task Force.

Upcoming items in January include the following:

- Council is soliciting public submissions of pictures for the FY20 Annual Report
- Washington County Mental Health Services Ballot Funding Request
- Review of the FY21 City Priorities
- Award the DPW Campus Upgrade Contract
- First Responder Wellness and COVID response update
- Discussion on proposed Charter changes
- Approve the Town Meeting Day Warning

Have a safe and happy New Year!

Lucas J. Herring
Mayor, City of Barre