



Hello Everyone

Short Friday Packet this week

Merry Christmas to you all

Have a safe and wonderful holiday

Jody

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, December 29, 2020, 7:00pm
City Council Chambers

The Barre City Council Meeting
Scheduled for Tuesday, December 29, 2020 has been cancelled.
The next regular scheduled meeting will be Tuesday, January 5, 2021.

Steven E. Mackenzie, P.E., City Manager

OTHER MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Until further notice, Committee and Board meetings may be held only via video (virtual) platforms. **Check the City Web Site for Meeting Warnings, Agendas and log-in instructions.**

Friday, January 1st
New Year's Day, City Hall Closed

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held December 22, 2020**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order on video conference by Mayor Lucas Herring at 7:00 PM. In attendance, participating on video or phone, were: From Ward I, Councilors Jake Hemmerick and John Steinman; from Ward II, Councilors Michael Boutin and Teddy Waszazak; and from Ward III, Councilors Rich Morey and Ericka Reil. City staff members present via video or phone were City Manager Steven Mackenzie, Buildings and Community Services assistant director Stephanie Quaranta, City Assessor Joe LeVesque, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: NONE

Adjustments to the Agenda: Discussion on rolling appointments for board vacancies is deferred.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

Council approved the following consent agenda items on motion of Councilor Steinman, seconded by Councilor Reil. **Motion carried on roll call vote, with all voting in favor.**

- Minutes of the following meetings:
 - Regular Meeting of December 15, 2020
- City Warrants as presented:
 - Approval of Week 2020-51, dated December 23, 2020:
 - Accounts Payable: \$210,544.39
 - Payroll (gross): \$134,826.20
- 2020 Licenses & Permits: NONE

The City Clerk/Treasurer Report –

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- Water/sewer bills are due by the end of December.
- City Hall is closed to the public, but staff is working with customers via email and phone. Clerk's office will be closed December 24th and 25th and again January 1st for the holidays.
- Working on TIF state audit and TIF annual report.

Liquor Control – NONE

City Manager's Report - Manager Mackenzie reported on the following:

- Interim operations for the BOR rink have been put in place, with people able to reserve ice time by the hour, with restrictions in place. Buildings and Community Services assistant director Stephanie Quaranta said an online reservation platform has been added to the website, and online payments are being accepted. Governor Scott loosened the restrictions on youth sports, and the new restrictions will be put in place at the BOR as of the first of January. Ms. Quaranta said Barre Youth Sports will begin using the rink at that time. Spaulding High School and Northfield High School have also reserved dates, but may not start until later in January.
- The pool refurbishment project end of the season meeting was last week. The project is 85-90% complete, and the contractor expects to be on schedule to have the work completed before next summer's scheduled re-opening.
- Recent review of the FY21 budget shows expenses running a bit behind at this point in the year.

The Manager noted the winter solstice was yesterday, so days are now getting longer. He wished everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

Visitors and Communications –

Barre town resident Ginger Cloud said she owns a business in Barre City, and is grateful to see the Black Lives Matter flag flying. She said it will be sad to see it come down, and that the American flag already represents the police so there's no need to fly the thin blue line flag in January. She asked the Council to reconsider.

Montpelier resident Mary Mullaney said she is a friend of Ms. Cloud's, and the BLM flag creates racial harmony, while the thin blue line flag is sometimes equated with white supremacy.

Old Business –

A) Parcel Sales Process Updates: Determine Minimum Bid Amounts.

Manager Mackenzie said he is waiting for the appraisal to be completed on the East Montpelier land. He hopes to have the appraisal information in January and will bring this agenda item back at that time.

New Business –

A) Animal & Fowl Task Force Appointments:

- i. **Heather Runk**
- ii. **John LePage**
- iii. **Amy Dickinson**
- iv. **Heather Pipino**
- v. **Kerri Fredette**

Council interviewed those listed above who have expressed an interest in serving on the task force, with the exception of Mr. LePage, who wasn't in attendance. Mayor Herring said there are letters of interest from all potential appointees, and Council will consider the appointments in executive session.

B) Approve Public Hearings for Proposed Charter Changes to be Considered at March 2, 2021 Annual Town Meeting.

Clerk Dawes reviewed her memo about charter change timelines and the items being proposed by the Charter Change Review Group:

1. Removal of the first constable position,
2. Removal of the city engineer position,
3. Adding language that restricts the City to flying the US, State, City and MIA/POW flags.

The group will continue to revise language and bring it up for Council consideration in mid-January.

Council approved warning the 1st public hearing for January 26, 2021 at 7:15 PM, and the 2nd public hearing for February 2, 2021 at 7:15 PM on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Steinman. **Motion carried on roll call vote, with all voting in favor.**

C) BADC FY22 Stipend Funding Request.

Barre Area Development Corporation executive director Cody Morrison gave a Powerpoint presentation on recent and ongoing initiatives including working with the Barre Partnership, meeting community members, promoting COVID-related business recovery programs, business recruitment and retention, marketing, and grants. Mr. Morrison reviewed the current Barre Rock Solid marketing efforts. He said BADC is requesting \$51,744 in operating support in the Barre City FY22 budget, and there will be no request for additional funding support this coming year for Barre Rock Solid.

There was discussion on sources for marketing data, housing and programs for housing ownership, diversity in programs and advertising, and the numbers of businesses that have opened and closed during the pandemic. Manager Mackenzie said the requested amount for operating support is what's in the current FY22 budget draft.

D) Final Errors & Omissions Consideration Tax Year 2020.

City Assessor Joe LeVesque said there are two errors & omissions for Council consideration this evening. The first is 81 N. Main Street. Mr. LeVesque said the property was previously owned by Gifford Medical Center and was tax exempt. He inadvertently took the exemption off the property for the current tax year, and it should have been left to carry as part of Gifford's appraisal. He recommended setting the exempt portion at \$250,000 out of the full assessment of \$543,200. Clerk Dawes said the property was sold in September 2020, but was owned by Gifford as of April 1, 2020, and therefore the tax exempt status should continue for this year. The Clerk said taxable status and assessments are based on ownership as of April 1st each year. The Clerk noted the tax exemption for last year was \$467,200, with \$76,000 of the assessment being taxable.

Council approved the errors & omissions for 81 N. Main Street, setting the full assessment for tax year 2020 at \$543,200 with \$467,200 tax exempt and \$76,000 taxable on motion of Councilor Wasazazak, seconded by Councilor Boutin. **Motion carried on roll call vote, with all voting in favor.**

Mr. LeVesque said the next property for consideration is 61 Brook Street. He said he increased the assessment this year from \$45,400 to \$96,300 and sent a notice of change. The owners did not respond to the notice of change in a timely manner due to a death in the family. Mr. LeVesque said the owners contacted him to let him know no improvements have been made at the property, so the increase isn't warranted. Mr. LeVesque said he made an error in increasing the assessment.

Council approved the errors & omissions for 61 Brook Street, setting the assessment for tax year 2020 at \$45,400 on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Reil. **Motion carried on roll call vote, with Councilor Hemmerick abstaining.**

E) Review of Updated FY22 Budget and Ballot Proposals.

Manager Mackenzie said he is working on draft #2 of the FY22 budget, and will have a copy to send to Councilors in the next week. Updates are being incorporated related to health insurance costs, fuel price increases, and notification from Spaulding High School that they won't be retaining the school resource officer next year. The Manager said Barre Area Development and Central Vermont Public Safety Authority won't be placing funding requests on the ballot. The City recently participated in discussions with the state about the wastewater treatment plant digester upgrade project, and may qualify for a 40% disadvantaged community grant. A funding request may be placed on the ballot as a place holder to cover increases in project costs since voters approved a \$900,000 bond in 2018. Should the City receive the grant it would offset the increased costs.

F) Social Media Policy Revisions re: Facebook Page Protocols.

Manager Mackenzie said the City, Police Department and Recreation have Facebook pages, as do the Energy, Cow Pasture and Dog Park committees. There was discussion on whether FB pages should be sanctioned by the Council or administration, the need for disclaimers, and making all FB pages ADA compliant. The draft policy revisions will come to Council in the near future.

G) Rolling appointments of Board Vacancies.

This item is deferred.

H) Discussion on FY20 Annual Report Photo(s).

Council supported the idea of soliciting public submissions for photos for the annual report. Submissions will be due by January 5th.

Round Table –

Councilors wished everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

Mayor Herring said Governor Scott relaxed some of the holiday restrictions, allowing people from two close households to gather. The Mayor thanked the community for being vigilant with COVID restrictions, helping bend the curve in our area. He reviewed an email he received, thanking the Public Works department, saying one of the sidewalk plow operators cleared the end of their driveway.

Executive Session –

Councilor Boutin made the motion to find that premature general public knowledge of personnel to be discussed would clearly place the City of Barre at a substantial disadvantage should the discussion be public. The motion was seconded by Councilor Steinman. Mayor Herring said the discussion would focus on appointments to the Animal & Fowl Task Force and the City Assessor **Motion carried on roll call, with Councilor Steinman abstaining.**

Council went into executive session at 9:27 PM to discuss personnel under the provisions of 1 VSA § 313 on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Reil. Manager Mackenzie was invited into the executive session. **Motion carried on roll call, with all voting in favor.**

Council came out of executive session at 9:48 PM on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried on roll call, with all voting in favor.**

Council appointed the following people to the Animals & Fowl Task Force on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried on roll call vote, with all voting in favor.**

Task Force Appointees:

- **Heather Runk**
- **John LePage**
- **Amy Dickinson**
- **Heather Pipino**
- **Kerri Fredette**

Mayor Herring said the Council will look into establishing a volunteer application process going forward.

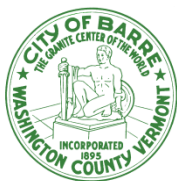
Mayor Herring said the Council directed Manager Mackenzie to look into the position of the Assessor, dealing with the issue internally. Councilor Waszazak said the Council takes the integrity of the grand list extremely seriously.

The Council meeting was adjourned by Mayor Herring at 9:52 PM.

There is no audio recording of this meeting. The meeting was recorded by the video conference platform.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk



• *City of Barre, Vermont*

“Granite Center of the World”

Steven E. Mackenzie, P.E.
City Manager

6 N. Main St., Suite 2
Barre, VT 05641
Telephone (802) 476-0240
FAX (802) 476-0264
manager@barrecity.org

To: Mayor Lucas Herring and the Barre City Council

From: Steven Mackenzie, P.E., City Manager

Re: Department Head Reports

Report Date: December 24, 2020

In order to keep you informed of the Department activities of the office, I'm forwarding this report of activities of the City staff for the previous Friday - Thursday. If there are any additional questions please do not hesitate to ask.

1. CLERK/TREASURER'S OFFICE:

- City Hall remains closed to the public. The land records vault in the Clerk's office is open by appointment on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.
- The Clerk's office and Delinquent Collections office will be closed Thursday and Friday, December 24th and 25th. The offices will be closed again on Friday, January 1st.
- Working with the Buildings and Community Services Department on a disinterment request to remove remains buried at Hope Cemetery for transfer to another cemetery in the area. Such a disinterment requires written authorization from all surviving family members. We're waiting on one last authorization form to be received. Not sure this will get done before the receiving cemetery closes for the winter season.
- Water/sewer bills were mailed on Monday, November 30th, and are due by December 31st.
- Annual license renewal applications will continue to come to the Council for approval through the rest of December and into January. City policy is a license is considered still valid even if not approved yet, as long as the application is received by December 31st. After that date, the application fee goes up by 50%.
- Had our third meeting December 22nd with state auditor's office re. our TIF audit. Next meeting will be with the Manager to discuss the procurement policy, and processes around bidding jobs and issuing contracts. Working on pulling copies of invoices and contracts for their next document request.
- Preparing for dog licenses to go on sale January 4th.

2. BUILDING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES:

- On Monday, I met with a family regarding lot assignments for their family lot at Hope Cemetery.
- On Tuesday, I met with the technicians from New England Air to resolve the leaking radiator problem at City Hall. As the radiator was not needed in the area under the Opera House stage, we removed the unit and capped the lines.
- Also on Tuesday, we had a fire alarm activation at City Hall due to sheetrock dust that had blown into a smoke detector in the Opera House. The Fire Department was dispatched and we were able to reset the alarm. We had to wait until the next day to clear the trouble from the system and reset the elevator recall and the smoke detector.
- On Wednesday, I met with the Finance Director to set budget figures for the heating fuel line items for the City buildings maintained by the BCS department.
- Also on Wednesday, I assisted Donny with locating a lot in Hope in preparation of a burial to be held next week.
- On Thursday, I received an update on the Opera House renovation project.
- We had two full burials at Hope during the week.
- The Facilities crew managed the “small group” rentals at the BOR during the week. We also started work on some patching of walls in Alumni Hall to prepare for painting.
- Merry Christmas!!!

2a. RECREATION:

- Time was spent with the B.O.R. schedule and the COVID reservations. The Governor’s return in part to youth sports released. Information was sent out to BYSA and Figure Skating with the criteria for opening up as well as their schedules. We will honor the COVID reservations scheduled and will open to youth sports January 2, 2021.
- This was a shorter week with vacation time taken.
- Provided a City Council update.

3. DEPARTMENT OF PERMITTING, PLANNING AND ASSESSING:

Planning – Janet:

- Assisted on Monday afternoon the now former Assessor with grammatical revisions to his E&O memo for city council’s consideration Tuesday evening;
- Received, reviewed and obtained signature on the FEMA public assistance grant award in the amount of \$23,441.36;
- Continue to work with Clerk on any TIF related calls and needs, and have 2 calls established for the first week of January already;
- Continue to submit covid expenses for the LGER grant and wait for that revised grant award;

- Assisted in the termination of the Assessor on Wednesday afternoon;
- Began transitioning the assessor email, and telephone with IT assistance to me so that service can remain somewhat fluid;
- Fixed the City website PPA page to remove named Assessor;
- Creating a plan to get the assessing side of the office cleaned and organized so that I can move in to that physical space and move forward there;
- Disseminated the CIP working draft to all department heads to obtain capital projects and costs for the next 10 years;
- Reviewed comments from the Manager regarding the draft city-wide Reappraisal RFP;
- Working on a glossary that is for planning terms, terms and acronyms out of the city plan, etc. to post on the Planning Commission website as an informational piece;
- Assist fellow staff with information, help, etc.;
- Return phone calls, emails.

Permitting – Heather:

- Issued 3 Electrical Permits;
- Sent out 2 new rental registration letters and invoices;
- Continued the archiving effort of old zoning/building files;
- Answered all phone messages, emails, filed, picked up paperwork from the office twice weekly, and updated Zoning & Fire Dept. databases.

Assessing Clerk – Kathryn:

- On vacation this week.

3a. CONTRACT ASSESSOR:

- Contractor did not provide report.

4. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS:

- Department Head will send report with the warrants on Monday.

5. FINANCE DIRECTOR:

- Met with Manager Mackenzie and HR Director Taft to update FY22 Police personnel budget for draft #2 regarding SRO/COPS Grant
- Created recon for FY22 budget changes between draft #1 & draft #2
- Attended virtual TIF Audit Q&A with the state auditor office personnel
- Several discussions with PPIS Director Shatney regarding FEMA Grant
- Off – Christmas Eve & Day

6. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY:

6a. FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Weekly Fire Activity Report to follow this memo.

6b. POLICE

Police Media Logs to follow this memo.