

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council  
Held November 22, 2016**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order by Mayor Thomas Lauzon at 7:00 PM at Barre City Hall. In attendance were: From Ward I, Councilor Jeffrey Tuper-Giles; from Ward II, Councilor Michael Smith; and from Ward III, Councilor Lucas Herring. Also present were City Manager Steven Mackenzie and Clerk/Treasurer Carolyn Dawes.

**Absent:** From Ward I, Councilor Paul Poirier; from Ward II, Councilor Michael Boutin; and from Ward III, Councilor Anita Chadderton.

**Adjustments to the Agenda:** Mayor Lauzon said there would be adjustments to the agenda.

**Approval of Consent Agenda:**

Council approved the following consent agenda items on motion of Councilor Tuper-Giles, seconded by Councilor Smith. **Motion carried.**

- Minutes of the following meetings:
  - Regular meeting on November 15, 2016
- City Warrants as presented:
  - Approval of Week 2016-47:
    - Accounts Payable: \$213,682.51
    - Payroll (gross): \$107,986.62
- Licenses & Permits: NONE

**The City Clerk/Treasurer Report** – Clerk Dawes reported on the following:

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter property tax delinquency rate finished at 4.7%.
- Preparing for Washington County senate race recount from the November General Election. The recount is scheduled to begin on December 13<sup>th</sup>.
- Annual renewals for business and animal licenses were mailed out last week. All licenses expire December 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Approval of Building Permits** – Council approved the following building permits on motion of Councilor Herring, seconded by Councilor Tuper-Giles. **Motion carried.**

<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Address</u>
The Reynolds House	102 S. Main Street
Metro 51 LLC	51 Prospect Street

**Liquor Control** – NONE

**City Manager's Report** – Manager Mackenzie reported on the following:

- Conducted a security audit of City Hall. Will be looking to implement measures to ensure the safety and security of staff.
- Traffic Advisory Committee meeting December 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Visitors & Communications** – NONE

**Old Business** –

**A) Water Bill Appeal Policy Recommendation/Approval.**

Manager Mackenzie said the staff recommends establishing an appeal route through the Board of Abatement (BOA), which is what several other communities do. Water/sewer billing clerk Clint Smith

said he polled several similarly sized municipalities, and they use the BOA route. Mr. Smith recommended Council adopt the same practice. Clerk Dawes said there is nothing definitive in statute that addresses appeals for high water bills. She said supports moving to the BOA model, and recommended Council seek a charter change to codify the process and possibly expand the statutory abatement criteria to include water-specific criteria.

There was discussion about protecting water/sewer customers from one-time incidents, equipment failure, malicious acts and catastrophic expense; setting a threshold for appeal requests; and limiting the number of times a customer can request an appeal. Council voiced support for using the BOA for water bill appeals. Manager Mackenzie said draft language would come back to Council in two weeks. Mayor Lauzon said Council will use the draft language and criteria to address the two appeal requests awaiting hearings.

**B) Greater Barre Community Justice Board Member Appointment.**

Manager Mackenzie said Justice Center bylaws require Council to ratify the members of the board. The bylaws call for 5 – 11 board members, and there are currently four. The Manager said the bylaws call for the Council to appoint two members, and he will make sure to include those vacancy notices in the weekly list of committee openings.

Council ratified the four current members of the Justice Center board on motion of Councilor Tuper-Giles, seconded by Councilor Herring. **Motion carried.**

Mayor Lauzon said there should be continued discussion on the role and value of the Community Justice Center, and how they can function with only four board members. The Mayor said he will reach out to the executive director.

**New Business -**

**Other) Reconsideration of last week's vote to cede authority for dispatch services to the Central Vermont Public Safety Authority.**

Mayor Lauzon reviewed his memo requesting a vote to reconsider last week's Council approval to cede dispatch services. The Mayor said he was unable to attend last week's meeting, and has questions he would like addressed before the City cedes dispatch services to CVPSA. He said he has made arrangements for a joint Barre City Council/Montpelier City Council meeting on December 7<sup>th</sup>, at which time CVPSA will make a presentation on assuming dispatch services from both member communities.

There was discussion about options for opting out of dispatch services and/or out of CVPSA; market potential for new dispatch customers; potential savings from managing overtime; backup in cases of emergency; and sharing staff. Mayor Lauzon said he would put his questions in writing and present them to CVPSA in advance of the December 7<sup>th</sup> joint meeting. Councilor Smith said the Council had agreed on moving forward with ceding dispatch services at last week's meeting.

Councilor Herring made the motion to reconsider last week's approval in ceding dispatch services to CVPSA. The motion was seconded by Councilor Tuper-Giles. **Motion failed with Mayor Lauzon and Councilors Herring and Tuper-Giles voting in favor, and Councilor Smith voting against.**

Mayor Lauzon said he will put withdrawal from CVPSA on next week's Council agenda.

**A) Authorization to Execute Old PD Programming & Conceptual Design Agreement with Black River Design.**

Manager Mackenzie reviewed the scope of work to create the conceptual designs for renovations to the old police department section of City Hall. The Manager said the plans will include the possible

relocation of the server room to that area, and the \$8,600 cost for the conceptual plans will be split evenly between the water fund, sewer fund and general fund. He said the next step would be to develop construction and bid documents, and then identify funding for the construction phase. Councilors suggested considering changes to the council chambers at the same time.

Council authorized the Manager to sign the agreement with Black River Design, to include consideration of the council chambers, on motion of Councilor Herring, seconded by Councilor Smith. **Motion carried.**

**B) General Discussion – FY 18 Budget Preparation.**

Mayor Lauzon said there will be a Council budget work session on Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. The Mayor said he and Councilor Herring have been discussing possible changes in the way the City handles economic development, which may change the appropriations for Barre Partnership and Barre Area Development Corporation. He said there will also need to be discussions on capital and paving needs, and Local Option Taxes. Manager Mackenzie said he has asked the Council, staff and Budget Committee to identify programmatic changes, as the City cannot continue to provide the current level of services without an unrealistic tax increase. He said his first draft of the FY18 budget will be presented to the Budget Committee at its November 30<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Round Table –**

Mayor Lauzon said Council will hold its annual dollar drop on Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>. There will be a joint meeting with Montpelier City Council on December 7<sup>th</sup>, and that meeting will be in lieu of the regularly scheduled meeting on December 6<sup>th</sup>.

Councilor Herring said the American Legion is offering a free Thanksgiving luncheon on Thursday. The public is welcome to make donations, volunteer to help or stop by to eat.

Councilor Tuper-Giles wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Mayor Lauzon said he issued a mayoral proclamation naming this Saturday Small Business Saturday, and encouraged people to shop with the downtown merchants. The Mayor said the holiday parade starts Saturday at 5:15 PM and ends at City Hall Park with the traditional tree lighting. He wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Mayor Lauzon said he was disappointed in Councilor Smith's vote on the reconsideration of ceding dispatch services to CVPAS, and he doesn't understand the harm in waiting two weeks for the joint meeting. He said Council will consider opting out of CVPSA at next week's meeting and again at the joint meeting on December 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Executive Session – NONE**

The Council meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM on motion of Councilor Tuper-Giles, seconded by Councilor Herring. **Motion carried.**

An audio recording of this meeting is available from the City Clerk.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk