

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held December 19, 2017**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order by Acting Mayor Lucas Herring at 7:00 PM at Barre City Hall. In attendance were: From Ward I, Councilor Sue Higby; from Ward II, Councilors Brandon Batham and Michael Boutin; and from Ward III, Councilors Lucas Herring and John LePage. Also present were City Manager Steven Mackenzie and Clerk/Treasurer Carolyn Dawes.

Absent: From Ward I, Councilor Jeffrey Tuper-Giles. Mayor Thomas Lauzon arrived at 8:25 PM.

Adjustments to the Agenda: Acting Mayor Herring said Council will be taking up a request from the Barre Town Thunder Chickens to use City property to access the VAST trail system. Manager Mackenzie said he will be requesting an executive session to discuss litigation.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

Council approved the following consent agenda items on motion of Councilor Batham, seconded by Councilor LePage. **Motion carried.**

- Minutes of the following meetings:
 - Regular meeting on December 5, 2017
- City Warrants as presented:
 - Approval of Week 2017-51:
 - Accounts Payable: \$193,797.68
 - Payroll (gross): \$114,718.21
- 2018 Licenses & Permits –
 - Animal Licenses:
 - Mark Atkins, 21 Camp St., 2 golden partridge hens
 - Entertainment Licenses:
 - Barre Elks Club, 10 Jefferson St
 - Ladder 1 Grill, 12 S. Main St
 - VT Granite Museum, 7 Jones Bros Way
 - Barre Opera House, 6 N. Main St
 - Mulligan's Irish Pub, 9 Maple Ave
 - Quarry Kitchen & Spirits, 210 N. Main St
 - American Legion, 320 N. Main St
 - Food Establishment Licenses:
 - American Legion, 320 N. Main St
 - Morse Block Deli, 260 N. Main St
 - Quarry Kitchen & Spirits, 210 N. Main St
 - Mulligan's Irish Pub, 9 Maple Ave
 - Food Takeout Licenses:
 - Central VT Career Center, bakeshop at Sidewalk Village
 - Pool Table/Video Machine Licenses:
 - American Legion, 320 N. Main St
 - Taxi Cab Driver Licenses:
 - Dean Grondin, Green Cab
 - Kathleen Morrow, Green Cab
 - Brent Gould, Green Cab
 - James Kephart, Green Cab
 - Gary Clark, Green Cab
 - Alice Seavey-Windsinger, Green Cab
 - Dennis Seavey-Windsinger, Green Cab
 - Jennifer Overton, Green Cab

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

- Payment on water & sewer bills is due by January 2, 2018.
- City Hall will be closed on Christmas Day, December 25th, and New Year's Day, January 1st.
- Information is posted on the City website regarding offices up for election at the Annual Town Meeting on March 6, 2018.

Approval of Building Permits – NONE

Liquor Control – Council approved a temporary outside consumption permit for the Barre Elks Club for their annual New Year's Day event on motion of Councilor Batham, seconded by Councilor Higby.
Motion carried with Councilor Boutin abstaining.

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

- The new auditorium floor covering has arrived and was used over the weekend for the Breakfast with Santa event.
- The civic center digital sign went live today.

The Manager said he was looking for informal Council approval to purchase a used police cruiser to replace the one totaled recently. He said official authorization will be on next week's agenda. There were no objections from the Council.

Visitors and Communications –

David Rouleau of the Barre Town Thunder Chickens requested landowner permission for snowmobiles to use a portion of City property near Rotary Park for accessing the VAST trails. Council granted the request and authorized the Manager to sign on behalf of the City on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Batham. **Motion carried.**

Old Business – NONE

New Business –

A) Reappointment of City Health Officers.

Council reappointed Fire Captain Matt Cetin as City Health Officer and Building Inspector Robbie Strachan as Deputy Health Officer on motion of Councilor Batham, seconded by Councilor Boutin.
Motion carried.

B) Update on the Aldrich Library.

Library executive director Sarah Costa, board president Nancy Pope and board member Pam Wilson gave a Powerpoint presentation on the library, highlighting usage, programs and financials. Councilor Batham said for the record he is the Council-appointed liaison to the library board. Ms. Costa said for fiscal year 2017 the library saw 130,000 visits, circulated 84,000 books, and increased Wifi usage by 60%. The number of programs and program attendance has increased, with 5,500 kids participating; an increase of 69% over the previous year. Teen participation is up 122%. 2018 will mark the 20th anniversary of the Authors at the Aldrich program.

The FY17 operating income was \$606,616, with 32.5% coming from Barre City and 29.7% coming from Barre Town. Expenses for FY17 were \$586,502. The library received a large portion of the community Promise Grant, which will allow renovations to the children's room. There was discussion on the breakdown of individual and business fundraising, issues of harassment by those hanging out around the library to access the Wifi, ongoing development of programs to encourage people to come inside instead of loitering, and the Barre City and Barre Town budget appropriations in support of the library. Manager Mackenzie said his draft FY19 budget includes a 2% increase.

C) Overview of the 2018 Capital Equipment Plan.

Public Works Director Bill Ahearn said the City owns \$8 million in rolling stock. After compiling the list of equipment, reviewing conditions and useful life expectancies, he said \$700,000 is needed on an annual basis to maintain and replace for usual and customary life expectancies. If items are cascaded from one department to another, that annual dollar amount drops to \$460,000. Those items on the list with negative end of life numbers are costing the City more to maintain than they are worth. The plan allows the Manager and Council to identify capital needs as they arise.

D) Presentation of FY19 Budget Proposal.

Manager Mackenzie presented his draft FY19 budget, as prepared by the budget committee and him. The draft budget includes an increase of just over 2%. The tax rate projection sheet includes several additional items that would be voted on separately, including streets, Central Vermont Public Safety Authority, and capital needs. The projected tax rate would increase by 3.17% or 5.72 cents.

Abbott Avenue resident and budget committee member Paul Poirier said he cannot support a budget with a nearly 6 cent increase to the tax rate. Mr. Poirier said he is concerned about the impact of the congressional tax bill on health insurance coverage costs, which could add a significant unbudgeted expense. He said he supports asking the voters again to approve a local options tax to provide additional revenue, and that department heads should be told to find 1% reductions in their budgets.

Mayor Lauzon arrived at this point in the meeting at 8:25 PM, and assumed the chair.

There was discussion on reducing overtime expenses, staffing with regards to grants management, how long before the City replaces the DPW garage, and continued funding for the Central Vermont Public Safety Authority.

Mayor Lauzon said the Council will schedule some budget work sessions in the near future.

E) Presentation of “Final” Infrastructure Projects Master Plan.

Manager Mackenzie called Council’s attention to the infrastructure matrix included in their packets.

F) Approve New Parking Policy.

Clerk Dawes reviewed the draft revisions to the parking permit policy, and said the Parking Committee is recommending approval. The Clerk said the main revisions are around permits provided at no charge to City employees, school finance office staff, and a few other people who regularly visit City Hall.

Council approved the revised parking permit policy as presented on motion of Councilor Batham, seconded by Councilor Herring. **Motion carried.**

Round Table –

Councilor Higby reminded everyone to patronize local merchants. She also reminded people to be cautious about winter safety; know where your vents are, clean your chimney, keep storm drains clear, and use walking staffs or cleats.

Councilor Herring said Council had received a resignation letter from Development Review Board chair Pete Fournier. He thanked Mr. Fournier for his fifty-four years of public service as a government employee and volunteer. He reminded everyone of the community Christmas dinner on Christmas Day.

Councilor LePage encouraged people to help their fellow citizens by shoveling snow.

Councilor Batham said he attended today’s Barre City staff holiday luncheon, and he thanked the staff for

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their service to the community. He said he will be out of town for the next two meetings, but will participate by phone.

Mayor Lauzon thanked those who donated to the Christmas for Kids program.

Executive Session –

Councilor Herring made the motion to find that premature general public knowledge of the litigation and personnel issues 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 Batham. **Motion carried.**

Council went into executive session at 9:00 PM to discuss litigation and personnel issues under the provisions of 1 VSA sec. 313 on motion of Councilor Batham, seconded by Councilor Herring. **Motion carried.**

Manager Mackenzie was invited into the executive session.

Council came out of executive session at 9:16 PM on motion of Councilor Herring, seconded by Councilor Batham. **Motion carried.**

No action was taken.

The Council meeting adjourned at 9:17 PM on motion of Councilor Batham, 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