



March 29th, 2019:

Residents and Neighbors,

I want to first thank all the voters that came out and supported the items that the City placed on the Town Meeting Day warning. These ballot measures, including our bonds, are what is needed to keep the City moving in the right direction. Now that the FY20 budget is approved, City staff are working on the plans to have work with streets, water and sewer, and other projects being soon after July 1st of this year.

We welcomed two new Councilors after Town meeting Day. John Steinman will be representing voters from Ward 1 and Teddy Waszazak will be from Ward 2. Rich Morey retained his seat from Ward 3. The new Council has met and reviewed the organizational structure and have meetings are scheduled and held. New councilors have also received the City's onboarding documentations and are being introduced to the staff.

The City Manager presented several properties around the City, as well as property owned outside the City, that may have potential for sale. Council voted on an RFP process to address 5 Second Street in a similar fashion as the Wheelock House and contract with a realtor for the sale of other properties. We should know if there are any interested parties in these parcels in the FY20 budget year.

On March 12th, Council took part in recognition for an extraordinary response by City Police, Fire and EMS staff. Deputy Chief Brent led the discussion, which included comments from Diane Thompson who was saved during the event, when responding to a neighbor's call. She was given chest compressions, there was use of a portable defibrillator, and then she was transported to CVMC where she recovered and since returned to Barre City.

On March 23rd, DPW Director Bill Ahearn and I held a "Coffee with the Mayor and DPW Director" event as Espresso Bueno. Residents stopped by and discussed issues such as plowing, areas where snow is piled during the winter months, repairing of streets through a "box-cut" technique, and potholes located throughout the City. Following the discussion was the City's Volunteer Recognition Luncheon for those volunteering on one of the many committees, boards and commissions on behalf of the City of Barre.

I was able to attend the Central Vermont Medical Center Community Town Hall on March 26th. This forum gave an overview of changes as the primary hospital serving Barre City in areas such as Population Health, Community Health Needs Assessment, Patient- and Family-Centered Care, and Workforce Development. CVMC will be holding a follow up town hall in the Fall.

Council voted to take part in both Earth Hour on March 30th at 8:30pm and to join the National Mayor's Challenge for Water Conservation. Both efforts are geared to create awareness of our individual usage of natural resources. These efforts will also continue with a scrap metal recycle day in late April, followed by Green Up Day on May 4th.

The Neighborhood Watch Program has taken off throughout the City. 18 different locations have participated in organizational meetings to date, most recently in the River Street and Lower Hill Street areas. This will continue in April with Merchant Street and Currier Park. If you are interested in this program, please feel free to reach out and we can put you in touch with a current group or help to set up a meeting in your area of the City.

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

- Consultant John Hickock presented on the progress with Barre City pool renovations. An Agency of Transportation grant was sought for and received to support the project.
- Council was introduced to the Barre Lions Club by four of their current members (Theken, Plante, Livendale, and Hinrichsen). I was also able to present them with a proclamation noting their 80 years of service to the City of Barre.
- Planning Director Janet Shatney presented the draft Vacant Building Ordinance, which a second meeting was held to discuss feedback from the public.
- Councilor Tuper-Giles discussed the need for increased signage for no smoking in city parks and to help with enforcement of current ordinances.
- As part of team building with the new Council, I provided a mayoral Proclamation for the 10th Anniversary of Pi Day and brought 2 pies from Delicate Decadence to share at the meeting.

City Council approved several items including the following:

- Council re-assignment members to Charter, Ordinance and Policy workgroups based on the reforming of the Council from Town Meeting Day.
- Approval for Energy Plan Public Engagement Consultant RFP (Planning Director)
- Approval of Barre City Ward Meetings to occur in June. Each Ward will also have a Facebook page for discussions.
- Council agreed to cancelling the first Tuesday in June, July and August, which was also done last year.

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

- Council began discussion on the Social Media Policy and the Food Vendor Policy. Both should be addressed within the next month. Additionally, Council will sign acknowledgement forms for Social Media, Email, and Conflict of Interest Policies.
- The City Clerk warned the pending changes to the Unified Zoning Ordinance. The first reading is scheduled for April 2nd and a second reading will be scheduled pending those discussions.
- The Miscellaneous and several other ordinances are being reviewed, which will be brought before Council over the next several months.
- There will be upcoming presentations to Council on the Summer Street Mural Project, Vermont Historical Society, the Governor's Opioid Council, Barre Partnership, Barre Area Development, the Sound the Alarm event through the American Red Cross, American Legion Baseball, and Relay for Life.
- The City will begin its recruitment process for current committees, commissions, and boards, as well as discuss if there is a need for any additional bodies of the City needed. There are a few appointments that occur "off-cycle", like with the CV Fiber Board and to the Aldrich Public Library, which are currently in recruitment.

- The “Safe Routes for All” group will have its Annual Meeting at the Vermont Granite Museum on Thursday, April 11th from 9am to 4pm. This group has been working with the city staff to improve walkability throughout the City.

Lucas J. Herring
Mayor, City of Barre