

**Special Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held July 27, 2021**

The Special Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in person and via video platform by Mayor Lucas Herring at 6:00 PM at Barre City Hall. In attendance were: From Ward I, Councilors Emel Cambel and Jake Hemmerick; from Ward II, Councilors Michael Boutin and Teddy Waszazak; and from Ward III, Councilor Ericka Reil. City staff members present were Human Resources Director/Acting City Manager Rikk Taft, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: From Ward III, Councilor Samn Stockwell.

Adjustments to the Agenda: NONE

Visitors and Communications – NONE

Executive Session –

Councilor Boutin made the motion to find that premature general knowledge of contracts and 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 Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

Council went into executive session at 6:01 PM to discuss contracts and personnel under the provisions of 1 VSA sec. 313 on motion of Councilor Cambel, seconded by Councilor Boutin. **Motion carried.**

Clerk Dawes was invited into the contracts portion of the executive session.

Clerk Dawes left the executive session at 6:24 PM.

Council came out of executive session at 7:00 PM on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried.**

No action was taken.

The Special Council meeting was adjourned at 7:01 PM on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried.**

Mayor Herring said the regular Council meeting will begin in five minutes.

There is no audio recording of this meeting.

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held July 27, 2021**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in person and via video platform by Mayor Lucas Herring at 7:08 PM at Barre City Hall. In attendance were: From Ward I, Councilors Emel Cambel and Jake Hemmerick; from Ward II, Councilors Michael Boutin and Teddy Waszazak; and from Ward III, Councilor Ericka Reil. City staff members present in person or via video platform were Human Resources Director/Acting City Manager Rikk Taft, Buildings and Community Services Director Jeff Bergeron, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: From Ward III, Councilor Samn Stockwell.

Adjustments to the Agenda: Mayor Herring said he will add a brief discussion on the upcoming community visit during the final new agenda item.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

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

- A. Minutes of the following meetings:
 - a. Regular meeting of July 13, 2021
- B. City Warrants as presented:
 - a. Ratification of Week 2021-29, dated July 21, 2021
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$211,080.50
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$127,385.65
 - b. Approval of Week 2021-30, dated July 28, 2021:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$169,554.39
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$137,063.17
- C. 2021 Licenses & Permits: NONE
- D. Authorize Letter of Support for Vermont CWIP/DIBG Stormwater Treatment Grant Application.

The City Clerk/Treasurer Report –

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- The TIF audit by the State Auditor’s Office has been completed. Copies of the audit will be distributed to Councilors, and the audit will be officially presented at the August 10th meeting.
- The Board of Abatement is holding hearings on July 29th at 6PM in the Council Chambers.

Liquor Control – NONE

City Manager’s Report - Manager Mackenzie is away on vacation this week.

Visitors and Communications –

Mayor Herring said the Arbor Day Foundation is celebrating its 10th anniversary. The Foundation provided trees to residents several years ago, and it is inviting people to post photos of their trees on the Foundation website. The Mayor said more than 1,400 tires were collected during Saturday’s free tire waste disposal event at the civic center, including 1,100 tires from the public and 300 tires collected by the City since the previous disposal event last year.

Old Business –

A) Strategic Planning and Priorities.

Mayor Herring said Montpelier City Manager Bill Fraser will be attending the August 24th Council meeting to talk about developing a strategic planning retreat and process. Councilors asked for a timeline, which the Mayor said he will work on.

New Business –

A) Appointment of JD Fox to the Diversity and Equity Committee.

JD Fox was in attendance by way of Zoom, and expressed his interest in serving on the committee. Council approved the appointment on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Reil. **Motion carried.**

B) Accept Resignation from Scott Bascom from the PRT Committee and CVRPC TAC.

Mayor Herring said Mr. Bascom has served the City on various committees for better than two decades, and is moving into retirement. Council accepted Mr. Bascom’s resignation with regret and gratitude for

his years of service on motion of Councilor Cambel, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried.**

C) Accept Re-appointments to the Barre City Energy Committee.

Mayor Herring said all members of the Committee are seeking reappointment. Council approved the reappointments on motion of Councilor Hemmerick, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried.**

Mayor Herring said there are a number of open committee slots, and solicitation will continue until filled.

D) Presentation of See.Click.Fix Mobile App to Council.

This item is deferred.

E) Civic Center Special Promotion Extension.

Buildings and Community Services Director Jeff Bergeron said the Civic Center Committee is offering an extension for renewals of banner and dasher board sponsorships. Due to COVID, many local businesses have experienced financial hardships, and the extension would delay when their renewal fees are due. Renewals would return to their usual schedule next year. Council approved offering the extension to October 2021 on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Reil. **Motion carried.**

F) Discussion on Creation of Homeless Task Force.

Councilor Waszazak reviewed his memo on creation of the task force, noting the state's emergency housing program will be ending soon and the City can expect an influx of unhoused people. Councilor Reil has offered to chair the task force, and brings experience from her service on the Montpelier Homeless Task Force. Councilor Reil said the Barre City Task Force would serve as an advisory group. The hope is to include law enforcement, mental health, and social service representatives along with those who are unhoused and City officials. The optimum number of task force members would be seven, and they would look to be active for a year.

There was discussion on providing locations for safe camping on City property; ordinance limits for nighttime use of parks, playgrounds and cemeteries; possible partnering with the Montpelier Task Force; looking at the systems that allow people to fall through the cracks; and providing access to electricity to recharge phones. Rev. Carl Hilton vanOsdall of the First Presbyterian Church said the Barre Interfaith Group has been working on food and housing insecurity issues for years. The Group is supportive of the Task Force and hopes to collaborate with its work. Councilor Boutin said he will be voting against creation of the task force, as he does not support allowing camping on City property, and feels the focus should be on looking at the broader systemic changes that need to be made.

Council approved creating a Homelessness Task Force chaired by Councilor Reil with support from Councilor Waszazak, to do the following:

1. Study the impacts of the end of the emergency housing program on Barre City.
2. Bring together city officials, unhoused individuals, and service providers.
3. Within 3 months of their first meeting, return to Council with a policy recommendation for the city's approach toward unhoused individuals.

The Task Force will consist of seven people who will be seated by August 27th, and will complete its work within one year.

Creation of the Task Force was on motion of Councilor Hemmerick, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried with Councilor Boutin voting against.**

G) Approval of FY22 Municipal Property Tax Rate.

Clerk Dawes reviewed her memo and support materials and said the municipal tax rate calculates to

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\$1.9578, and the local agreement rate calculates to \$0.0191. The Clerk noted the tax rate increase from FY21 is approximately 1.41%, which is laudable.

Council approved the municipal and local agreement tax rates on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried.**

H) Mayor VLCT Stipend Donation and Allocation to the City.

Mayor Herring said he receives a stipend from the VT League of Cities and Towns for his service on the board, and is donating the funds to the City. He asked the Council to accept the funds and allocate them for use in supporting the community visit event at the Elks Club on August 25th. The Mayor noted this will be a separate event from the community picnic, which will be scheduled for later this summer.

Council accepted the donation and allocated it to cover community visit expenses on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried.**

Round Table –

Councilor Reil said yesterday was the 31st anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which was touted at the time as breaking down barriers and creating equal rights. Councilor Reil said the fight for equal rights and access still continues.

Councilors Boutin and Waszazak offered condolences to the family and friends of Bruce Judd, who passed away earlier this week. They noted Mr. Judd was a fixture in the community, operating Hooker Whitcomb Funeral Home for many years, and bringing comfort to families in their times of grief.

Councilor Waszazak said he is grateful to be living in Vermont, which has the highest percentage vaccination rate in the country.

Councilor Hemmerick congratulated the Barre Partnership on hugely successful Food Truck Thursdays at Currier Park.

Mayor Herring announced the following:

- Mark your calendar for Green Up Day 2022 on May 7th.
- Department head priorities were included in the Council packet.
- He is gathering information on years of service for volunteers serving on City committees and boards, so they can be recognized.
- There will be an executive session at 6PM before the August 10th meeting to discuss contracts and personnel, and the August 24th meeting will begin early at 6PM to allow time for discussion on strategic planning with Montpelier City Manager Bill Fraser.

Executive Session – NONE

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried.**

The meeting was recorded on the video meeting platform.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk