

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council  
Held December 21, 2021**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in person and via video platform by Mayor Lucas Herring at 7:00 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, Councilors Ericka Reil and Samn Stockwell. City staff members present were Manager Steve Mackenzie, Deputy Fire Chief Joe Aldsworth, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

**Absent:** NONE

**Adjustments to the Agenda:** Approval of the tax stabilization policy updates was separated out from the consent agenda.

**Approval of Consent Agenda:**

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

- A. Approval of Minutes:
  - i. Regular meeting of December 14, 2021
  - ii. Special meeting of December 18, 2021
- B. City Warrants as presented:
  1. Approval of Week 2021-51, dated December 12, 2021:
    - i. Accounts Payable: \$581,903.56
    - ii. Payroll (gross): \$121,122.52
- C. 2022 Licenses & Permits:
  1. Food Establishments:
    - i. Ladder 1 Grill, 8 S. Main Street
    - ii. Kitty Korner Café, 214 N. Main Street
    - iii. Quarry Kitchen & Spirits, 210 N. Main Street
  2. Food Vendor Licenses:
    - i. J&L Haas LLC (Rise Up Bakery), 48 Granite Street
  3. Pawn Shop Licenses:
    - i. Gold & Silver Thrift Ltd. Co., 69 S. Main Street
- D. Approve Letter of Support for Neighborhood Revitalization Program – Central VT Habitat for Humanity
- E. Appointment of Barre City Regional Emergency Management Committees (REMC) Members
- F. Annual Renewal of Health Officer Appointment
- G. Approval of Updated Tax Stabilization Policy [taken up separately below]

Council reviewed the revisions to the tax stabilization policy, and discussed owner-occupied restrictions, discretionary standards, and criteria for approval of stabilizations. Council approved the revised policy on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried with Councilor Hemmerick voting against.**

**City Clerk & Treasurer Report –**

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- Water bills are due by January 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Town Meeting election information is posted on the City website, including a list of officers to be elected, nominating petitions, and consent of candidate forms.

**Liquor Control Board - NONE**

**City Manager's Report –**

Manager Mackenzie said there are no additional updates beyond the previously distributed written report. There was discussion on the recent questions from the community about the cameras installed at the traffic signals, which are used to determine when there's a vehicle in a turning lane to activate a signal change. Manager Mackenzie said there is no video recording from these cameras. There were questions on the status of the purchase of the speed control signs. The Manager said he will follow up on them.

**Visitors and Communications –**

Jonathan Williams, Barre City's representative to the CV Fiber board, gave an update, noting there are 21 member communities, and the goal is to create a municipal broadband network. They recently received \$1 million in federal funding support, and are currently conducting a pole inventory for 17 towns to determine where fiber will be installed. They will be hiring a full-time executive director in the near future, and will be able to take advantage of new federal and state broadband funds.

**Old Business – NONE**

**New Business -**

**A) Appointments to Fill BUUSD School Board Vacancy.**

Barre Unified Union School District board member Sarah Pregent said they received three letters of interest for the vacant school board seat. The board interviewed all three people last week, and are recommending the Council appoint Giuliano Cecchinelli to fill the vacant seat until March town meeting, at which time the remaining two years on the term will be up for election. Council approved the appointment as recommended on motion of Councilor Cambel, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick.

**Motion carried.**

**B) Warning 7:15 pm - #2021-06 Second Reading Ch. 3 Animal and Fowl Ordinance.**

Mayor Herring opened the second reading and public hearing at 7:22 PM and asked for any comments or questions from the public or Council. Hearing none, the Mayor closed the public hearing at 7:23 PM.

Council approved the ordinance revisions on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried.**

**C) Employee Longevity Recognition.**

Manager Mackenzie presented longevity awards to those employees present:

- Jason Fleury, police department, 30 years
- Russ Tucker, public works department, 25 years

The Manager read off the names of other employees who had reached years of service milestones:

- Donna McNally, finance dept., 40 years
- Debbie Seaver, engineer's office, 35 years
- Troy Kirkpatrick, police dept., 30 years
- Dee Machia, police dept., 20 years
- Gary Sheridan, fire dept., 20 years
- Brian Farnham, fire dept., 10 years
- Steve Mackenzie, city manager, 10 years
- Zack Tillinghast, fire dept., 10 years

Councilors offered a standing ovation in honor of the years of dedicated service provided by those being recognized for their longevity.

**D) Warn First & Second Public Hearings for Potential Charter Changes.**

Clerk Dawes said there are two things to do this evening:

1. Approve warning dates for the first and second public hearings for charter changes,

2. Discuss draft language for proposed charter changes.

The Clerk recommended the public hearings be held on January 25<sup>th</sup> and February 1<sup>st</sup>, as per statute. Council approved the recommended dates on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Boutin. **Motion carried.**

Councilors reviewed the sections of draft language. There was discussion on authority to accept or enter into easements with financial obligations, checks & balances, micromanagement of the Manager, requiring development of an annual capital improvement plan, and governance oversight.

Councilor Boutin made a motion to have the City Attorney vet the proposed changes to sections 307 (powers of city; policy matters; appointment of certain officers), 407 (appointments), 510 (creation and organization) and 605 (local rooms, meals, and alcoholic beverages option taxes), seconded by Councilor Waszazak. Councilor Waszazak offered a friendly amendment to include section 104 (general corporate powers), which was accepted by Councilor Boutin.

Councilor Hemmerick offered a friendly amendment to include section 409 (capital improvement plan) for legal review. The friendly amendment wasn't accepted.

Councilor Hemmerick made the motion to amend the original motion to include section 409 (capital improvement plan) for legal review, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried with Councilor Boutin voting against.**

Resident Bernadette Rose said the proposed changes would offer guidance to the new City Manager upon Manager Mackenzie's retirement at the end of the fiscal year.

Councilors voted on the original motion as amended. **Motion carried.**

Councilor Hemmerick noted he has submitted some additional revised language to Clerk Dawes. The Clerk said she will incorporate the additional language in the materials being sent to the City Attorney for review.

**E) Legislative Update.**

Councilor Waszazak recused himself from the discussion, as he is a registered lobbyist. He left the room.

Representative Peter Anthony said he continues to be optimistic there will be approval of a statewide program embedding mental health clinicians in police departments, similar to the program currently running in Barre City and Montpelier, with the support of Washington County Mental Health. The bill to remove the railroad trestle over the Stevens Branch near Allen Lumber is in the Transportation Committee, and there doesn't appear to be much support for moving it forward. Rep. Anthony said the charter changes approved by City voters last March at town meeting missed crossover, and are now with the Senate Rules Committee. Senator Perchlick has said he would work to get the bill approved as soon as possible.

Councilor Hemmerick left the room part way through the discussion.

There was discussion on dispatch services, cannabis regulations and taxation, Act 250 revisions, rental registry programs, and retail purchase of raw milk. Representative Tommy Walz said housing availability and old housing stock are being looked at very carefully. There have been problems with renters and landlords being able to access funding support through the Rental Assistance Program, where there is still a large pool of available support. There was discussion on speeding up construction of new housing, and

making adjustments to the way the National Guard Adjutant General is chosen by moving to an election rather than appointment.

Councilors Hemmerick and Waszazak returned to the dais.

**F) Discussion and/or Approval to Disband Bodies for the City.**

**i. Animal and Fowl Task Force**

**ii. Dog Park Committee**

Council approved disbanding the Animal and Fowl Task Force, with thanks for the members' service, on motion of Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Boutin. **Motion carried.**

Chrysta Murray from the Dog Park Committee said she and fellow committee member Jeff Cochran are interested in continuing to serve on the committee, provided there are no minimum meeting requirements. Ms. Murray said they rarely meet officially, but are in communication about the needs of the park. Mr. Cochran provides ongoing mowing on a volunteer basis. There was discussion on the condition of the park, ongoing maintenance and repairs, issues associated with a nearby homeless encampment, and available funds from the Semprebon bequest allocation and fundraising. Council determined there is no need to disband the committee at this time, and the vacancies on the committee will continue to be listed for those interested in serving the City.

**Round Table –**

Councilors wished everyone a Happy Solstice, Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and Happy New Year. They encouraged people to be safe and get vaccinated.

Councilor Boutin said every dog is beautiful to their owner.

Councilor Stockwell said she is excited about the housing movements happening in Vermont.

Councilor Hemmerick said they're thinking about taking out a permit for a fence in the spring, perhaps in advance of getting a dog.

Mayor Herring reminded everyone there is no Council meeting next week.

**Executive Session – NONE**

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

The meeting was recorded on the video meeting platform.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk