

**Special Meeting of the Barre City Council  
Held November 2, 2021**

The Special 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 City Manager Steve Mackenzie, Acting Police Chief Larry Eastman, Human Resources Director Rikk Taft, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

**Absent:** NONE

**Adjustments to the Agenda:** Mayor Herring said the Rotary Club lease for their portion of the Wheelock House will be moved out of the consent agenda to allow for discussion. The Mayor said the Barre Partnership lease for their portion of the Wheelock House will be removed from the consent agenda, as the current lease runs through September 2022.

Manager Mackenzie requested adding a discussion on a request to fly the large American flag over N. Main Street for Veteran's Day. The official request will come to Council at next week's meeting, but the Manager said he'd like to discuss some of the details this evening.

Councilor Hemmerick asked to add a discussion on the holiday parking program.

**Approval of Consent Agenda:**

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

- A. Minutes of the following meetings:
  - 1. Regular meeting of October 26, 2021
- B. City Warrants as presented:
  - 1. Approval of Week 2021-44, dated November 3, 2021:
    - i. Accounts Payable: \$162,657.58
    - ii. Payroll (gross): \$126,734.91
- C. 2021 Licenses & Permits: NONE
- D. Authorize Manager to Execute Wheelock House Leases
  - i. Barre Partnership Lease [N.B. removed from agenda]
  - ii. Rotary Club Lease [Moved to new business]

**Visitors and Communications –**

Resident Bernadette Rose read a statement recognizing November as National American Indian Heritage Month. Ms. Rose said Barre City is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded land of the Western Abenaki, known as “en DA kin ah”. She asked that as Veterans' Day approaches everyone recognize and honor the great and continued service given by American Indian veterans and active duty personnel, as well as all other U.S. veterans.

Studio Place Arts executive director and former Councilor Sue Higby said she's like to see a public discussion what they'd like to see the Wheelock House used for.

**Other) Rotary Club Lease of Wheelock House**

Manager Mackenzie reviewed his memo and suggested Council approve a four-year lease and add a termination clause. The Manager said leasing the space to the Rotary Club was originally approved by the Council in 2019, and executing the lease is administratively addressing the arrangement. Former

Councilor Rich Morey said the Rotary Club is using their portion of the space for storage of emergency supplies for children and families under supervision of the VT Department of Children & Families.

Councilor Boutin made the motion to approve the lease as presented by the Manager, seconded by Councilor Waszazak.

Mayor Herring reviewed the history of the building since 2018, and noted in addition to being used by the Barre Partnership and Barre Rotary Club, the rear of the building was used as a field office for the contractor working on the Keith Avenue parking lot project. There was discussion on having the Rotary lease expire at the same time as the Partnership lease, costs of maintaining and heating the building, lease arrangements that have the Partnership and Rotary covering 1/3 each of the utility costs for the building, getting an update on the condition of the building from Buildings and Community Services Director Jeff Bergeron, sustained access to the visitor's center at the front of the building, and selling vs. not selling the building. Councilor Hemmerick said he felt there had been a manipulation of procedures.

Councilor Waszazak offered a friendly amendment to the motion to have the Rotary lease expire at the same time the Partnership lease expires. The friendly amendment was accepted by the mover and seconder.

There was additional discussion on empty spaces on N. Main Street, setting goals for use of the space and budgeting, and use and management of the civic center. Resident Mark Waskow said he leases space in Burlington and would gladly lease space in the City in exchange for paying 1/3 of the utility costs.

There were comments made about manipulation of procedures, conducting fair and aboveboard processes, not following best management practices, issues of transparency, and building trust in City government.

**Council voted on the motion as amended. Motion carried with all voting in favor.**

Manager Mackenzie said the aspersions cast during some of the comments by Councilors and those in attendance are unacceptable.

**Other) Application to Fly Large American Flag over N. Main Street for Veterans' Day**

Manager Mackenzie said he has received an application to fly the City's 20' X 30' American flag over N. Main Street next week for Veterans' Day, and he is working with the applicant, Brian Judd, to finalize details before it comes to Council next week for consideration. The Manager said he's asking Council for advice or action on two items this evening:

1. Shall the City's liability insurance be used to cover the flag display?
2. Shall the City's bucket truck and staff be used to install and take down the flag?

The Manager said the City's insurance carrier, PACIF, confirmed the flag would be covered under the City's liability policy at no additional cost. There was discussion as to which City-owned flag would be on display, Mr. Judd's current election challenge lawsuit before the Vermont Supreme Court, and the motivation behind the flag request.

Councilor Boutin made the motion to approve having the City's insurance cover the display. There was no second. Councilor Hemmerick made the motion to acknowledge the statement from PACIF regarding coverage of the flag display at no additional charge. The motion was seconded by Councilor Boutin.

**Motion carried with all voting in favor.**

Manager Mackenzie said the City's bucket truck is available to install and remove the flag, and the approved fee for use of the truck would be charged to the applicant. There was discussion on whether the

Council needs to approve use of the bucket truck to hang a City-owned flag, encouraging similar requests to be made in a more timely manner, celebrating and honoring veterans by displaying the flag, and political objectives of the applicant.

Council came to informal consensus that approval wasn't necessary to use the bucket truck to hang and remove the City-flag, should the request be approved at next week's meeting.

Former Mayor Thom Lauzon said he appreciates and respects Manager Mackenzie, and it's an embarrassment that so many Councilors don't.

**Other) Holiday Parking**

Councilor Hemmerick said parking meter money collected during the holiday parking period last year was donated to the Vermont Foodbank, and he would like to recommend funds raised this year be donated to Habitat for Humanity. Manager Mackenzie said discussion on this topic is part of the Barre Partnership presentation at the November 16<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

**Visitors & Communications -**

Merchant Street resident Jesse Rosado said residents on the street are still concerned about no parking on one side of the street. Mr. Rosado said he brought this concern to the Council several months ago, and he's wondering when it will be addressed. Manager Mackenzie said he will follow up with Public Works Director Bill Ahearn.

**Executive Session –**

Councilor Stockwell made the motion to find that premature general knowledge of personnel issues and Fraternal Order of Police negotiations 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 Hemmerick. **Motion carried.**

Council went into executive session at 8:55 PM to discuss personnel and negotiations under the provisions of 1 VSA §313 on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried.**

Manager Mackenzie, Human Resources Director Rikk Taft, Acting Police Chief Larry Eastman, and Labor Attorney Scott Cameron were invited into the executive session.

Councilor Reil left the meeting at 9:30 PM.

Council came out of executive session at 9:37 PM on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

There was no action.

The meeting adjourned at 9:37 PM on motion of Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

The meeting was recorded on the video meeting platform.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk