

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held September 20, 2022**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in person and via video platform by Mayor Jake Hemmerick at 7:03 PM at Barre City Hall. In attendance in person or virtually were: From Ward I, Councilors Emel Cambel and Thom Lauzon; from Ward II, Councilors Michael Boutin and Teddy Waszazak; and from Ward III, Councilors Michael Deering and Samn Stockwell. City staff members present were City Manager Nicolas Storellicastro, Finance Director Dawn Monahan, Public Works Director Bill Ahearn, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: NONE

Adjustments to the Agenda: NONE

Visitors and Communications –

Heather Slayton read a statement, saying she is concerned about what's going on at Council meetings. Ms. Slayton said minutes from the Diversity & Equity Committee are missing from the required postings on the City's website, which is a violation of the Vermont Open Meeting laws. She said there are questions about recordings of the committee meetings, and she wondered what resources and time are being wasted.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

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

- A. Approval of Minutes:
 - i. Regular meeting of August 30, 2022, as corrected.
- B. City Warrants as presented:
 1. Approval of Week 2022-38, dated September 21, 2022:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$240,532.91
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$140,847.14
- C. 2022 Licenses & Permits: NONE

City Clerk & Treasurer Report –

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- First quarter property taxes were due by September 15th. Payments are still being received, but the delinquency rate is below 5%.
- Water/sewer bills are due by September 30th.
- The state is mailing out ballots for the November 8th general election by next Monday, September 26th. All active voters will be mailed a ballot.

Liquor Control Board – NONE

City Manager's Report –

Manager Storellicastro noted the following:

- There was a water main break in the Thomas Street/Kynoch Avenue/Gallow Avenue neighborhood. Repairs have been made, and the water may appear discolored, but it is safe to use. Residents are encouraged to run their cold water faucets for 5 minutes to help clear the lines.
- The construction zone on Route 302 where the new pump station is being installed experienced some road damage due to the recent rain. The area is scheduled to be paved tomorrow, if the weather allows.
- There is a bulk trash drop off day on Saturday at the civic center. The event is exclusively for Barre City residents.
- Fire Chief Doug Brent's final day was last Friday. Deputy Chief Joe Aldsworth has been appointed interim Fire Chief. Recruiting and posting will begin this week to feel the vacant chief's position.

To be approved at 09/27/2022 Barre City Council Meeting

There was a brief discussion on the responses to the RFPO for purchase and redevelopment of 22 Hill Street. As this is real estate sales related, it will be discussed further in executive session.

Unfinished Business – NONE

New Business –

A) Approve Banwell Architect Contract Amendment Phase 1B.

Public Works Director Bill Ahearn distributed a list of possible sites for the new public works campus, and noted some of the sites had been previously eliminated, and others have been added to the list after the geographic search area was expanded. Mr. Ahearn said the additional contract work by Banwell will help review and narrow down the expanded list of possible sites, and create a plan that will assist in seeking funding.

Councilor Boutin said the overall projected cost of the project is too much, and he will be voting against the contract amendment.

There was discussion on other siting locations including co-locating the sewer portion at the wastewater treatment facility, using temporary storage for sand and silt, and tapping into possible federal funding. It was noted the current DPW facility is in the flood plain, would make it more expensive to redevelop that location. There was discussion on the cost of the original contract and the amendment, and funding sources for the contract; property tax assessment should the facility be located outside of Barre City; and including the public in the process.

Councilor Lauzon made the motion to approve the contract amendment, seconded by Councilor Waszazak.

Mayor Hemmerick said there should be integration of renewable energy technologies, and possible City locations should be re-evaluated. The Mayor said he can't support this contract amendment, but believes it should be reworked and brought back.

Council approved the motion as presented with Mayor Hemmerick and Councilors Deering and Boutin voting against.

B) ARPA Community Feedback Process.

Manager Storrellicastro reviewed a draft request for letters of interest to begin the community outreach process for use of the ARPA funds. The Manager said he is nearing completion of a contract to work with a consultant on conducting the public outreach. There will also be collaboration with Central VT Regional Planning Commission. A survey toll will be launched in October and a public forum will be held in November, with a final report being issued by January.

Councilor Waszazak made the motion to approve the draft request for letters of interest, seconded by Councilor Cambel.

There was a friendly amendment to remove reference to the Council's informal allocations of ARPA funds so as to encourage public ideas and participation. The mover and seconder accepted the friendly amendment.

Council approved the motion as amended.

C) FY24 Budget Kickoff.

Manager Storrellicastro reviewed his roadmap for FY24 budget development and presentation. The Manager reviewed the FY23 budget, changes to date, and projected year-end deficit. He talked about the FY24 baseline items including salaries and benefits; use of ARPA, local options tax, and undesignated fund balances, and noted the early calculations show a budget increase of 4.15% taking into account staff expenses and level funding of non-staff expenses.

To be approved at 09/27/2022 Barre City Council Meeting

Manager Storrellicastro asked the Council for their priorities and guardrails:

- Councilor Waszazak: body cameras for the police department
- Councilor Lauzon: continued investment in infrastructure; not keen on new positions; no cuts in services
- Councilor Deering: Return the cemetery department to pre-COVID funding levels
- Councilor Stockwell: Making City buildings more energy-efficient, well maintained and attractive; creating partnerships for housing
- Mayor Hemmerick: Rebuilding the funding pipeline for capital projects; review systems as a whole; consider reorganization around community & economic development

Councilors asked to have a bond status incorporated into the capital improvement plan presentation, and schedule an update on TIF project development from White & Burke.

Upcoming Business – NONE

Round Table –

Councilor Deering said he's working with former Councilor Ericka Reil and Another Way to gather camping gear to provide assistance to those experiencing homelessness. He said Spaulding High School won its homecoming football game last weekend, and the next game is this Friday.

Councilor Boutin said Fire Chief Doug Brent's retirement celebration last Friday was a great event.

Executive Session – Councilor Boutin made the motion to find that premature general public knowledge of real estate discussions around 22 Hill Street would clearly place the City of Barre at a substantial disadvantage should the discussions be public. The motion was seconded by Councilor Deering. **Motion carried.**

Council went into executive session at 8:32 PM to discuss real estate under the provisions of 1 VSA § 313 on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Lauzon. Manager Storrellicastro and Clerk Dawes were invited into the executive session. **Motion carried.**

Council came out of executive session at 8:45 PM on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Lauzon. **Motion carried.**

There was no action taken.

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 PM on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Deering. **Motion carried.**

The open portions of this meeting were recorded on the video meeting platform.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk