

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held January 25, 2022**

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, Human Resources Director Rikk Taft, Planning Director Janet Shatney, Public Works Director Bill Ahearn, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: NONE

Adjustments to the Agenda: Manager Mackenzie requested an executive session to discuss real estate acquisitions, labor negotiations, and personnel. Councilor Cambel asked that local options taxes (LOT) be taken up for discussion during the charter changes public hearing.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

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

- A. Approval of Minutes:
 - i. Regular meeting of January 18, 2022
- B. City Warrants as presented:
 1. Approval of Week 2022-04, dated January 26, 2022:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$523,336.10
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$130,949.46
- C. 2022 Licenses & Permits:
 1. Food Establishment License:
 - i. Mulligan's, 9 Maple Avenue
 2. Entertainment License:
 - i. Mulligan's, 9 Maple Avenue
 3. Food Takeout License:
 - i. Campo Di Vino/Bella Campo, 131 S. Main Street

City Clerk & Treasurer Report –

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- Yesterday was the deadline for submission of nominating consent of candidate forms. The list of candidates was emailed to Councilors last evening.
- Absentee ballot requests are still rolling in. Ballots will be available by February 9th.
- Third quarter property taxes are due by February 15th.
- Dog licenses are available. All dogs must be licensed by April 1st.

Liquor Control Board - NONE

City Manager's Report –

Manager Mackenzie said there was nothing to add to his written report. The Manager was asked about the search for an assessor, and he spoke of the issues many municipalities are having filling similar vacancies. There will be a discussion on all City vacancies at an upcoming meeting.

Visitors and Communications –

Resident Bernadette Rose thanked the Council for holding hybrid meetings, which allow her to attend and participate. Ms. Rose said there's a new program offering financial support for homeowners through the Vermont Housing Finance Agency. Clerk Dawes said the City has signed up to participate in the

program, which will offer financial support to pay off delinquent mortgages, property taxes, utilities, and condominium or homeowner association dues. The City will send out flyers with delinquent tax and water/sewer bills, and will post information on the City website and Facebook page.

Old Business – NONE

New Business –

A) Appointments for Consideration and/or Action.

- i. **Charles (Chip) Castle, Homelessness Task Force**
- ii. **Philip G. Moros, Homelessness Task Force**
- iii. **Candace Gale, Homelessness Task Force and/or Dog Park**

Philip Moros introduced himself and shared his interest and experience around homelessness issues. Council approved the appointment on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried.**

It was noted the other possible appointees were not present, and there were questions as to whether they had been invited to attend. They will be placed on next week's agenda for consideration.

B) Warned for 7:15 pm: First Public Hearing Proposed Charter Changes.

Mayor Herring opened the public hearing at 7:18 PM and invited comments and questions from the public. Hearing none, he invited comments and questions from Council. They reviewed the proposed charter changes approved for placement on the ballot at last week's meeting. There was discussion on the timeframe for the capital improvement plan, and it was decided to leave the language as drafted.

Councilor Cambel requested discussion on the proposed local options sales tax charter change that wasn't acted on at last week's meeting, and said the voters should be given the opportunity to vote on the question. Manager Mackenzie reviewed his memo on the proposal, and said the Council-approved capital equipment plan illustrates the need for capital funds that would be raised by the local options sales tax.

There was discussion on use of ARPA funds and surplus fund balance funds for capital needs, funding and timeline for creation of a new public works campus, reducing pressure on the general fund and bonding needs, impact of inflation on future LOT sales tax collections, previous votes on this proposed item, and other funds currently available and allocated for capital needs.

Councilor Cambel made the motion to place the proposed local options sales tax charter change on the annual town meeting ballot, seconded by Councilor Stockwell.

Councilor Waszazak said he agrees with the Manager's analysis, but he needs to balance his personal opinions with those expressed by his constituents. He will not support the motion.

Resident Bernadette Rose encouraged Council to put it on the ballot. Councilor Boutin said his position of not placing the LOT on the ballot hasn't changed. Councilor Hemmerick said he doesn't argue with the need, but feels there needs to be more due diligence around capital planning and budgeting, and he said the timing might be better to bring the question to the voters in conjunction with the November general election. Public Works Director Bill Ahearn said they are currently making maintenance decisions that aren't best practice because of the lack of capital funds. Resident Ellen Sivret said she supports putting the question on the ballot. Councilor Waszazak said after hearing this evening's comments and discussion, he will support placing the question on the ballot.

Council approved the motion as presented on roll call vote with Councilors Boutin and Hemmerick voting against.

Councilor Boutin said he would like Council to consider placing charter change language around the Housing Board of Review on the ballot. It was noted this hasn't been discussed over the past several meetings as the Council was considering possible charter changes. It will be referred to the Charter Review Committee for future consideration.

C) TIF District Options – Due Diligence Update & Draft Parking Study Review.

Stephanie Clark from White + Burke, and Andy Hill from DESMAN Design Management reviewed the draft parking study. Mr. Hill gave a Powerpoint presentation and spoke of the number of public and private parking spaces in the designated area, occupancy rates, parking demand modelling methodology, land use, emerging development needs, and projected future adequacy.

There was discussion on contracting with private property owners for use of their parking spaces, costs associated with building structured parking, ways to address quality of parking through management rather than construction, finding ways to connect with parking available at the Civic Center, effects of COVID on current and future parking needs, identifying pinch-points, improving streets and sidewalks to make downtown more walkable, and restriping existing parking to maximize number of spaces.

Ms. Clark said they will continue to refine the work and issue a revised report.

E) Approve Warning for 2022 Annual Town Meeting.

Clerk Dawes said the warning has been adjusted to add the local options sales tax charter change article. Council approved the warning on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Waszazak.

Motion carried.

F) Approval of 2021 Certificate of Highway Mileage.

Council approved the 2021 certificate of highway mileage on motion of Councilor Hemmerick, seconded by Councilor Boutin. **Motion carried.**

G) Approval of Cover Photo of Annual Report.

Council deferred this item until next week, as there are no photos yet proposed. Clerk Dawes will work with Executive Assistant Jody Norway to come up with some suggestions.

H) Approval of Dedication of Annual Report.

Council approved dedicating the annual report in memory of former Deputy Police Chief Andy Marceau on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried.**

I) Discussion and/or Action re: Indefinite All-Virtual Barre City Public Body Meetings.

Mayor Herring noted due to recently enacted emergency legislation, public bodies may return to fully virtual meetings until January 15, 2023. Council approved allowing City committees and boards to make the decision on how to conduct their meetings, noting meetings with a virtual component must be recorded, on motion of Councilor Hemmerick, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

D) City Hall (Old Police Station) Rearrangement Plans.

This item is deferred to next week due to the late hour.

Round Table –

Councilor Stockwell said she has been reading about Vermont having the highest rate of opiate deaths in the country, and is comforted by the efforts Barre City is making to address the issues.

Councilor Waszazak encouraged people to get vaccinated and boosted against COVID, and to request absentee ballots for town meeting and other 2022 elections.

To be approved at 02/01/2022 Barre City Council Meeting

Councilor Hemmerick congratulated the staff on projected ambulance revenues. He said he is running for mayor.

Mayor Herring reported on the following:

- Offered kudos to Laurie and Kathe, who have been the leaders for the Tremont-Elm-Franklin Street Area Neighborhood Watch for the past eight years. They are stepping down the end of this month.
- Aldrich Library, Barre Partnership and Barre Area Development Corporation will be in with their quarter updates next month.
- At a future meeting Council will consider reallocating Semprebon bequest funds earmarked for the Community Visit to be used by the River Access group, and other groups set up following the Community Visit.
- Confirmed Councilors are receiving the VLCT legislative reports.

Former Mayor Thom Lauzon thanked the Council for dedicating the annual report to former Deputy Police Chief Andy Marceau. Mr. Lauzon spoke of Deputy Chief Marceau's dedication to the City, and asked for a minute of silence. Mayor Herring led those in attendance in a moment of silence.

Executive Session –

Councilor Boutin made the motion to find that premature general knowledge of real estate acquisition, labor negotiations, 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 9:42 PM to discuss real estate acquisition, labor negotiations, and personnel under the provisions of 1 VSA sec. 313 on motion of Councilor Hemmerick, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried.**

Manager Mackenzie was invited into the executive session.

Council came out of executive session at 10:03 PM on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried.**

No action was taken. Councilors informally agreed to hold hybrid meetings at least through Town Meeting. Mayor Herring said, "How 'bout those Chiefs?"

The meeting adjourned at 10:04 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