

**Special Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held March 6, 2013**

The Special Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order at 6:00 PM by Mayor Thomas Lauzon. In attendance were: From Ward I, Councilors Charles Dindo and Paul Poirier; Ward II, Councilors Michael Boutin and Michael Smith; and from Ward III, Councilors Anita Chadderton and Lucas Herring. Also in attendance were City Manager Steven Mackenzie and Clerk/Treasurer Carolyn Dawes.

Mayor Lauzon said this special meeting is to discuss the possible replacement of firefighter turn-out gear contaminated by asbestos during the response to a fire at Houle Brothers Granite in December.

Manager Mackenzie had convened a panel to speak with the Council on the asbestos contamination issue. The panel members were:

- Chief Tim Bombardier
- Deputy Fire Chief Joe Aldsworth
- City Attorney Oliver Twombly
- Joe Damiata, VLCT, Manager – Underwriting, Safety and Health Promotion
- Fred Satink, VLCT, Loss Control Specialist
- Todd Hobson, Clay Point Associates, Inc.
- Scott Meyer, VOSHA, Project Worksafe Project Manager

Chief Bombardier reviewed the timeline of the fire on December 20, 2012, when he received word that there was asbestos in the building on January 14, 2013, and when he attended a meeting on February 13, 2013 at which he received additional information about the difficulties of addressing issues of asbestos contamination in firefighting equipment.

There was discussion among the panelists and the Council on the following:

- Sharing of information with the mutual aid companies that responded to the fire; collaboration of response to insurance companies.
- The differences between this fire event and others that have involved asbestos.
- The types and concentration of asbestos at Houle Brothers.
- Potential health hazards.
- The types of equipment that are contaminated, including turn-out gear, self-enclosed breathing apparatus (SEBA), hoses, leather parts, and other porous materials.
- Possible cleaning options for the turn-out gear coats and pants.
- Cost of cleaning, cost of replacement.
- Types of testing for contamination of gear.
- Assessment of actions performed at the scene of the fire.
- Testing and abatement to date at Houle Brothers. Levels of abatement required by law.
- Inspection of similar structures in the City to document asbestos and other hazards.
- Changes in standard operating procedures (SOP) in the wake of the fire.
- The ability to recoup costs from the building owner's insurance.

Mayor Lauzon asked that the panel come back to Council at Tuesday's meeting with a recommended course of action.

There was further discussion on the following:

- Exploring options for cleaning gear, replacing gear, costs, shipping contaminated gear, age and life expectancy of current gear, cost-benefits analysis.

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- Communications about contamination with the firefighters' union.
- Short-term use of contaminated equipment and low risk of cross-contamination during responses.

After the discussion on asbestos, Councilor Poirier asked when Council will take up the discussion of the municipal budget that was voted down yesterday at the Annual (Town) Meeting elections. Mayor Lauzon said the discussion will begin at the Special Council meeting already scheduled for Saturday, March 16, 2013. The Mayor said the tentative date for the budget re-vote is May 14, 2013.

Mayor Lauzon said next Tuesday's Council meeting will begin at 6:00 PM instead of the usual 7:00 PM, to accommodate the panelists.

Council adjourned at 7:16 PM on motion of Councilor Smith, seconded by Councilor Herring. **Motion carried.**

An audio transcript of the meeting is available through the Clerk's Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk