

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held September 25, 2012**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order at 7:00 PM by Mayor Thomas Lauzon. In attendance were: From Ward I, Councilor Paul Poirier; from 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 Carolyn Dawes.

Approval of Consent Agenda: Council approved the following consent agenda items as presented on motion of Councilor Smith, seconded by Councilor Herring. **Motion carried.**

- Minutes of the following meeting:
 - Special and Regular Meetings of September 18, 2012
- City Warrants as presented.
- 2012 Licenses & Permits issued through the clerk's office: NONE

We Dig Barre Treasure Dig Drawing. Barre Partnership board member Mary Jane Magnan and mascot Digger invited Councilor Boutin to draw last week's winner, and announced the final weekly clue. Ms. Magnan said next week will be the final drawing before the grand prize drawing in mid-October.

The City Clerk and Treasurer Report – Clerk Dawes made the following announcement:

- The registered voters from Ward I are invited to attend a ward caucus on Thursday, September 27th at 7:00 PM at Alumni Hall to fill a council seat vacancy until the March Annual (Town) Meeting.
- The Board of Abatement is scheduled to hear appeals on Tuesday, October 9th starting at 5:00 PM.
- Ballots for the November 6th general election were sent electronically to military and overseas voters on Friday, September 21st, to comply with federal law. Paper copies of the ballots are expected to arrive by the end of the week, and will be mailed out to those who have requested early absentee ballots. The Clerk's office is accepting requests for early absentee ballots.
- The Clerk said those who request absentee ballots will receive both the general election ballot and the Spaulding Union High School District roof bond vote ballot.

Councilor Poirier said he has received complaints about last week's Board of Civil Authority property tax assessment appeal hearings. Mayor Lauzon asked the Clerk to call a BCA meeting so members of the Board can listen to the audio recording of the meeting and discuss policy and procedure changes going forward.

Approval of Building Permits – NONE

Liquor Control Board – NONE

New Business –

B) Resolution #2012-14 Relating to Planning Grant Updates of Design Review Standards.

City Planner Michael Miller said the Planning Commission is applying for a municipal planning grant (MPG) to hire a consultant to look at design review criteria for the downtown. The consultant will develop draft language that will come to Council for discussion and approval. The grant application is for \$15,000 and requires a \$3,500 local match, which is included in the budget.

Council approved resolution #2012-14 on motion of Councilor Herring, seconded by Councilor Smith. **Motion carried.**

Old Business –

A) Annual Appointments.

Mayor Lauzon reviewed the list of appointments and said the City will be advertising to fill vacancies.

To be approved at 10-02-12 Barre City Council Meeting

Councilor Poirier said he would like to have prospective new appointees introduced to Council before appointment.

Due to the fact that the Heritage Festival coordinator is a hired position, Council concurred with removing it from the list of appointees. Councilor Smith noted that Councilor Boutin should be listed as the Council liaison to the Community Justice Center board.

Council approved the list of appointments with the exception of the new appointees to the Planning Commission, who will be invited to meet the Council at a future meeting, on motion of Councilor Poirier, seconded by Councilor Herring. The motion also included setting Council policy that prospective new appointees meet with the Council before appointment. **Motion carried.**

Visitors and Communications –

Mayor Lauzon said Oreste Valsangiacomo Sr.'s funeral is scheduled for Friday, September 28th, and he has requested that the Barre City flags fly at half-mast that day in honor of Mr. Valsangiacomo's service to the community.

Mr. Miller said the City received the letter of final determination from FEMA with regards to the flood hazard area maps, which will go into effect on March 19, 2013. He said the City will be contacting those property owners who will be affected by the changes. Mayor Lauzon asked if there are any further opportunities to appeal. Mr. Miller said once the maps have gone into effect, the City can request FEMA revise the maps.

City Manager Report – NONE

New Business –

A) SHS Parade/Homecoming Coverage Request.

Council approved the parade request, contingent upon the Manager and Police Department working with SHS on details of coverage and parade route, on motion of Councilor Herring, seconded by Councilor Chadderton. **Motion carried.**

Visitors and Communications, cont. -

Spaulding Union High School District (SUHSD) board chair Norma Malone read a statement in response to an article in Sunday's Times Argus. Ms. Malone referenced an email from Mayor Lauzon inviting her to attend a joint Barre City Council/Barre Town Selectboard/SUHSD Board meeting to discuss the football field lighting project. She respectfully asked the Council to reconsider its vote related to the lighting project and Semprebond funds. She called for an apology from the Mayor to the SUHSD Board and its leadership and invited the Council to learn more about the hard work being done at the high school. Mayor Lauzon asked Ms. Malone if the SUHSD Board is willing to get together to talk about moving the lighting project forward. Mr. Malone said the Board's priority is the roof project. The Mayor asked when the next Board meeting is, and Ms. Malone said Monday, October 1st at 6:00 PM. Ms. Malone said there will be an informational meeting about the roof project on Monday, October 29th. Mayor Lauzon said he would appreciate it if a majority of the Council would attend the October 1st SUHSD meeting to discuss the lighting project under visitors & communications on the agenda.

Barre Town Selectboard Chair Jeff Blow said he wanted to poll the Councilors, asking them if they share Mayor Lauzon's opinions on the Selectboard leadership. Mr. Blow received responses from each Councilor. There was a discussion between Mr. Blow and Mayor Lauzon about communications between the two of them and conducting business between the two communities. Mayor Lauzon said if Mr. Blow and Ms. Malone were upset by his comments, he apologizes. The Mayor said he would like to have the Barre Town Selectboard join the Council in attending the October 1st SUHSD Board meeting.

There was discussion about past joint meetings, the regional public safety initiative, and issues surrounding the Act 250 commission and the asphalt plant planned for Wilson Industrial Park.

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Mayor Lauzon asked Mr. Blow if he will attend the October 1st SUHSD meeting. Mr. Blow said no.

New Business –

C) First Reading of Ordinance Change #2013-02: Water Disconnection.

Clerk Dawes reviewed the proposed ordinance revisions and said they are in response to the recent ruling in the Brenda Brown et al v. City of Barre case.

Council approved setting a 2nd reading and public hearing for the October 2nd meeting on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Smith. **Motion carried.**

D) Council Appointment of Hearing Officer for Water Shut Off.

Clerk Dawes reviewed the statute that outlines appeal opportunities related to water shut-offs, and recommended that Council appoint her as the hearing officer. There was discussion about the process leading up to water-shut offs.

Council appointed Clerk Dawes as hearing officer for water-shut off appeal requests on motion of Councilor Herring, seconded by Councilor Smith. **Motion carried.**

E) Ordinance Revision #2013-03: Chapter 18 Solid Waste Disposal – First Reading.

Councilor Boutin reviewed the proposed revisions. There was discussion about minor edits for typos.

Landlord Herb Heath said he worked with Councilor Boutin on the revisions, and he would like to see them tried out to see if they work. There was general discussion with unidentified members of the public and the Council about weekly vs. bi-weekly pick-up, deodorization of trash containers, size of totes, definition of bulk containers, ordinance enforcement, municipally-coordinated trash pick-up systems, and set-backs. Councilor Boutin will incorporate the discussed revisions and bring the ordinance back for a new first reading next week.

Mayor Lauzon said he wants to expand the annual rental fee program to allow for collecting more information, which would be helpful to the inspectors, code enforcement officers and landlords. The Mayor said he will propose the changes to the Landlords' Association first.

Mayor Lauzon said he would also like to explore licensing landlords and property managers. The Mayor said there would be no fee attached to such licensing, but restrictions could be placed on the licenses.

Mr. Heath said he wanted to share some thoughts from the earlier exchanges with Mr. Blow and Ms. Malone, and said he hopes it is the beginning of something good. The Mayor said he apologizes to the extent that his behavior has added to the issue, and he will call Mr. Blow and extend the invitation to attend the SUHSD Board meeting again.

F) 2013 / 2014 General Fund Budget Development Discussion.

Mayor Lauzon said he wants to set expectations for the FY 2013-2014 budget discussions. The Mayor said he would like deliberations done by the 1st week of January. He would like the Manager to seat a citizen's budget review committee to review the Manager's budget before presentation to Council. Manager Mackenzie said he expects to start working on the budget in mid-October, and he will bring a proposed budget timeline to the Council in 2 weeks. Councilor Herring said he would like to review debt service obligations as part of the budget preparation process.

G) Water and Sewer Fund Financial Review Discussion.

Mayor Lauzon said the water & sewer funds need to be reviewed and rates need adjustments. The Mayor said he will take on this project and will work with Assistant Director of Public Works Steve Micheli.

Round Table –

Councilor Poirier said he would like to have Chief Bombardier in to talk with the Council about social issues, including drugs and enforcement of loitering ordinances. He said he wants to ask the Chief what the Police Department is doing to combat these issues and what resources to they need.

Councilor Herring said there are 192 members on Front Porch Forum. He said Ms. Malone is a great individual and that the Barre City, Barre Town and SUHSD school boards recently joined together on a para-educator contract. He said the Granite Museum is conducting a survey in advance of its forum on October 11th, and the survey can be accessed through the VGM website, Front Porch Forum and City website. Councilor Herring said he supports Mayor Lauzon, that he is a great leader and has reached out to other communities.

Councilor Chadderton said she wants to hear more about FEMA and what it is willing to help the City with on the spillway repairs. Manager Mackenzie said the Council will be asked to award the contract for the spillway repair work at next week's meeting, and he will update the Council on FEMA's participation at that time.

Mayor Lauzon said he spoke with Chair Towne in Berlin and Mayor Holler in Montpelier about the regional public safety initiatives, and all agree dispatching services is the place to start. The Mayor said he would like to see the Councils and Selectboards take stronger ownership of the initiative.

Manager Mackenzie gave a Big Dig update, and said the contractor anticipates completion by November 15th. The Manager said he is working with City Engineer Reg Abare and architect Jay White on plans for restoration work on the City Hall façade, including the handicap ramp. He said the current ramp does not meet code. He said he met with the ADA Committee to discuss the ramp and it has been decided the ramp will be removed and replaced, with the work being done in the spring. Mayor Lauzon said he wants to see the costs for demolition and replacement of the ramp. Manager Mackenzie said the crosswalk on Prospect Street between City Hall and the post office will be moved closer to the intersection to allow for better visibility for both vehicles and pedestrians.

Manager Mackenzie said Council will tour the City playgrounds before next week's meeting. Councilors will gather at Charlie's Playground 2012 starting at 5:30 PM.

Council adjourned at 10:15 PM on motion of Councilor Boutin, 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