

**Special Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held May 14, 2014**

The Special Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order by Mayor Thomas Lauzon at 7:00 PM at Barre City Hall. In attendance were: From Ward I, Councilors Charles Dindo and Paul Poirier; from Ward II, Councilor Michael Boutin; and from Ward III, Councilor Lucas Herring. Also in attendance were City Manager Steven Mackenzie; Special Projects Manager Pat McDonald; Cemeteries & Parks Director Dwight Coffrin; Facilities Director Jeff Bergeron; Recreation Director Stephanie Quaranta; City Clerk/Treasurer Carolyn Dawes; and members of the Citizen Finance Department, Linda Couture, John Hannigan and Justin Johnson (chair). There were also several members of the public present.

Mayor Lauzon called attention to the article in today's Times Argus about the Secretary of State's ruling that email approvals outside of Council meetings are against the Vermont Open Meeting Law. The Mayor said the Barre City Council has approved permits through emails in the past, and cannot do so going forward. The Mayor suggested revising City ordinances to allow administrative approval by the Clerk in the absence of a Council meeting. Clerk Dawes will work on draft revision language for Council consideration.

Special Projects Manager Pat McDonald reviewed the Organizational and Management Review, and the recommendation to merge the Recreation, Facilities and Cemeteries & Parks Departments.

There was discussion among the Council, Ms. McDonald and the Department Directors about the following:

- Number of staff in the various departments
- Naming the merged department
- The process used to reach the recommendations
- Conducting interviews with existing staff and the possibility of opening up the positions to a search
- Potentials to use existing expertise
- Comparing structures with other municipalities
- Forming a strong team to benefit the existing staff
- Directorships and assistant directorships
- Marketing opportunities for cemeteries and recreation
- Fair treatment of existing directors
- Potentials for moving up the ladder
- The difficulty of understanding what we're trying to accomplish with the reorganization in light of yesterday's failed revised budget revote
- What are the savings through reorganization?
- Ideas for cost savings from the employees
- No support for increasing the budget for any department
- Setting priorities
- Would department look the same if starting from scratch rather than taking current staffing into consideration?
- Facilities Department runs well – there are deferred maintenance needs.
- Recreation runs well– council would like to do more, but there are budget constraints – fortunate to have Barre Youth Sports (BYSA)
- What could we do to be more efficient with all three current departments?
- Cemeteries – not enough staff to effectively carry out spring burials, and that situation would be exacerbated if no winter burials. Need more staff and equipment.
- Barre City is highest cemetery lot costs in the area, and on of only 3 cemeteries in Vermont that offers winter burials
- Other options for use of the cemetery office building
- Discussion about salaries – having the discussions in executive session. Current salaries are a public record.

To be approved at 05-20-14 Barre City Council Meeting

- No cost savings are identified in the proposed reorganizations. Savings come through working with staff to identify and implement cost savings.
- Is the Council's directive to the Manager to merge the departments and work with the pool of money?
- Advantages of having 2 assistant directors

Motion #1: Councilor Poirier made the motion to accept the concept of reorganization as presented and leave it to the manager to address compensation. When asked, Councilor Poirier restated his motion as accepting the reorganization of these three departments as presented, and leave it to the manager to figure out the logistics and compensation. Seconded by Councilor Dindo.

There was discussion about the motion being out of order based on the charter. Mayor Lauzon said the Manager cannot be held to the motion.

Motion #2: Councilor Poirier made a second motion to accept the recommendation on reorganization and have the Manager report back to the Council on the reorganization and salaries. When asked, Councilor Poirier restated his motion as authorizing the Manager to reorganize the three departments identified – Facilities, Recreation and Cemeteries & Parks - and to come back to the Council with information on how the salaries will be dealt with. Seconded by Councilor Boutin.

Mayor Lauzon ruled motion #1 out of order and Councilor Poirier withdrew it.

Council voted on motion #2 made by Councilor Poirier.

Motion carried with Councilor Herring voting against.

Discussion continued on the following:

- Are we building a new department that is actually the same departments with a different name?
- Location of work spaces at Alumni Hall
- Opportunities are being missed because we don't have the courage to have the discussion about what's in the best interest of the City
- No further reorganization discussions until finalizing a revised budget
- Put the budget on the May 27th Council meeting agenda

Whitney Maxfield, speaking as a representative of the Flags for Veterans, spoke in support of leaving the Cemetery Department at Hope Cemetery.

Discussion continued on the following:

- Work of the Cemetery, Recreation and Civic Center Committees
- Contracts for non-union positions, and salary or ranges – using VLCT materials to guides

Council adjourned at 8:17 PM on motion of Councilor Poirier, seconded by Councilor Herring. **Motion carried.**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk