

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council  
Held January 19, 2016**

The Regular 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, Councilor Charles Dindo; from Ward II, Councilors Michael Boutin and Michael Smith; and from Ward III, Councilors Anita Chadderton and Lucas Herring. Also present were City Manager Steven Mackenzie and Clerk/Treasurer Carolyn Dawes.

**Absent:** From Ward I, Councilor Paul Poirier

**Adjustments to the Agenda:** NONE

**Approval of Consent Agenda:**

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

- Minutes of the following meetings:
  - Regular meeting on January 12, 2016.
  - Special meeting on January 16, 2016.
- City Warrants as presented: week 2016-03.
  - Accounts Payable: \$253,664.96
  - Payroll (gross): \$101,183.44
- Licenses & Permits:
  - 2016 Food Establishment License:
    - Planet Rock N' Metal, 123 N. Main Street
    - Simply Delicious, 14 N. Main Street
  - 2016 Food Vending License:
    - Maria's Bagels, wholesale & retail delivery services
  - 2016 Entertainment License:
    - Planet Rock N' Metal, 123 N. Main Street
    - Barre Partnership, all events through the year, with City/PD coordination
  - 2016 Pool Table/Video Machine License:
    - Planet Rock N' Metal (downstairs), 123 N. Main Street, 1 pool table
    - Planet Rock N' Metal, (upstairs), 123 N. Main Street, 9 video machines

Councilor Dindo requested that animal license renewals associated with chickens and ducks be voted on separately. Council approved a 2016 Animal License for April Jolley, 20 Maplewood Avenue, 11 chickens, on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Herring. **Motion carried with Councilor Dindo voting against.**

**The City Clerk/Treasurer Report** – Clerk Dawes reported on the following:

- Information for the 2016 Annual (Town) Meeting is posted on the website, including the list of offices up for election, petition and consent forms. Nominating petitions are due to the Clerk's office by 5PM on January 25<sup>th</sup>.
- Requests for early absentee ballots are being accepted. Ballots will be available by February 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Council will approve the Annual (Town) Meeting warning at the January 28<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting. The final date to approve the warning is January 30<sup>th</sup>.
- The Clerk is working with the VT Department of Taxes on a correction to the TIF grand list in the NEMRC module. The process requires that Council approve requesting the correction through the state's appeal process. That appeal letter will be on next week's agenda for approval, along with additional information about the correction and its impact on the TIF fund.

- Council has scheduled a special meeting for this Saturday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> to continue budget discussions. The Clerk will not be in attendance, so she asked that Council take minutes.

**Approval of Building Permits – NONE**

**Liquor Control – NONE**

**City Manager’s Report – NONE**

**Visitors & Communications – NONE**

**Old Business – NONE**

**New Business –**

**A) FY15 Audit Presentation.**

Randall Northrop from Corrette & Associates presented the draft FY15 audit. Mr. Northrop said there is a qualified opinion due to accounts receivables not being billed to the Town of Barre in a timely manner. Manager Mackenzie said the outstanding receivables are associated with projects at the wastewater treatment plant and the Town’s portion of the North Main Street Reconstruction Project utility work. He said the balance due to the City’s enterprise funds is approximately \$450,000.

Mr. Northrop said the fund balance surplus for FY15 is \$100,911, and the overall fund balance is (\$221,619). There was discussion around the make-up of the fund balance deficit, which is tied to the inherited cemetery department deficit, and the availability of the FY15 surplus for use in the FY17 budget.

Mr. Northrop reviewed the internal controls report. He talked about recommended actions and the Clerk shared some of the actions that have already been put in place. Mr. Northrop said the audit showed good compliance, and the City has good controls over inventory. There was nothing substantive in the single audit.

There was discussion on the due tos/due froms, and possible forgiveness of the transfers between the water and sewer enterprise funds. Mr. Northrop suggested working on the issue in a measured way over the next year or two.

The next steps are for the City to submit the management response, and for the Council to accept the audit. Mayor Lauzon thanked Mr. Northrop for his services.

**B) 7:15 PM Second Reading and Public Hearing Ordinance 2015-04 Animal and Fowl Ordinances.**

Mayor Lauzon opened the second reading and public hearing at 7:45 PM. Councilor Boutin said he would like to advance the chicken sections for approval, and continue to work on the cat sections. Mayor Lauzon said he would like to see Councilors Boutin and Dindo work with members of the public on both sections of the ordinance.

There were several people in attendance who spoke on the issue. There was discussion around set-back distances for chicken yards, enforcement of the current ordinance, and licensing cats.

Mayor Lauzon said due to the changes incorporated in the draft language at last week’s meeting, he should not have allowed it to be moved forward to a second reading. The Mayor said the ordinance will go back to a first reading, and will not be back on the Council agenda for at least 30 days. He suggested those interested in discussing the issues should meet with Councilors Boutin and Dindo in the interim.

The public hearing closed at 8:30 PM.

**C) BCEMS and High School FY17 Budget.**

School Superintendent John Pandolfo, joined by BCEMS school board chair Lucas Herring, presented the budgets. Mr. Pandolfo reviewed their handouts and noted the expected combined school tax increase is projected to be \$0.0014. There was discussion around funding changes currently being discussed in the legislature that could impact school budgets and tax rates.

**D) FY15 Annual Report Photos and Dedication.**

Councilor Boutin suggested dedicating the FY15 annual report to retired library director Karen Lane. There was no consensus on what should be on the cover. Mayor Lauzon told Councilors they have a week to submit ideas.

**E) Local Options Tax.**

Mayor Lauzon gave a PowerPoint presentation on local options taxes (LOT). The Mayor spoke about the other municipalities that have LOTs, ways to reduce property taxes, the effect on the local economy and consumer behavior, exemptions from sales tax, and the effect on local property sales.

Former Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce President George Malek introduced new President Bill Moore. Mr. Malek reviewed his handout and talked about the “leakage” from the LOT funds received by the City and the actual benefits to taxpayers. He said the LOT creates different winners and losers and contributes to on-line sales and consumers shopping in other states.

The Clerk reviewed the charter change process required to approve local options taxes. The first public hearing on all proposed charter changes, including LOT, will be Thursday, January 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Round Table:**

Councilor Smith said there will be a weatherization button-up workshop at the Labor Hall later this week. He reminded everyone that the Central Vermont Public Safety Authority board has an at-large position available that will be filled on Town Meeting Day.

Councilor Herring said there are five BCEMS school board seats up for election at the Annual (Town) Meeting.

**Executive Session – NONE**

The Council meeting adjourned at 9:58 PM on motion of Councilor Smith, seconded by Councilor Herring. **Motion carried.**

An audio recording of this meeting is available from the City Clerk.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk