

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held January 24, 2017**

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 Jeffrey Tuper-Giles; 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, vacant.

Adjustments to the Agenda: NONE

Approval of Consent Agenda:

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

- Minutes of the following meetings:
 - Regular meeting on January 17, 2017
- City Warrants as presented:
 - Approval of Week 2017-04:
 - Accounts Payable: \$265,902.18
 - Payroll (gross): \$129,092.91
- Licenses & Permits
 - 2017 Animal Licenses:
 - Kerri Fredette, 8 Downes Avenue, 9 poultry
 - 2017 Food Establishment Licenses:
 - Basil's Pizzeria, 20 S. Main Street
 - Jerry's Sports Tavern, 30 Summer Street
 - 2017 Pool Table/Video Machine Licenses:
 - Planet Rock N' Metal – upstairs, 123 N. Main Street, 9 video machines
 - Jerry's Sports Tavern, 30 Summer Street, 1 pool table
 - 2017 Vending Licenses:
 - Sani-Sport, sports services, yard services

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

- Dog licenses are now available.
- Third quarter taxes are due by February 15th.
- Deadline for nominating petitions is January 30th.
- Board of Civil Authority meeting this Thursday, January 26th at 5:30 PM.
- Information about March 7th Annual (Town) Meeting available on the website.
- Accepting requests for early absentee ballots.

Approval of Building Permits – NONE

Liquor Control – NONE

City Manager's Report – Manager Mackenzie reported on the following:

- Received FEMA approval for 2 Brook Street property buyouts associated with the 2015 flooding.
- The Harrington Avenue buyouts are waiting for closing approval from FEMA.
- Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and state congressional delegations are soliciting information on projects that are shovel ready and could be completed in the next 1 to 4 years. There is possible federal funding available.

Mayor Lauzon requested that the Manager explore with FEMA the possibility of razing all buyout properties

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while equipment is mobilized this summer, regardless of whether closings have occurred.

Visitors & Communications – NONE

Old Business –

A) Discussion re: ERF Vector and Sweeper Grants.

Assistant Director of Public Works reviewed the Clean Diesel and Clean Water Initiative grants received to support purchase of a new vector and street sweeper. There was discussion on the conditions for acceptance of the grants, including taking the current vector permanently out of service; salvage value for the vector as compared to the value of the Clean Diesel grant; 10% local match; efficacy of a new street vacuum sweeper; and disposal of material collected in the street sweeper.

B) Approval of FY18 Budget Proposal.

Manager Mackenzie gave a PowerPoint presentation of the proposed FY18 budget. Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce president William Moore spoke in opposition to the proposed local option taxes charter change, saying it would place a burden on local businesses. Mr. Moore said he has spoken with businesses in Montpelier about the effects of the recently imposed room, meals and alcohol LOT. Montpelier motels and hotels have indicated they have seen a decrease in room nights. He said national surveys show declining consumer restaurant visits. He requested that the Council not place the LOT charter change on the ballot.

There was discussion on the sources of the data presented by Mr. Moore, the data's relevancy to central Vermont and Barre City, and the effect of other changing factors on increases or decreases in consumer activities.

Local restaurateur Doug Doenges said his restaurant has been experiencing flat customer counts for the last seven years, and said competition for customers is fierce. Mr. Doenges asked the Council not to handicap local businesses, and said the City should concentrate on economic development.

Local business owner Mark McCarthy said businesses are fragile, and customers can get the same products through other avenues. Mr. McCarthy asked that the Council stop spending and taxing, and that the City do without services to keep the costs down. He said he is interested in serving on the Budget Committee.

Mayor Lauzon said this is the first public hearing. Council needs to finalize proposed charter change language at next week's meeting, and there will be a second public informational meeting at the February 7th Council meeting.

Councilor Herring asked Mr. Micheli to provide the Council with a list of streets and capital purchases that would be impacted by the proposed street and capital ballot item and the local option taxes. Mr. Micheli will have that information for next week's meeting.

Council accepted and approved Manager Mackenzie's proposed FY18 budget on motion of Councilor Herring, seconded by Councilor Chadderton. **Motion carried.**

On another topic, Mayor Lauzon said he had signed the warranty deed for sale of a small parcel of property on South Main Street to One Bridge Street LLC, as was previously approved by Council. The sale is in exchange for a water line easement. The Mayor said City charter requires the Mayor to sign any such documents.

New Business –

A) Warning: First Public Hearing 7:15 PM. Proposed Charter Changes.

Mayor Lauzon opened the public hearing at 8:27 PM and opened the floor for questions and comments. Clerk Dawes reviewed the three proposed charter changes:

To be approved at 01-31-17 Barre City Council Meeting

- Remove the recreation committee from the charter.
- Change the percentage from 5% to 10% of voter signatures required on a petition to place a public question on a ballot.
- Allow local option taxes for rooms, meals and alcohol.

There was discussion on the order of the articles for the proposed charter changes on the ballot, the effect of the petition signature percentage increase on ballot funding requests, and the possible future creation of a community fund.

Hearing no additional questions or discussions, Mayor Lauzon closed the public hearing at 8:45 PM.

B) Review of Draft Warning for 2017 Annual (Town) Meeting.

Clerk Dawes said Council will be approving the warning at next week's meeting. She will add the approved budget numbers and rearrange the charter change articles, as requested earlier this evening.

Mayor Lauzon asked Clerk Dawes to explore printing all proposed charter change language on the ballot, rather than on separate sheets of paper. The Clerk said she will talk with the printers about whether there is room on the ballot, which is already very full.

Round Table –

Councilor Herring encouraged new and potential Councilors to attend Local Government Day in Montpelier in February.

Councilor Boutin requested an executive session to discuss contracts and personnel.

Mayor Lauzon said Governor Scott's budget address yesterday included proposing that school budgets be level funded for FY18 and be voted on May 23rd. There was brief discussion on the possibility of such action.

Executive Session –

Councilor Boutin made the motion to find that premature general public knowledge of the contracts and personnel issues 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 Herring. **Motion carried.**

Council went into executive session at 8:53 PM to discuss contracts and personnel issues under the provisions of 1 VSA sec. 313 on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Herring. **Motion carried.**

Manager Mackenzie was invited into the executive session.

Council came out of executive session at 9:24 PM on motion of Councilor Herring, seconded by Councilor Boutin. **Motion carried.**

No action was taken.

The Council meeting adjourned at 9:24 PM on motion of Councilor Herring, seconded by Councilor Smith. **Motion carried.**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk