

**Special Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held January 14, 2019**

The Special Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order by Mayor Lucas Herring at 5:30 PM at Barre City Hall. Councilors in attendance were from Ward I, Councilors Sue Higby and Jeffrey Tuper-Giles; from Ward II, Councilor Brandon Batham and Michael Boutin (arrived 5:36 PM); and from Ward III, Councilors John LePage and Rich Morey. Also present were City Manager Steve Mackenzie, City Finance Director Dawn Monahan, Fire Chief Doug Brent, Public Works Director Bill Ahearn, and City Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: NONE

Barre Area Development Corporation executive director Joel Schwartz reviewed current and proposed funding levels. Mr. Schwartz said the board has committed \$30,000 towards new marketing efforts this year. He said there is an existing memorandum of understanding between BADC and the Barre Partnership that should be reviewed and updated.

Councilor Tuper-Giles, in his capacity as board president of the Barre Partnership, said they have made an offer to a potential new executive director, and are waiting to hear their reply. They expect to have the position filled by the first of February. BP board member Caitliin Corkins reviewed grants and other funding that have been received by virtue of being a designated downtown. Our designated downtown status is maintained by the Partnership. Mr. Tuper-Giles said they are developing a 5-year action plan, and looking for ways to collaborate with BADC after the new executive director comes on board.

Council began review of the latest draft of the proposed FY20 budget. Discussion included the following:

- Articulating objectives for community development funds given to BADC and BP.
- Funding for the community service officer.
- Setting a target for the tax rate increase.
- Items included on the list for the proposed short-term capital note, which will be on the ballot.
- Use of the Semprebon Annuity.
- Purchase of a police cruiser and ambulance out of the capital equipment fund.
- Impact on fire department overtime of filling the 16th firefighter position.
- Possible addition of a fulltime assessor as a staff position.

Councilors agreed to add the firefighter, but not the assessor.

Additional discussion included the following:

- Possible cuts to bring the projected tax rate increase down to 2%.
- Teen center alternatives, including partnership with the library.
- Use of the Semprebon annuity for building maintenance.
- Revisions in budgeted fire department overtime amounts due to inclusion of 16th firefighter.
- Remove the \$15,000 contingency currently included in the draft budget.

Firefighter Zach Tillinghast, president of the firefighter bargaining unit, spoke in favor of filling the 16th firefighter position.

Additional discussion included:

- Options for increases in revenues, fees, and fines.
- Add back the pool revenue, as the pool project will likely start after this year's pool season.
- Manager and staff finding \$50,000 in additional cuts.

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- Remove \$50,000 in increased building maintenance, and replace it with \$50,000 from the Semprebond annuity into the capital equipment fund.
- Cut the allocation for the teen center.
- The Fire Department will identify \$30,000 - \$35,000 in cuts.
- The goal for the projected tax rate increase is between 2% - 3%.

Council will hold another budget workshop on Monday, January 21st, at 5:30 PM.

The Council meeting adjourned at 7:38 PM on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Batham. **Motion carried.**

There is no audio or video recording of this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk