

**Special Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held January 21, 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 from Ward III, Councilors John LePage (arrived 5:45 PM) and Rich Morey (arrived 5:47 PM). Also present were City Manager Steve Mackenzie, City Finance Director Dawn Monahan, and City Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: From Ward II, Councilor Michael Boutin.

Manager Mackenzie began a review of the latest draft of the proposed FY20 budget. The current projected tax rate increase is 2.84%.

Council discussion included the following:

- Streets, sidewalks and capital funding chart, including \$100,000 from the Semprebon annuity.
- Funding for repairs to the civic center buildings.
- Adjustments to revenues from auditorium rentals due to loss of renters.
- Identifying new revenue sources/leasing the Wheelock building/growing the grand list.
- Targets for the projected tax rate increase.
- Reducing the amount budgeted for Vermont Youth Conservation Corps.
- Reducing amount for Community Outreach Advocate
- Reducing and equalizing amounts for the Barre Partnership and Barre Area Development Corp. Establishing matrices by which their performance can be measured.
- Reducing budget for salt used on roads. Decreased use of salt and sand during winter.
- Reducing hours of contracted assessor.
- Adjustments to Fire Department overtime.
- Reducing Council expenses associated with upcoming City manager search.
- Reducing funding for tree removals.
- Reducing finance consultant funds.
- Reduce police training funds.
- Cut or eliminate the summer bike patrol (Bees). Adjust bike maintenance funds accordingly.
- Reducing proposed increase to TNT building principal payments.

Councilors suggested a number of cuts, and when incorporated into the spreadsheet, the revised projected tax rate increase is 2.11%. Additional adjustments were made, which brought the revised projected tax rate increase to 2.35%.

There was further discussion on:

- Funding for the bike patrol.
- Setting a projected tax rate increase equal to the rate of inflation: 2.28%
- Funding for Barre Partnership.

Councilor Tuper-Giles left the meeting at 7:38 PM.

Council agreed to level fund the Barre Partnership and Barre Area Development Corp.

The recalculated projected tax rate increase is 2.26%. All Councilors present said they would support such a budget and tax rate increase.

To be approved at 1-29-19 Barre City Council Meeting

Public Works Director Bill Ahearn reviewed his spreadsheet of proposed water, wastewater and storm sewer projects, and recommended Council include a \$2.5 million bond question on the Annual Meeting ballot. The water and wastewater portions of the bond would be paid out of enterprise funds, and preliminary calculations show the debt service payments would require an approximate 8% increase in sewer rates. Storm water portions of the debt service would be paid out of the general fund.

Councilor voiced support for placing the bond question on the ballot. They suggested development of a public statement as to the need for the infrastructure improvements.

The Council meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM on motion of Councilor Batham, seconded by Councilor Higby. **Motion carried.**

There is no audio or video recording of this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk

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