

**Special Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held December 21, 2019**

The Special Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order by Mayor Lucas Herring at 8:07 AM at Barre City Hall. Councilors in attendance were from Ward I, Councilors John Steinman (arrived 8:15 AM) and Jeffrey Tuper-Giles; from Ward II, Councilors Michael Boutin and Teddy Waszazak; and from Ward III, Councilors Rich Morey and Samn Stockwell. Also present were City Manager Steve Mackenzie, Police Chief Tim Bombardier, Deputy Police Chief Larry Eastman, Fire Chief Doug Brent, Deputy Fire Chief Joe Aldsworth, Buildings and Community Services Director Jeff Bergeron, Public Works Director Bill Ahearn, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes

Absent: NONE

Manager Mackenzie gave a summarized overview of draft #3 of the proposed FY21 budget. The Manager said the current draft has a tax rate increase of 5.91%. The current draft does not include any new staff or funding for the Barre Area Development Corporation marketing plan.

Chief Bombardier talked about the cruiser replacement program, and the two cruisers budgeted for replacement in the FY21 budget. There was discussion on vehicle rotations, cruiser design model changes, use of vehicles as they're rotated out of the police department, deferring replacement for a year to reallocate funds for other capital needs, and how public safety vehicle support all other departments.

There was additional discussion related to police and dispatch departments on:

- Part time officers.
- Overtime practices.
- Proposed additional officers and impacts on revenue and expenses.
- Security camera systems at the Public Safety Building, and consolidation of security systems across City facilities and departments.

DPW Director Bill Ahearn reviewed his proposal for new staff positions in the street, water, and wastewater departments. The positions in the water & wastewater departments would be paid for out of the enterprise funds, and there is room in the funds to cover the additional expenses. Manager Mackenzie said he has already authorized those additional positions.

There was additional discussion for the streets, water & wastewater departments on:

- Succession planning, availability of training programs, and competitiveness of the City's compensation levels.
- Changes in staffing demographics/experience levels.

Councilor Stockwell left at 9:33 AM.

There was additional discussion on:

- Understaffing in Public Works, and borrowing and lending staff from/to other departments.
- OT costs mostly related to winter snow events; need for additional workforce.
- Hiring per diem staff or contracting for services.
- Liability issues associated with non-Barre City municipal workers doing street work.
- Difficulty filling positions; lending staff to other departments as needed.
- Deferring additional staff to next fiscal year.
- Traffic signal problem-solving and maintenance.
- Salt management.

To be approved at 01-07-20 Barre City Council Meeting

Manager Mackenzie reviewed the draft capital budget, and possible need for bonding. There was discussion on:

- Status of bond-funded water and wastewater projects.
- Outsourcing street projects.
- Use of local options tax revenues for street work.
- Review of current DPW equipment.
- Developing RFP to begin planning for replacement of DPW campus.
- Exploring lease options.
- Capital needs for the Buildings & Community Services and Fire departments.

Councilor Morey left at 10:35 AM.

Buildings & Community Services Director Jeff Bergeron talked about capital and operating budget needs in his department, including facilities, cemeteries and parks. Included were discussions on:

- Mower replacements.
- Contract mowing services.
- Tree removal.
- Replacement of the Alumni Hall boiler system.
- Building maintenance at the Public Safety Building.
- Effect of new City Hall boilers and energy audit on fuel oil usage.
- Civic Center Committee review of rental rates.
- Staff increase request. Staff assignments for building maintenance.

Councilors discussed other items in the proposed operating budget, capital budget, and staff additions. They voiced their support for the \$20,000 allocation for the City's share of costs associated with embedding a part-time mental health clinician in the Police Department.

Councilors reviewed specific line items, and made suggestions for review of funding related to:

- New line for furniture in the Fire Department.
- Review of costs associated with providing mutual aid to neighboring communities.
- Review of taxi license rates and fees.
- Revenue options associated with cell towers placed on North Barre Manor.
- Recapture of fees associated with animal control costs.
- Funding for and operation of Barre Partnership and Barre Area Development Corporation.
Exploration of merger of two organizations, sharing resources and expertise.

Manager Mackenzie reviewed the list of current grants, and said he is working on a list of grants the City is actively pursuing.

The next budget workshop is set for Saturday, January 18th, at 8:00 AM.

The Council meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Tuper-Giles. **Motion carried.**

There is no audio or video recording of this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk