

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held March 22, 2022**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in person and via video platform by Mayor Jake Hemmerick at 7:00 PM at Barre City Hall. In attendance were: From Ward I, Councilors Emel Cambel and Thom Lauzon; from Ward II, Councilors Michael Boutin and Teddy Waszazak; and from Ward III, Councilors Michael Deering and Samn Stockwell. City staff members present were Manager Steve Mackenzie, Human Resources Director Rikk Taft, Deputy Police Chief Larry Eastman, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: NONE

Adjustments to the Agenda: Manager Mackenzie said acceptance of the Cow Pasture grant is deferred until the grant documents are received; and new agenda items associated with ARPA outreach and bond projects are deferred to next week. It was agreed to move the City Manager Task Force up on the agenda to accommodate those in attendance.

Visitors and Communications –

Montpelier resident Steve Whitaker said both Barre City and Montpelier are members of the Central Vermont Public Safety Authority which is controlled by a charter. The charter requires board vacancies of appointed municipal representatives must be filled within 45 days of the vacancy. Barre City's vacancy has been open for more than 45 days. Mr. Whitaker said the City is in violation of the charter, and it's important to have the vacancy filled, even temporarily, for the annual meeting in April when officers will be elected.

Mr. Whitaker said he submitted two public records requests to Manager Mackenzie, and received a response from Fire Chief Doug Brent. The Manager said Chief Brent was acting as the Manager's designee. Mr. Whitaker said fee information had been redacted from the Motorola proposal for dispatch equipment he requested. The Manager said the redactions were made as per guidance from City Attorney Oliver Twombly. Mr. Whitaker said the vendor fee information should be public. Manager Mackenzie will reconfirm with Mr. Twombly.

Mayor Hemmerick said he'll place the CVPSA appointment on the March 29th Council agenda.

Barre City resident Ellen Kaye said Green Mountain Transit has made cuts to services offered in Barre City and central Vermont with short notice. Ms. Kaye said she is in contact with the City's legislative representatives and Washington County Senator Perchlik, who will be meeting with GMT to discuss the changes. She said this is an equity and environmental issue, and encouraged Councilors to be involved in the discussion.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

There was discussion around adopting the consent agenda by general consent of Council rather than formal action. Manager Mackenzie said approvals of some grants and other agreements included in the consent agenda need official approval in the minutes to satisfy granting and funding organization requirements. Council will continue to do formal approvals of the consent agenda.

Council approved the following consent agenda items as adjusted on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Waskzazak. **Motion carried.**

- A. Approval of Minutes:
 - i. Regular meeting of March 15, 2022
- B. City Warrants as presented:
 - 1. Approval of Week 2022-12, dated March 23, 2022:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$271,718.42

To be approved at 03/29/2022 Barre City Council Meeting

- ii. Payroll (gross): \$134,460.07
- C. 2022 Licenses & Permits: NONE
- D. Acceptance of Resignations of Jake Hemmerick:
 - i. Council Liaison to Manager's Search Task Force
 - ii. Transportation Advisory Committee
 - iii. Animal Control Committee
- E. Cow Pasture Grant Acceptance [deferred until grant agreement documents are received]

City Clerk & Treasurer Report –

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- Water/sewer bills were mailed earlier this month, and are due by March 31st.
- The City has received just over \$10,000 to date from the VT Homeowners Assistance Program being administered by VT Housing Finance Agency. They are providing funding assistance for property taxes and water/sewer bills, along with mortgages and other home ownership related expenses. The City is also working with VT Economic Services on their water/sewer assistance program which provides funding assistance for delinquent, current and future bills.

Liquor Control Board – Most license renewals have been received and are being vetted by the Police and Fire Departments. The first round of renewals will come to Council for approval next week.

City Manager's Report –

Manager Mackenzie had nothing to add to his written report.

Unfinished Business – NONE

New Business –

B) City Manager Task Force Update.

Task Force chair Amanda Gustin and Vice Chair Michael Sitton reviewed the actions taken to date, and the steps moving forward. Ms. Gustin said she was recently chosen to serve as chair of the task force following the resignation of chair Rich Morey. The task force has carried on its work in spite of not being able to engage a consultant to assist in the search; a job description and community profile were developed and approved by the Council; notices have been posted broadly; staff and committee members have been surveyed on what qualities they would look for in a city manager; and the task force is conducting informational interviews with recently hired Vermont managers. They have developed a detailed schedule of work leading up to Manager Mackenzie's last day on July 8th, and will begin reviewing received applications shortly, along with conducting preliminary interviews. The intention is to present a pool of candidates to the Council by April 30th.

There was discussion on the optimum number of candidates to forward to the Council, whether Councilors should review all applications regardless of whether the applicants make the candidates list, and future coordination with Council through attendance at meetings and executive sessions. Council gave informal approval that five is the optimum number of candidates to be given to the Council, with the Task Force having leeway on that number based on the quality of the applicants. Councilor Lauzon said the number of task force members has dropped to seven from five, but it would be unwise to appoint new members at this point in the process. It was noted the makeup of the task force will be discussed later in the meeting.

The Task Force will facilitate day-long interviews and meetings with the final pool of candidates, which will include interviews with Council, meetings with key City staff and community members, and a community presentation.

Councilors thanked the Task Force and staff liaison Human Resources Director Rikk Taft for their hard work on this important project.

A) Adoption of 2022-2023 Meeting Schedule.

Mayor Hemmerick reviewed the draft meeting schedule for the year, and noted it is accessible through the sharedrive. It was suggested moving the first meeting in July from the 5th to the 12th because of the Independence Day holiday. Council adopted the meeting schedule as amended on motion of Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried.**

C) Fio Contract.

Manager Mackenzie said the contract being presented this evening incorporates the revisions discussed at last week's meeting. Council approved the contract as amended on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried, with Councilor Boutin voting against.**

D) Public Outreach Process & Establishment of Community Innovation American Rescue Plan Act Funding Task Force for Innovation Grant Funding.

This item is deferred to next week.

E) Update on Speed Enforcement Initiative and Speed Indicator Sign Placement.

Manager Mackenzie said four speed signs have been installed on S. Main, N. Main, Prospect and Washington Streets. They are movable and the City will develop a plan for their rotation. The signs gather traffic and speed data, which will be helpful in establishing enforcement patrols. There are four more signs scheduled to be purchased in the new fiscal year.

Deputy Police Chief Larry Eastman reviewed his memo on speed enforcement since the beginning of the calendar year, saying the department is conducting approximately 22 hours/week of directed patrols. The speed carts will be deployed again this summer. Councilors asked that Berlin Street and the Hope Cemetery area be designated as target areas.

F) Update on the status of Bond Projects.

This item is deferred to next week.

G) City Manager Task Force Councilor Liaison.

i. Discussion of Voting Privileges and Committee Composition.

ii. Nominations & Appointment to One Vacant Seat.

Mayor Hemmerick said he echoes Councilor Lauzon's previous remarks about appointing new members to the task force at this point in time, and recommended the Council amend the number of seats on the task force from seven to five so as to facilitate their ability to maintain a quorum. Council approved the change in the number of seats as recommended on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried.**

This action will be ratified at next week's meeting.

H) Animal Control Committee.

i. Nominations & Appointment to Two Vacant Seats.

Mayor Hemmerick noted Animal Control Committee seats held by previous Councilors are now vacant, and invited nominations for new appointments. It was noted Councilor Boutin will continue to serve on the committee. Councilors Deering and Stockwell nominated themselves with both nominations seconded by Councilor Lauzon. **Appointments were approved.**

I) Establishment/Appointments of City Councilors to a Council Housing Work Group.

i. Formalize Establishment of Prior, 3-Member Work Group.

ii. Nominations and Appointment for Vacant Seat.

Mayor Hemmerick reviewed his memo on the history of Council's discussions on housing, and noted this evening's actions will formalize the general consent given by Council at an earlier meeting. There was

To be approved at 03/29/2022 Barre City Council Meeting

discussion on how the work group will coordinate with the Housing Group that formed following the All In For Barre community visit, the amount of work to be done, areas of overlap, and using multiple resources to tap into state and federal funding opportunities.

Council approved the formal establishment of the Housing Work Group, and named Mayor Hemmerick and Councilors Stockwell and Lauzon to the work group on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried.**

Upcoming Business –

Mayor Hemmerick reviewed a number of upcoming events and Council meeting agenda items including:

- Open house to welcome Police Chief Vail, Alumni Hall, March 27th from 2-4PM.
- Update on bond-funded projects.
- Development of ARPA plan outreach.
- Update on water/sewer share agreement with Barre Town.
- Changes to the appointment policy.
- Conclusions of the Trash Committee.

Round Table –

Councilors expressed their gratitude for the work being done by the Manager Search Committee.

Councilor Deering is excited by the beautiful weather. He encourages everyone to be friendly and say, “Hi” to people they don’t know.

Councilor Stockwell noted the recent passing of Deborah Lisi-Baker, who was the first executive director of the Vermont Center for Independent Living, and did important work bringing disability rights to central Vermont.

Councilor Lauzon apologized for jinxing the UVM men’s basketball team by wishing them good luck last week. He offered kudos to Sen. Pollina for the comments he made in support of H.444, the bill moving through the legislature that would approve charter changes voted on at last year’s town meeting elections.

Mayor Hemmerick said he attended this past weekend’s cornhole tournament at the auditorium, and noted it was a great event.

Executive Session – NONE

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Deering. **Motion carried.**

The meeting was recorded on the video meeting platform.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk