

To be approved at 11/23/21 Barre City Council Meeting

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council  
Held November 16, 2021**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in person and via video platform by Mayor Lucas Herring at 7:00 PM at Barre City Hall. In attendance were: From Ward I, Councilors Emel Cambel and Jake Hemmerick; from Ward II, Councilors Michael Boutin and Teddy Waszazak; and from Ward III, Councilors Ericka Reil and Samn Stockwell. City staff members present were City Manager Steve Mackenzie, Public Works Director Bill Ahearn, Planning Director Janet Shatney, Deputy Fire Chief Joe Aldsworth, Interim Police Chief Larry Eastman, Community Outreach Interventionist Brooke Pouliot, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

**Absent:** NONE

**Adjustments to the Agenda:** The following adjustments were made or discussed:

- The Aldrich Library update is removed from the agenda and replaced by a written report.
- Councilor Cambel asked for a discussion on what the FY23 budget would look like at a 3% increase. Manager Mackenzie said he is working on a road map to 3%, which he will provide to the Council before the December 4<sup>th</sup> budget workshop.
- Councilor Hemmerick asked to pull the submission of the homeland security grant application out of the consent agenda, and add it as a discussion item to the agenda.

**Approval of Consent Agenda:**

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

- A. Minutes of the Regular meeting of November 9, 2021
- B. City Warrants as presented:
  1. Approval of Week 2021-46, dated November 17, 2021:
    - i. Accounts Payable: \$139,978.01
    - ii. Payroll (gross): \$125,285.06
- C. 2022 Licenses & Permits: NONE
- D. Ratify acceptance of the US Flag from Steve & Lisa England
- E. Approval of Capital Improvements Planning Consultant Solicitation RFP

**City Clerk & Treasurer Report –**

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- Second quarter property tax payments were due yesterday. The delinquency rate currently stands at 8%. Additional timely payments are expected to be received by mail over the next few days.
- Annual business license renewals are being received and approved by appropriate departments. They will start coming to Council for approval at the next meeting.

**Liquor Control Board - NONE**

**City Manager's Report –**

Manager Mackenzie reported on the following in addition to his written report:

- Barre Town yard waste drop off site will be open this Saturday, which will be the last day for the season. Curbside pick-up will take place this Thursday and Friday.
- The winter parking ban started Sunday night, November 15<sup>th</sup>, at 1AM, and continues to April 1<sup>st</sup>.
- The Barre Partnership merchants' meeting minutes noted the holiday parade is November 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Visitors and Communications –**

Mayor Herring said the City will hold a virtual volunteer appreciation event this year due to COVID. The event will take place on December 6<sup>th</sup>. The Mayor noted volunteer contact information is being redacted from Council packets at the request of the volunteers. He recommended Councilors read the VLCT newsletters for valuable information, and noted they should have City business related emails in a public records format.

**Old Business – NONE**

**New Business –**

**A) Appointment of Marc Cote to the Cow Pasture Stewardship Committee.**

Marc Cote addressed the Council, sharing his interest and experience with regards to serving on the committee. Council approved the appointment on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

**B) Appointment of Rachel Rudi to the Homelessness Task Force.**

Rachel Rudi addressed the Council, sharing her interest and experience with regards to serving on the committee. Councilor approved the appointment on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried.**

**C) Barre Area Development Quarterly Update.**

BADC executive director Cody Morrison gave a Powerpoint presentation of quarterly activities including working with local businesses; participated in All In For Barre community visit; serves on the Housing Task Force; applied for a recovery marketing grant in partnership with Barre Partnership and Central VT Chamber of Commerce; working on review and revisions of the tax stabilization policy; jointly hosting two Spaulding High School workbased learning students with the Partnership; working with the Partnership on resident, business and visitor packets; analyzing data from the 2020 census data; pitched the redevelopment of the former TENCO property; and marketing initiatives. Upon questioning, Mr. Morrison said there's \$41,000 left from the \$80,000 marketing money approved by Barre City and Barre Town voters at last year's town meeting elections. He noted more than 20 businesses have relocated to, expanded or opened in Barre in the last year.

**D) Revised Tax Stabilization Policy.**

Mr. Morrison reviewed the draft revisions. There was discussion on extending tax stabilizations to owner-occupied residential housing, clarifying definitions of multi-family housing, prioritizing affordable housing, reviewing return on investments, encouraging accessible/universally designed housing, set exclusions for vanity projects, cross-referencing with ordinances, not funding luxury improvements, noting the purpose is to encourage people to make improvements and grow the grand list, stabilization of education taxes, taking income sensitivity into consideration, and focus on habitability and safety. Mayor Herring said the Council decided not to name a liaison to the BADC board, so he will work with Mr. Morrison on the next round of revisions.

**E) Barre Partnership Quarterly Update.**

BP executive director Tracie Lewis gave a Powerpoint presentation on recent activities including Food Truck Thursdays and Concerts in the Park, Barre Art Splash, Fall Festival, and the Halloween Costume Contest. Ms. Lewis said they recently welcomed two new board members, and are preparing for the Merry Barre Holidays events. They are requesting Council approval for the annual free parking from Thanksgiving through New Year's Day, and approval of the holiday parade and horse-drawn carriage rides. Ms. Lewis said they need someone to stand in for Santa at the parade and holiday tree lighting celebration, and Councilor Waszazak offered his services.

Council approved the parade and horse-drawn carriage rides on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

**F) Holiday Parking Amnesty Program and Donation.**

Barre Partnership executive director Tracie Lewis recommended money fed into parking meters during the free parking period be donated to the Granite Center Garden Club. It was suggested the funds be donated to the Good Samaritan Haven. Ms. Lewis said she will create the labels for the meters, and Councilors Hemmerick and Waszazak said they would help with installation of labels on the meters. Former Mayor Thom Lauzon said both named organizations are worthy of support, and he and his wife Karen will make a donation to the Garden Club so all meter funds can go to the Good Samaritan Haven.

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Council approved donating the meter funds to the Good Samaritan Haven on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

**G) Aldrich Library Quarterly Update.**

Mayor Herring said Aldrich Library director Loren Polk sent a written report.

**H) Update of Traffic Control Measures on Merchant Street.**

Public Works director Bill Ahearn reviewed his memo included in the Council packet. Mr. Ahearn said the asphalt plants have closed for the year, so installation of bulbouts cannot happen until next year. Mayor Herring said Council priorities include holding a joint Transportation Advisory Committee, ADA Committee, and Paths, Routes and Trails Committee meeting to discuss common concerns, and resident Michael Hellein suggested creating a list of projects that could be collaborated on by the three committees. Mr. Ahearn spoke of options for changing the on-street parking to allow for parking on both sides in an alternating pattern to allow for passage of emergency vehicles, and committing to have all the projects completed by May 2022.

Merchant Street resident Jesse Rosado reviewed the four items promised by the Council to the neighborhood including installing a speed table, removing traffic diverting signage, installing bulbouts and a new crosswalk, and noted the speed table and sign removal have been completed. Mr. Rosado said the neighborhood wants the on-street parking to revert back to both sides. There was discussion about whether the curbs had been painted yellow in the past, cross-referencing planning and work flow with planning documents, over-commitment and understaffing, creating realistic expectations, and determining appropriate lane widths. Mr. Ahearn said the on-street parking will be restored this fall as soon as weather allows, and the bulbouts and crosswalks will be completed by May 15, 2022.

**I) Discuss/Approve ARPA Funding Proposal – Warming Shelters in Barre.**

Councilor Reil said the Homelessness Task Force is seeking ARPA funding to support a warming shelter in the Aldrich Library Milne Room for the winter. She said the Good Samaritan is only a night shelter, and those staying there must leave the building in the morning. Many people spend the day in the library until the shelter opens again in the evening, but the library doesn't open until 11AM. The warming shelter would fill the gap between when the shelter closes in the morning and when the library opens. Aldrich Library director Loren Polk has been part of the discussion, and offered the space. The proposal calls for creating a part-time position at the library for a welcoming and warming program coordinator who will make the space available six days/week, and would provide an opportunity for people to access services. Councilor Reil said the Task Force is asking for \$15,000 in ARPA funds to cover the costs of the program.

Manager Mackenzie said it's not clear that ARPA funds can be used in this manner, and he asked for time to confirm with the ARPA coordinator and VT League of Cities and Towns. Mayor Herring suggested FY21 surplus funds could be used if ARPA funds aren't available.

There was discussion on Good Samaritan Haven allowing people to stay during the day under certain weather conditions, extension of the state's motel voucher program, the lack of services at the motels, and how census tracts play into determining appropriate use of ARPA funds. Councilor Boutin suggested using the funds to support Good Samaritan Haven to keep its doors open during the day, as they already have the ability to host people and provide access to services.

Barre City Police Department community outreach interventionist Brook Pouliot said she advocates for approval of the warming shelter, and said it will serve those who don't use the Good Samaritan Haven or motels, and allow people to access services. There was discussion of safety measures at the library, and encouraging other communities to host similar warming shelters. Clerk Dawes said the budgeted amount for payroll taxes was low, and the total cost would be closer to \$17,000. Former Mayor Lauzon said the Aldrich Library and Good Samaritan Haven should be here to participate in the discussion, and he suggested tabling the discussion and holding a special meeting tomorrow evening with all interested parties present.

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Council approved allocating up to \$17,000 for a warming shelter at the Aldrich Library, funded out of ARPA, or the FY21 surplus should the project not be eligible for ARPA funding, on motion of Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried with Councilor Boutin voting against.**

**Other) Authorize Submission of Homeland Security Grant Application for Dispatch Consoles**

Interim Police Chief Larry Eastman said the grant would help cover the costs associated with replacing the three consoles in the dispatch center. Chief Eastman said the consoles were installed when the building was built 15 years ago, and are well past their useful life expectancy. The City has approximately \$169,000 in the console replacement reserve fund, and the grant would cover the balance of the \$300,000 costs. Councilor Hemmerick said he will not vote in favor of submitting grant applications without first seeing the application. There was discussion on making sure any consoles purchased would be compatible with Montpelier's systems, and any future joint systems.

Council approved submitting the grant application on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Reil. **Motion carried with Councilor Hemmerick voting against.**

**Round Table –**

Councilors expressed their excitement about seeing snow on the ground.

Councilor Hemmerick said the Housing Task Force held its first meeting yesterday, and they have broken up into subcommittees to work on a variety of items.

**Executive Session –**

Councilor Stockwell made the motion to find that premature general knowledge of litigation 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 Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

Council went into executive session at 10:28 PM to discuss litigation under the provisions of 1 VSA §313 on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

Manager Mackenzie and Public Works Director Bill Ahearn were invited into the executive session.

Council came out of executive session at 10:52 PM on motion of Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried.**

There was no action.

The meeting adjourned at 10:52 PM on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried.**

The meeting was recorded on the video meeting platform.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk