

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held November 30, 2021**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in person and via video platform by Mayor Lucas Herring at 7:07 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, Fire Chief Doug Brent, Deputy Fire Chief Joe Aldsworth, Acting Police Chief Larry Eastman, Finance Director Dawn Monahan, Planning Director Janet Shatney, Public Works Director Bill Ahearn, Human Resources Director Rikk Taft, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: NONE

Mayor Herring noted the meeting started late due to technical difficulties with the zoom camera and microphone in the Council chambers.

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

- The water/wastewater memo was in Friday's Council packet, but the budget sheets were distributed only yesterday. Manager Mackenzie said Public Works Director Ahearn will give his presentation, and the Council can decide whether to act tonight or defer to next week.
- The bond update memo was in Friday's Council packet, but the financial sheets weren't included. Manager Mackenzie said they can be discussed at Saturday's budget workshop.
- Councilor Hemmerick asked that consent agenda items E & H be moved and incorporated under new agenda items.

Mayor Herring asked Council to approve a recess until 7:30 PM to allow additional time to fix the technical difficulties. Council approved the recess on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried.**

Mayor Herring reconvened the meeting at 7:34 PM and there was discussion about the best way forward under the current circumstances. Councilors suggested the mask mandate agenda item be taken up for discussion as the first order of business, as there are a number of people present to speak to the issue. The Mayor also suggested the old business discussion on the Municipal Bodies and Appointments Policy be moved to the end of the meeting.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

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

- A. Minutes of the Regular meeting of November 16, 2021
- B. City Warrants as presented:
 1. Ratification of Week 2021-47, dated November 24, 2021
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$182,942.67
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$134,027.45
 2. Approval of Week 2021-48, dated December 1, 2021:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$130,023.58
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$135,275.47
- C. 2022 Licenses & Permits:
 1. Food Establishments
 - i. Barre Elks Club, 10 Jefferson Street
 - ii. The Meltdown, 83 Washington Street
 - iii. American Legion, 320 N. Main Street

- iv. Mister Z's, 379 N. Main Street
 - v. Quality Inn, 173 S. Main Street
 - vi. Chinatown, 302 N. Main Street
 - vii. Subway, 86 N. Main Street
 - viii. Mutuo, 20 Beckley Street
 - ix. Bamboo Gardens, 115 S. Main Street
 - x. Asian Gourmet, 276 N. Main Street
 - xi. Si Aku Ramen, 237 N. Main Street
 - xii. Domino's, 322 N. Main Street
 - xiii. Reynolds House 102 S. Main Street
 - xiv. Dunkin Donuts, 350 N. Main Street
 - xv. Hollow Inn & Motel, 278 S. Main Street
2. Food Takeout:
 - i. Champlain Farms (2), 15 S. Main Street and 169 Washington Street
 - ii. North End Deli Mart, 475 N. Main Street
 - iii. Beverage Baron, 411 N. Main Street
 - iv. Quality Market, 155 Washington Street
 3. Entertainment Licenses:
 - i. Reynolds House, 102 S. Main Street'
 - ii. VT Granite Museum, 7 Jones Bros. Way
 - iii. Barre Historical Society-Labor Hall, 46 Granite Street
 - iv. Barre Opera House, 6 N. Main Street
 - v. American Legion, 320 N. Main Street
 - vi. The Meltdown, 83 Washington Street
 4. Movie Theaters
 - i. Paramount (2 screens), 241 N. Main Street
- D. Accept Resignation of Greg Kelly from the Central Vermont Internet Board.
 - E. Authorize Consultant Selection for 20 Year Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrade Evaluation.
[Adjusted to follow new agenda item E]
 - F. Authorize Procurement of Main St. Tree Guards from FY21 Fund Balance.
 - G. Approval of Sno-Bees Snowmobile Club Landowner Permission Form.
 - H. Approval to Apply for a VCDP Implementation Grant for Downstreet Rehabilitation Projects.
[Adjusted to follow new agenda item E]

City Clerk & Treasurer Report –

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- Town Meeting election information has been updated on the City website, including a list of officers to be elected, nominating petitions, and consent of candidate forms.
- Water bills went in the mail today, and are due by January 3rd.

Liquor Control Board - Council approved the following liquor licenses on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried with Councilor Boutin abstaining.**

- New First & Third Class licenses for Pearl Street Pizza, 159 N. Main Street.
- Educational Sampling Event permit for Vermont Burlesque Festival, Barre Opera House, January 21, 2022.

City Manager's Report –

Manager Mackenzie said he has no report for this week.

Visitors and Communications – NONE

Mayor Herring temporarily recessed the meeting at 7:43 PM to allow additional time to work on the technical difficulties still being experienced.

The Mayor reconvened the meeting at 7:48 PM. They were unable to fix the technical difficulties, but managed to set up a temporary way for those in the council chambers and those participating on Zoom to hear each other.

New Business -

K) Discussion &/or Action re. Local Public Mask Mandate.

Mayor Herring invited members of the public to offer their comments on mandating masks in public spaces. The following residents and business owners shared their thoughts about masks, with none voicing support of a mandate: J.J. Norway, Josh Dickinson, Frederick LaPan, Bob Houle, William Toborg, Thomas Kelly, Sarah Helman, John Anderson, Lisa Liotta, Amanda Gustin, Bernadette Rose, Joanne Reynolds, Freddy LaPan, and Renita Marshall. Comments and suggestions included respect for personal freedoms, driving business away with a mandate, enforcement, posting signage at all public establishments letting customers know their mask policies, government overreach, and support for mask wearing with no mandate.

There was Council discussion on COVID statistics on the VT Department of Health website, encouraging masks and vaccines, and supporting decisions made by local businesses about mask-wearing in their establishments. The Council chose not to take any action on the issue.

New Business –

A) Resolution for Donna McNally's 40 years of Service to the City of Barre, Resolution #2021-16. Deferred until next week.

B) Working Community Challenges Update.

Eli Toohey from the Working Community Challenges Program said their goal is to decrease the number of women living in poverty. Ms. Toohey talked about the benefits cliff, employer collaborations, child care availability, and said they are working to increase economic stability. There was discussion on developing trainings for employers, and housing issues. Ms. Toomey said she'll give another update after they have finished developing their training procedures and increased the number of women in the cohort.

C) Montpelier's Community Development Program.

Polly Nichol with the Montpelier Housing Task Force shared ways the City of Montpelier supports housing improvements and initiatives through housing-friendly zoning and a housing fund to help with down payments and multi-family development. Ms. Nichol said the fund started when Montpelier voters approved a penny on the tax rate to raise the seed money. They have used other funding sources, including federal grants, which are difficult to administer. The task force has expanded its work by creating HomeShare, and supporting accessory dwelling units.

Representative Peter Anthony said Barre City had a similar organization in Barre Neighborhood Housing 25-30 years ago, which was absorbed into Central VT Land Trust, which became Downstreet Housing, which now has a regional focus. Barre City should regrow its capacity to host a locally focused housing organization.

There was discussion on community development staffing in Montpelier, growth to the Montpelier grand list due to support provided by the housing fund, other communities with similar programs, and supporting work on deferred maintenance for single family homes.

D) Discuss/Act on ARPA Funding Request for Downstreet Recovery Residence.

Michelle Kersey and Nicola Anderson from Downstreet said they are developing a recovery residence to serve women with children. The project includes purchase and renovation of a building in the downtown. They have secured most of the funding, but with recent increases in development cost estimates, there is a funding gap. They are requesting \$60,000 in ARPA funds to help fill the gap. There was discussion on closing on the purchase of the property, construction schedules, updated cost estimates, property tax status for the completed project, and developing a process for soliciting and considering requests for ARPA funds.

Council requested updated cost estimates and estimates of post-completion taxability be provided for review before consideration of approval.

Other) Approval to Apply for a VCDP Implementation Grant for Downstreet Rehabilitation Projects. [Adjusted from consent agenda]

Ms. Kersey and Ms. Anderson said the implementation grant would assist with the rehabilitation of the Bromur Street apartment buildings and the Ward 5 school, which is being converted to low income housing. There was discussion on relocating Bromur Street apartments' trash receptacles as part of the project, property tax status for the completed projects, and heating systems. Manager Mackenzie said this evening's approval would allow Downstreet to access the online grant application portal so they can begin the process of data entry. The actual application will be provided to the Council for review and final approval for submission at the required public hearing to be held in the near future.

Councilor approved as presented on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Reil.
Motion carried.

E) Review &/or Acceptance of 5-year Water/Wastewater Enterprise Fund Budgets Planning Projections.

Public Works Director Bill Ahearn reviewed the water portion of the budget planning projections, and said the current and projected water rates are sufficient to support \$500,000 in improvements per year over the next 5 years, including replacing 4" water lines with 8" lines. Mr. Ahearn said improvements will concentrate on City infrastructure. There was discussion on revising projected revenues from the Town based on continuing expansions, revisiting the agreement between the City and Town for water & sewer services, and other capital projects including valve replacements and increasing hydrant density.

Mr. Ahearn reviewed the sewer portion of the budget planning projections, and said the current and projected sewer rates support \$50,000 in improvements per year over the next 5 years. He said there is new data available and some of the information can be updated. Mayor Herring asked that the planning projections be updated and provided to Council for acceptance next week under the consent agenda.

Other) Authorize Consultant Selection for 20 Year Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrade Evaluation. [Adjusted from consent agenda]

Mr. Ahearn reviewed the rating process used to evaluate the proposals, and noted there are two submissions that rose to the top. He requested Council approve management to make a determination between the two submissions and negotiate a contract. There was discussion on the two candidates and the pros and cons associated with either being a small project to a big company or a big project to a small company. It was noted the consultancy is estimated to cost approximately \$100,000, of which \$80,000 is projected to be covered through a clean water state revolving loan.

Council authorized the Manager to make the selection of a consultant for negotiation of an Engineering Services Agreement not to exceed \$100,000, and make all necessary applications

for loans and grants through the CWSRF, on motion of Councilor Hemmerick, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

There was discussion on future development and future sewer capacity, preserving capacity for City development, charging for reserving capacity, and including discussion on this subject when renegotiating the agreement with Barre Town.

F) Update on Bond Projects Status and Expenses.

Deferred to the Budget Workshop scheduled for Saturday, December 4, 2021.

Mayor Herring said due to the late hour, the rest of the new agenda items will be deferred.

G) Charter Work Group Update.

Deferred to a future Council meeting.

H) Act 164 (S.54) Regulation of Cannabis.

Deferred to a future Council meeting.

I) Administrative (Public Bodies) Ordinance Update.

Mayor Herring said amendments to the ordinance will be driven in part by the reports from the Charter Working Group.

J) Update on Volunteer Information.

Deferred to a future Council meeting.

Old Business –

A) Discussion and/or Approval of Municipal Bodies Appointments Policy.

Mayor Herring noted the policy had been reviewed by Council previously and was being brought back for final approval. Council approved the revised policy on motion of Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried.**

Round Table –

Mayor Herring thanked Mr. Ahearn and the Department of Public Works for their quick repainting of the curbs on Merchant Street, and he said the Safe Road Alliance will be giving presentations in the City and offering trainings to local youth. The Mayor said he and others are working with the Central Vermont Medical Center to address issues around providing transportation to people needing rides back to Barre City after receiving services at the hospital after hours for public transport.

Executive Session – NONE

The meeting adjourned at 10:51 PM on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried.**

The meeting was recorded on the video meeting platform, however the technical difficulties experienced during the meeting interfered with full recording of the meeting. There is no video from the Council chambers, and the audio from the chambers is compromised.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk