

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held December 6, 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 in person or virtually 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 City Manager Nicolas Storellicastro, Assistant City Manager Dawn Monahan, Human Resources Director Rikk Taft, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: NONE

Adjustments to the Agenda: NONE

Visitors and Communications – NONE

Approval of Consent Agenda:

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

- A. Approval of Minutes:
 - i. Regular meeting of November 29, 2022.
- B. City Warrants as presented:
 1. Approval of Week 2022-49, dated December 6, 2022:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$1,844,652.78
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$132,470.74
- C. 2022 Licenses & Permits: NONE
- D. Appointment of the Manager as an authorized representative for CWSRF and DWSRF
- E. Authorize the Mayor to sign a letter of support for a Resource USDA application

City Clerk & Treasurer Report –

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- Water/sewer bills were mailed out last week. They are due by January 3, 2023.
- Information, nominating and consent of candidate forms for the 2023 annual town meeting elections are available on the City's website.
- Annual license and permit renewals will be coming to Council for approval as they are received and get approval from the various other departments.

Liquor Control Board/Cannabis Control Board – NONE

City Manager's Report –

Manager Storellicastro noted the following:

- The ARPA survey closes the end of this week.
- Strategic planning documents will come back to Council in the next few weeks.
- Council's December 20th meeting will be held at Alumni Hall for an FY24 budget workshop.
- Finance Director Dawn Monahan has been appointed Assistant Manager. She will be taking on additional duties including contracting, insurance, capital improvement plan, and special projects.

Unfinished Business – NONE

New Business –

A) "Housing Needs Assessment for the City of Barre" presentation.

David Sichel, chair of the All In For Barre Housing Task Force, presented an overview of the community and housing stock, vacancy rates, housing costs as a percentage of household incomes, and housing shortages. Mr.

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Sichel said there is a need for reviewing and updating zoning ordinances, creating all types of housing, and involving multiple stakeholders in the solutions. He said the City has applied for a grant to hire a consultant to overhaul the zoning regulations.

There was discussion on accessory dwelling units (ADU's), density changes, promoting state grant programs that offer assistance to property owners for making improvements, creation and administration of a revolving loan fund, reviewing statistics on subsidized housing and aging in place, scaling projects to attract developers, public/private partnerships, and infrastructure development.

Ericka Reil said housing needs to offer affordable options, and take transportation into consideration.

There was additional discussion on neighborhood development designations, growing the grand list, development of condominiums and duplexes as options, incentivizing weatherization improvements, and performing a detailed assessment of housing stock.

B) FY24 Budget Presentations: Barre Area Development Corporation, The Barre Partnership, and Aldrich Public Library.

Barre Area Development Corporation executive director Aimee Green reviewed the proposed FY24 budget. Ms. Green spoke of economic development in Barre City and Barre Town, goals for FY24, housing strategies, business recruitment and support, marketing strategies and investments, and strategic planning. She said BADC has created and filled a marketing coordinator position, which is included in the proposed FY24 budget.

There was discussion on the budget increase request, proposed housing development off Prospect Street, possible grant support for development, partnering with local major employers on housing initiatives, fundraising and generating revenues, scaling up marketing initiatives, and performance metrics.

Barre Partnership executive director Tracie Lewis reviewed the year's activities and the proposed FY24 budget. Ms. Lewis said the proposed budget shows the traditional 3.5% increase, but she is aware the current Barre City draft FY24 budget shows level funding for the Partnership for the year. There was discussion on marketing and coordination between the City, BADC and Partnership, and developing strategies for different demographics. Councilors expressed appreciation for all Ms. Lewis' and the Partnership's efforts and events during the current year.

Aldrich Public Library executive director Loren Polk reviewed her draft FY24 budget, and highlighted the budget cost drivers. Ms. Polk said they are asking for an 8% increase from the City. There was discussion on including the recently approved welcoming and warming shelter in the library's annual budget, cost increases in service contracts, increased maintenance expenses, and the possibility of sharing custodial services with the City.

Bernadette Rose talked about the volunteers that bring books to those who can't get to the library, and the afterschool and youth programs offered by the library.

There was additional discussion on the library's investment accounts and restricted endowments.

Manager Storellicastro said the Council has received budget presentations from all the different departments and organizations reflected in the general fund budget. The Councilor will look at the complete FY24 draft budget at its December 20th workshop meeting.

C) Authorization of a VLCT community Fund grant application by the Diversity & Equity Committee.

Manager Storellicastro noted a discrepancy between the grant amount shown in the grant narrative and what was included on the application, and said the amount shown in the narrative is correct. The amount being sought through the grant program is \$9,385. Mayor Hemmerick noted there is no required local cash match, however there is an in-kind match.

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Councilor Stockwell described the proposed project which would offer guided conversations about equity to people in leadership positions including Councilors, department heads and other City staff, and members of City committees, along with mediation for members of the Diversity & Equity Committee. She read a letter of support from Barre Unified Union School District Superintendent Chris Hennessey. Councilor Waszazak noted there are other letters of support included in the grant application.

Councilor Waszazak made the motion to authorize submission of the grant application, seconded by Councilor Lauzon.

Diversity & Equity Committee chair Joelen Mulvaney spoke about the possibility of a coordinator position referenced in the grant application, who would participate in the guided conversations, the style of facilitation, and providing mediation to the Diversity & Equity Committee.

Councilor Boutin made the motion to call the question, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. Such a motion requires immediate action and a 2/3 majority to pass. **Motion carried with Councilors Lauzon and Deering voting against.**

Council voted on the original motion to authorize submission of the grant. **Motion carried with Councilors Lauzon, Boutin and Deering voting against.**

Councilor Lauzon noted for the record he supports the grant application, but didn't support ending the discussion. He asked Ms. Mulvaney if the Diversity & Equity Committee has information about the Vermont IDEAL program. Ms. Mulvaney said they have reached out for additional information, and would be available to participate in further discussions. Manager Storellicastro said discussion is on next week's Council agenda.

Upcoming Business – NONE

Round Table –

Councilor Stockwell said she attended the *Messiah* performance at the Barre Opera House last weekend, and the soprano was wonderful.

Councilor Lauzon thanked all those who have made donations to the Christmas for Kids program.

Councilor Boutin said they will be making arrangements for wrapping the Christmas for Kids presents, and all are welcome to help out.

Mayor Hemmerick said he attended this evening's grand opening celebration of Downstreet's Foundation House women's recovery center on Keith Avenue. He noted it's the only such recovery center serving women with children in central Vermont.

Executive Session – NONE

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried.**

This meeting was recorded on the video meeting platform.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk