

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held June 20, 2023**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in person and via video platform by Mayor Jake Hemmerick at 6:00 PM at Barre City Hall, Barre, Vermont. 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, Fire Chief Keith Cushman, Deputy Fire Chief Joe Aldsworth, Public Works Director Brian Baker, Special Projects Manager Bill Ahearn, Buildings and Community Services Assistant Director Stephanie Quaranta, Human Resources Director Rikk Taft, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: NONE

Others Present: NONE

Adjustments to the Agenda:

- Remove the excavation permit fees from the consent agenda to new agenda for discussion.

Visitors and Communications –

Lisa Liotta said the Barre City community should be staffed by Barre City residents. She said she had applied for appointment to the Development Review Board and Planning Commission, but is withdrawing her name from consideration for both bodies.

Mayor Hemmerick acknowledged that yesterday was Juneteeth, which honors when word of the Emancipation Proclamation finally reached the entire country on June 19, 1865, 2 ½ years after it was signed into law. The Mayor talked about how the state of Vermont and its residents sent funding and soldiers in support of the war against slavery. He said how people confront racism continues to matter.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

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

- A. Approval of Minutes:
 - i. Regular meeting of June 6, 2023.
- B. City Warrants as presented:
 1. Ratification of Week 2023-24, dated June 14, 2023:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$175,952.02
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$142,810.22
 2. Approval of Week 2023-25, dated June 21, 2023:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$234,792.61
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$134,769.95
- C. 2023 Clerk's Office Licenses & Permits: NONE
- D. Approve excavation permit fees (moved to new items)
- E. Approve letter to Green Mountain Transit requesting restoration of services
- F. Annual presentation of the Internal Financial Controls Checklist
- G. Authorize a quitclaim deed to merge the Eastman Property with the Cow Pasture
- H. Approve City Council appointments
- I. Authorize the manager to execute contract(s)
- J. Resolution #2023-07: Designate the Manager as an authorized official with NBRC

City Clerk & Treasurer Report –

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- Water/sewer bill payments are due by June 30th.
- Working on end-of-fiscal-year financial transactions and accountings.

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Liquor Control Board/Cannabis Control Board –

Bibic Bhattarai, manager for a new convenience store called Grab N Go, to be located at 377 N. Main Street, introduced himself and said the business will offer beverages for sale, and eventually will have a food truck offering Nepalese food. Council approved a new 2nd class liquor license and tobacco license for Grab N Go on motion of Councilor Deering, seconded by Councilor Lauzon. **Motion carried with Councilor Boutin abstaining.**

City Manager’s Report –

Manager Storellicastro noted the following:

- The municipal pool will open this Friday, June 23rd. Admission will be free on the first day.
- Paving throughout the City is ongoing. There was discussion on painting lane lines as DPW staff members have time around preparing for paving projects. It was noted how bad the paving is on South Main Street near Cumberland Farms. The Manager said the City has been in discussions with the State on the poor condition of the pavement, as Route 14 is a state highway, however, the City has the responsibility for ongoing maintenance between state pavings. The state is scheduled to pave that area again in 2027, but there is an urgent need for paving now. The City has secured an agreement with the state that they will cover 55% of the cost of putting down an overlay of pavement in that area. Public Works Director Brian Baker said it is anticipated that paving will be done in the next 2-3 weeks, depending on the weather.
- Rental registry invoices have been sent out and payments are being received.
- The Manager and Clerk will offer refresher trainings in July to new committee and board members on open meeting laws, zoom meetings, and rules of conduct.

It was mentioned that Manager Storellicastro is nearing the end of his first year. The Council will discuss conducting a performance review during this evening’s executive session.

Mayor Hemmerick asked to have copies of public works permits provided to Council on an ongoing basis.

New Business –

Added from consent agenda – excavation permits.

Mayor Hemmerick asked about possible duplication of permits between the state and City. The Mayor said he wants to be sure the City isn’t taking on stormwater costs, maintenance and liabilities. Manager Storellicastro said stormwater permits aren’t included in the materials being presented for approval this evening. The Manager said excavation permits are already being issued by the public works department, and the proposed fees are to help cover costs associated with staff time. He said the fees are structured based on what neighboring communities do in similar circumstances.

Public Works Director Brian Baker and Special Projects Manager Bill Ahearn said the permits are applicable to any excavation happening in a City right-of-way impacting paving, streets, sidewalks and infrastructure.

There was discussion on costs associated with new water and wastewater connections, costs for accessory dwelling units, developing guidelines, updating ordinances, reviewing federal guidelines, and coordinating across City departments and the state.

Bernadette Rose asked when the new cross walk and bus stop near the North Barre Manor will be completed, as it’s been in the planning stages for two years. Mr. Baker said Public Works Superintendent TJ DeRose is laying out the project, and it is expected to be completed this construction season.

Manager Storellicastro noted this is Mr. Ahearn’s last meeting, having served the City as director of public works and special projects manager since 2017. The Manager presented Mr. Ahearn with a granite planter, and those in attendance gave a round of applause, acknowledging Mr. Ahearn’s service.

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Council adopted the new excavation permit fees on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Deering. **Motion carried.**

A) BADC strategic planning and marketing update

Barre Area Development Corporation executive director Aimee Green and marketing director Shannon Alexander said a subcommittee of the BADC board is currently vetting strategic planning consultants, with the planning process to begin in August. They reviewed the marketing plan which includes inventorying vacant spaces; working with the Barre Partnership, Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation and Central Vermont Regional Planning to hold an economic development summit in the fall; and continuing social media marketing initiatives and recruitment metrics & goals.

There was discussion on use of the marketing funding approved by Barre City voters on town meeting day. Mayor Hemmerick said Barre Town voters didn't approve similar funding, so the City funds should be dedicated to marketing efforts for the City. Ms. Green said BADC supports both communities, and noted the marketing dollars approved by Barre City voters cover Ms. Alexander's salary. Ms. Green is seeking grant funding to cover the balance of the expense. She said she will provide the Council with a spreadsheet showing what marketing efforts are being spent specifically on Barre City and Barre Town.

Cat Allen said improving facades in the downtown would make buildings more attractive to those looking to locate a business in the area.

MacKenzie (last name unknown) said she is interested in opening a restaurant, but finds it disheartening the amount of work needed to bring many of the buildings up to par. It would be helpful if BADC could provide information on where to access funding and support options for new businesses.

Lisa Liotta said there should be a public process for Main Street planning, and that stakeholders should be involved.

Jeffrey Tuper-Giles said there have been previous efforts to clean up facades and install displays in vacant storefront windows, with little success.

Jayne Bauer said there should be connections between existing businesses.

There were references made to an unfortunate incident in the media, and Councilors thanked Ms. Green for her quick actions to address the situation.

B) Update preparations to address emergency housing transitions

Manager Storrellicastro gave a brief update and noted there's been no further action on the possible use of the BOR as a congregate shelter, nor responses from the state for purchase or rental of portable toilets, shower trailers, or ice makers.

Councilor Waszazak said the Vermont legislature overrode Governor Scott's vetos of several bills from this past session, including the budget bill. Additional housing support was approved that will continue to provide housing until April 2024 for those experiencing housing insecurity. Ericka Reil said there are still people leaving the motel housing program who will need assistance.

C) Discuss composition of the Cemeteries, Recreation & Conservation Committee

Committee chair Giuliano Cecchinelli asked Council to reconsider merging the Cemeteries and Parks Committee and the Recreation Committee. There is an abundance of people interested in serving the two different areas of interest, and it would be a better use of peoples' energies to fill two separate committees. It was agreed to put this on the next Council agenda for discussion.

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There was discussion on the rationale behind merging committees, and reviewing application policies and processes.

D) Volunteer appointments/reappointments (order TBD)

Diversity and Equity

Current D&E chair Joelen Mulvaney requested reappointment to the Committee, and to change the name of the committee to Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging. Councilor Lauzon made the motion to reappoint Ms. Mulvaney to the D&E Committee, seconded by Councilor Waszazak.

The potential name change will be taken up at the next Council meeting on July 11th. There was discussion on transparency, abiding by constitutional and open meeting laws, treatment of volunteers, and accountability.

There were accusations of bullying and targeting, and whether the discussion was moving into an unacceptable area. Councilor Deering made the motion to call the question, which is non debatable. **Motion carried.**

Council voted on the motion to reappoint. **Motion carried with Councilor Deering voting against.**

Christopher Roberts requested reappointment to the D&E Committee, and spoke of his interest in continuing to serve. Council approved the reappointment on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

Raylene Meunier expressed her interest in being appointed to the D&E Committee, noting her interest in ADA issues. There was discussion on points of view, social media posts, and Town residents serving on City committees. Ms. Meunier said she currently serves on the Planning Commission, and is interested in being reappointed to that body, also. Mayor Hemmerick said he won't support Ms. Meunier's appointment to D&E because of her previous comments.

Alice Farrell expressed her interest in being appointed to the D&E Committee, and said she has spent her life being devoted to public service and education. There was discussion on social media posts, and Ms. Farrell's past service on the Barre Unified Union School District board. Ms. Farrell said the committee needs to have a good grasp of its goals and objectives to engage the community in the committee's work.

Councilor Lauzon made the motion to appoint Ms. Farrell to the Diversity & Equity Committee, seconded by Councilor Deering. **Motion did not pass with Councilors Lauzon, Deering and Boutin voting in favor, and Mayor Hemmerick and Councilors Cambel, Waszazak and Stockwell voting against.**

Councilor Lauzon made the motion to appoint Ms. Meunier to the Diversity & Equity Committee, seconded by Councilor Deering. **Motion did not pass with Councilors Lauzon, Deering and Boutin voting in favor, and Mayor Hemmerick and Councilors Cambel, Waszazak and Stockwell voting against.**

CV Fiber

Amanda Gustin expressed her interest in being appointed to the CV Fiber governance board. Council approved the appointment on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

Cemeteries, Recreation & Conservation

Norena Zanleoni expressed her interest in being reappointed to the Cemeteries, Recreation & Conservation Committee. Council approved reappointment of Ms. Zanleoni and Ilene Gillander, who was interviewed previously, to the CR&C Committee on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Lauzon. **Motion carried.**

Development Review Board (Wards I and II)

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Jeffrey Tuper-Giles expressed his interest in being reappointed as a Ward 1 delegate to the Development Review Board. Council approved the reappointment on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Waszazak.

Motion carried.

David Hough expressed his interest in being reappointed as a Ward II delegate to the Development Review Board.

Jayne Bauer expressed her interest in being appointed as a Ward II delegate to the DRB. Ms. Bauer noted she also submitted her name for appointment to the Planning Commission, and has a preference for the PC.

There was discussion on being able to ensure a quorum at meetings so as to conduct business, and creating an alternate position.

Council reappointed David Hough to the DRB on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Boutin.

Motion carried.

Planning Commission

Rosemary Averill and Joe Reil expressed their interest in being reappointed to the Planning Commission. Council approved the reappointments on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Waszazak.

Motion carried with Mayor Hemmerick voting against.

Michael Hellein expressed his interest in being reappointed to the Planning Commission.

Ernest Drown and Caitlin Corkins expressed their interest in being appointed to the Planning Commission.

Jayne Bauer said she already expressed her interest in being appointed to the Planning Commission during her interview for the DRB.

Raylene Meunier said she already expressed her interest in being reappointed to the Planning Commission during her interview for the Diversity & Equity Committee.

Council reappointed Michael Hellein and Raylene Meunier to the Planning Commission on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Boutin. **Motion carried with Mayor Hemmerick and Councilor Stockwell voting against.**

Council appointed Caitlin Corkins to the Planning Commission on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

CV Regional Planning Commission

Council approved appointing Michael Hellein as Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission alternate on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Lauzon. **Motion carried.**

Upcoming Business – Due to the late hour, this item was skipped.

Round Table – Due to the late hour, this item was skipped.

Executive Session – Councilor Stockwell made the motion to find that premature general public knowledge of litigation, real estate, and personnel discussions would clearly place the City of Barre at a substantial disadvantage should the discussions be public. The motion was seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried with Councilor Boutin voting against.**

Councilor Boutin said he objects to having real estate discussions in executive session.

Council went into executive session at 9:45 PM to discuss litigation, real estate, and personnel under the

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provisions of 1 VSA § 313 on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. Manager Storrellicastro, City Attorney Oliver Twombly, Fire Chief Keith Cushman, Deputy Fire Chief Joe Aldsworth, and members of the International Association of Firefighters' executive board: Camden Morrison, Holden Poirier, Kirk Strassberger, and Anderson Brown, were invited into the executive session. **Motion carried with Councilor Boutin voting against.**

Council came out of executive session at 11:06 PM on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:06 PM on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

The open portions of the meeting were recorded on the video platform.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk

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