

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held March 12, 2024**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in person and via video platform by Acting Mayor Michael Boutin at 6:01 PM at City Hall, Barre, Vermont. In attendance were: From Ward I, Councilors Emel Cambel and Thom Lauzon; from Ward II, Councilors Michael Boutin (serving as Acting Mayor) and Teddy Waszazak; and from Ward III, Councilors Michael Deering and Samn Stockwell. City staff members present were City Manager Nicolas Storrellicastro, Assistant City Manager Dawn Monahan, Public Works Director Brian Baker, Homelessness and Housing Coordinator Tess Taylor, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: Mayor Jake Hemmerick

Adjustments to the Agenda:

Manager Storrellicastro reviewed some editing changes to the contracts being considered under the consent agenda. The Manager also noted there will be an executive session for real estate and personnel issues.

Visitors and Communications:

Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Committee chair Joelen Mulvaney read the committee's annual report, covering the period from August 2022 through December 2023. The report highlighted committee progress and barriers.

Bernadette Rose said she attended last week's local hazard mitigation plan public meeting, and noted the staff members who participated in the meeting were well informed, and the event was well done.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

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

- A. Approval of Minutes:
 - i. Regular meeting of February 27, 2024.
- B. City Warrants as presented:
 1. Ratification of Week 2024-10, dated March 6, 2024:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$360,467.15
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$142,939.87
 2. Approval of Week 2024-11, dated March 13, 2024:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$226,462.51
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$155,170.15
- C. 2024 Clerk's Office Licenses & Permits:
 - i. Entertainment Licenses:
 - i. Union rally, City Hall Park, Saturday, March 23rd, from 11AM – 2PM. Zoe Jeka (applicant)
- D. Approve documents and resolution for Municipal Climate Recovery Fund loan
- E. Authorize the Manager to execute contracts
 - i. Public Works: Berlin Street culvert; Wastewater Treatment Facility roof, and 20-year review amendment; 2024 paving
 - ii. Flood Recovery: Wastewater Treatment Facility fence

City Clerk & Treasurer Report –

City Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- Official election results from last week's BUUSD, CVCCSD, and presidential primary elections are posted on the City website.
- Information on offices up for election, nominating petitions and procedures for Barre City's

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- annual meeting on May 14th, are posted on the elections page of the City website.
- Water/sewer bills went in the mail March 1st, and are due by April 1st.
- Dog licenses are available. All dogs must be licensed by April 1st.

Liquor Control Board/Cannabis Control Board –

Council approved the following license renewals on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Deering. **Motion carried with Acting Mayor Boutin abstaining.**

License holder	1st class license	2nd class license	3rd class license	outside consumption permit	tobacco	tobacco substitutes
American Legion	yes		yes	yes		
Cumberland Farms (N Main Street)		yes			yes	yes
Cumberland Farms (S Main Street)		yes			yes	yes
Jiffy Mart		yes			yes	yes
Ladder 1 Grill	yes		yes	yes		
The Meltdown	yes			yes		
Mulligan's	yes		yes	yes		
Mutuo	yes		yes			
Walgreens		yes			yes	

City Manager’s Report –

Manager Storellicastro reported on the following:

- Public meeting on hazard mitigation plan revisions was held last week. Next steps are to create and review a draft. There is a survey on the City website for public input.
- The assessors are conducting inspections of properties in the flood areas. They have re-assessed 50+ properties, and have updated more than 150 permits.
- The new BOR turf is expected to be installed by April 8th. There will be times in the schedule for general public access.
- There is a meeting scheduled with the proposed Seminary Street parking lot developer and the TIF consultant to explore TIF options.

There was discussion on enforcement of minimum housing ordinances in the north end, and reviewing the assessments of flood-damaged properties, including those outside of the flood zones.

New Business –

A) Approve use of ARPA to fund N. Main Street sewer lining.

Public Works Director Brian Baker reviewed a video of the inside of sewer piping along N. Main Street, highlighting sections of pipe that are cracked or broken. Mr. Baker showed an sample of a product for lining the pipes with a rigid material that will stabilize the system and extend the life of the pipes. It will also stop the inflow of groundwater into the system. The cost is much less expensive than tearing up the street and replacing the pipes. There was discussion on how much time it will take for installation, and the need to install a pump bypass for North Barre Manor to handle the changeover time.

Council approved allocating ARPA funds for the N. Main Street sewer lining project on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

B) Audit presentation.

Sullivan Powers auditor Rick Brigham and Assistant City Manager Dawn Monahan reviewed the FY23 audit. Mr. Brigham said Sullivan Powers issued an unqualified opinion, and there were no material weaknesses or deficiencies. There was discussion on transfers from the general fund to the capital fund, and development of a 5-year plan for enterprise funds and services.

Council accepted the FY23 audit, with thanks to the finance department, on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

Acting Mayor Boutin took the opportunity between agenda items to present Clerk Carol Dawes with the Public Service Award from Vermont Secretary of State Sarah Copeland Hanzas, acknowledging the Clerk's 16 years of service in advance of her planned retirement following the May 14th annual meeting elections. Those in attendance give Clerk Dawes a standing ovation.

C) Barre Up report.

Barre Up board members Shawna Trader and Pam Wilson, and Construction Manager Prem Linsky gave a 6-month report on the long-term recovery group's work. There was discussion on case management work with people impacted by the flood, preparing for future disasters, building organizational capacity, construction and rebuilding cases, partnerships with Youthbuild and other supporting groups, statistics and lessons learned.

Alex Raeburn said Barre Up has played a crucial role in providing resources and support while he has been dealing with the destruction of his home.

D) Warn Charter Change hearings.

Clerk Dawes reviewed her memo, and suggested Council warn the 1st charter change public hearing for April 11th, and the 2nd one for April 23rd. The meeting on April 11th, which is a Thursday, will be in lieu of the usual Tuesday meeting that week, and will include approval of the warning for the May 14th annual meeting elections.

The Clerk noted her memo included the various proposed charter changes, and input from the City Attorney. She said Council should schedule time for discussion on the language before April 11th, as that date will mark approval of the finalized proposals that will be printed on the ballot. The Manager will place the proposed charter changes on the April 23rd agenda for discussion.

Sue Higby said she is looking for a white paper with background on the proposed changes and why they're being considered.

Council approved the charter change public hearing dates of April 11th and April 23rd on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

E) Approve Stitzel, Page & Fletcher to conduct Barre City's tax sales for 2024.

Clerk Dawes reviewed her memo, asking Council to approve Stitzel Page to conduct tax sales. Council approved Stitzel, Page & Fletcher, P.C. to conduct Barre City's tax sale processes commenced in 2024 on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Deering. **Motion carried.**

F) Approve MOU to accept assignment of real estate option for Prospect Heights and authorize NBRC grant application.

Manager Storellicastro said Prospect Heights Development Incorporated has secured an option to purchase property from Fecteau Residential, Inc. The memorandum of understanding would assign the option to the City of Barre, which will strengthen the application for a Northern Borders Regional Commission Catalyst Program grant to assist in developing the property. Barre Area Development Corporation executive director Aimee Green noted the Prospect Street project has been named the number one priority on Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission's projects list. The Manager noted there are no out-of-pocket costs for the City under the terms of the MOU or option.

Councilor Lauzon noted he serves on the Prospect Heights board, as does Manager Storellicastro.

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Councilor Lauzon made the motion, seconded by Councilor Stockwell, to:

1. Authorize Acting Mayor Michael Boutin to execute the MOU subject to final review and approval by the City Attorney; and
2. Authorize the City of Barre to submit an application under the NBRC Catalyst Program.

Council voted on the motion as presented. **Motion carried.**

G) Flood recovery updates.

Manager Storrellicastro gave a Powerpoint update on flood recovery efforts. The Manager noted the legislature has included \$1M in local economic damage grants for the City in the FY24 budget adjustment bill. There will be updated budget presentations at the March 26th and April 2nd Council meetings. The state issued its RFP today for river engineering support services, which will be available to municipalities impacted by the flooding, and there's an EPA Community Change grant opportunity that might assist with flood mitigation efforts.

There was discussion on approaching properties that haven't yet expressed an interest in being bought out. Ben Charette asked when there will be more information on mitigation efforts on River Street. The Manager said the river engineers will be contracted by the state until July, and the contract will likely be extended until later in the year. The hope is to have information from the engineers later this summer.

H) First Reading Warned 8:00 PM: Ord. #2024-01: Police ordinance modernization.

Acting Mayor Boutin opened the public hearing at 8:01 PM. Manager Storrellicastro reviewed the proposed revisions which primarily remove redundant language from the ordinance that is already covered in the collective bargaining agreement or policy. Council approved the first reading and scheduled the second reading for the next Council meeting on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

Upcoming Business –

Manager Storrellicastro said the March 26th meeting will include a discussion on the FY25 budget. Councilor Waszazak asked to restart talks around ARPA allocations. Councilor Lauzon asked to hold an informal Council discussion on housing next Tuesday evening, with additional discussions on the Council's off nights. There was discussion on requesting legislative assistance around an additional extension for the TIF district, allowing tax stabilization agreements in the TIF district, and revising City zoning ordinances to mirror the state's definition of substantial damage.

Councilor Lauzon made the motion to meet on "off" Tuesday evenings to discuss housing, seconded by Councilor Deering.

Amy Galford said there should be outreach to those impacted by the flooding to invite their participation in the discussions.

Bernadette Rose said there should be more community-building events to engage and get community buy-in.

There was discussion on concerns around holding housing discussions, and the dangers of letting people stay in the floodway.

Council voted on the motion as presented. **Motion carried with Councilors Cambel and Stockwell voting against.**

Round Table –

Councilor Deering said he is now a permanent substitute teacher at Barre City Elementary School.

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

Council went into executive session at 8:29 PM to discuss real estate and personnel under the provisions of 1 VSA § 313 on motion of Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. Manager Storrellicastro was invited into the executive session. **Motion carried.**

Council came out of executive session at 8:45 PM on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM on motion of Councilor Stockwell, 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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