

To be approved at the next Barre City Council Meeting

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, July 14, 2026, 4:30pm
IN PERSON LOCATION: 15 Hilltop Avenue, Barre, VT

The warned Special Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in person by Mayor Thomas Lauzon at 4:30 PM at 15 Hilltop Avenue, Barre, Vermont. In attendance were: From Ward I, Councilor Sonya Spaulding and Beth Hilgartner; from Ward II, Councilor Jeff Bergeron and Councilor Amanda Gustin; and from Ward III, Councilor Michael Deering. City staff members present were City Manager Nicolas Storellicastro and Housing & Homelessness Liaison Tess Taylor.

Item 1. Call to Order at 4:30 PM

Item 2. Adjustments to Agenda

None.

Item 3. Site Visit at Hilltop Avenue

The City Manager provided a history on 15 and 21 Hilltop Avenue, which are owned by the City following FEMA buyouts. Under FEMA rules, the City will own the lots in perpetuity and cannot develop the property.

Small and non-permanent activities are allowed, including gardens. The City Manager was approached by Tilia Tea Company with a request to create a community garden on 15 Hilltop Avenue. The request was vetted through Vermont Emergency Management (VEM), which oversees FEMA buyout lot use. VEM authorized the plan use of the lot as being consistent with FEMA rules.

Tilia Tea Company then provided a briefing on the plans for the site, including the organizations goal of planting in underutilized and vacant urban lots. Work includes not just plantings, but removal of overgrown landscaping and removal of invasive species.

Several residents of the general neighborhood area expressed their opinions about the garden, both in support and opposition.

The Council acknowledged that the City will confront more of these situations as additional buyouts are executed and “pocket parks” are created as a result. The Council discussed how this could become a template for future uses of FEMA buyout lots transferred to the City.

Item 4. Adjournment.

On motion of Councilor Gustin, seconded by Councilor Bergeron, the Special Council Meeting was adjourned.

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council -Draft
Held July 14th, 2026, at 6pm
Council Chambers-Barre City Hall**

The warned Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in person and via video platform by Mayor Thomas Lauzon at 6:00 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall, Barre, Vermont. In attendance were: From Ward I, Councilors Sonya Spaulding and Beth Hilgartner; from Ward II, Councilor Jeff Bergeron and Councilor Amanda Gustin; and from Ward III, Councilor Michael Deering. City staff members present were City Manager Nicolas Storrellicastro, Finance Director Christina Kimball, Public Works Director Brian Baker, Facilities Director Tom Baker, Clerk Cheryl Metivier, Treasurer Carol Dawes

Adjustments to the Agenda – Insert an Executive Session between Item 8G and Item 8H.

Motion to approve of the agenda dated 7/14/2026 moved by Councilor Bergeron, Seconded by Councilor Spaulding, approved.

Visitors & Communications –none

Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Minutes -

- i. Special Meeting of 6/22/26
- ii. Special Meeting of 6/23/26-corrected

B. Clerk's Office Licenses & Permits

National Night Out Event-Currier Park – Aug 4th from 5pm-8pm

Munchie Madness Food Vendor located at 23 Jones Bros. Way

C. Approve temporary services contract with Manager-continue union negotiations

D. FY27 Council Appointments

E. Authorize Department Heads to execute City-approved FEMA buyout closing documents

F. Allocate up \$2000 from the Italian Stonecutter Memorial Fund for construction of new flood-resilient garden beds at Dente Park.

The Granite Center Garden Club (GCGC) is responsible for the planting and maintenance of flower beds around the City. Barre City reimburses the GCGC for the expense of plantings, compost, mulch, and related costs. This redesign of Dente Park requires a one-time expense of between \$1,500 and \$2,000

G Approve letter of attestation for the Barre Partnership Downtown Vibrancy Fund application.

The Granite Center Garden Club (GCGC) is responsible for the planting and maintenance of flower beds around the City. Barre City reimburses the GCGC for the expense of plantings, compost, mulch, and related costs. This redesign of Dente Park requires a one-time expense of between \$1,500 and \$2,000

H. Authorize the Manager to execute contract(s)

- \$54,000 for Andrew LaRosa, Architect PLLC: Services related to implementation of state elevation grants.

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- Amount TBD for Downs Rachlin Martin: Legal services for Prospect Heights development agreement. Rate per hour for attorneys ranges from \$245-\$475 per hour.
- Salt buggies Epoke \$56,994 from the Capital Improvement Fund This purchase would replace 3 aging sidewalk salt buggies. The proposed new machines provide operational efficiencies because they carry more salt (reducing the number of times they need to reload) and distribute salt more effectively (reducing the total cost of salt used).

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda for 07/14/2026 was moved by Councilor Gustin, seconded by Councilor Bergeron, approved.

4-a. Approve City Warrants

- i. Approve week of 7/15//26
- ii. Ratify week of 6/24/26, 7/1/26, 7/8/26

Motion to approve city warrants moved by Councilor Gustin, seconded by Councilor Deering – approved. Councilor Spaulding abstaining

City Clerk & Treasurer Report –

The Clerk's office has mailed 400+ absentee ballots to date with 150+ having been returned. Please read and follow the directions for returning ballots. A ballot not following the procedure will be marked invalid until the voter comes into cure the issue.

There is still plenty of time to request absentee ballots. You may do so by calling the Clerk's office or sign up online through the voter portal.

Liquor/Cannabis Boards-

Dougie Catering

Motion to approve Liquor/Cannabis licensures moved by Councilor Deering, seconded by Councilor Spaulding, approved

Managers' Report-

- Recreation Dept is in full gear with cool camps like a CSI and painting a Mural there may still be openings in the CSI camp at this time. Contact the Recreation Department.
- DPW is still in street repair finishing up Camp St and adding a sidewalk, working on Seminary St and Berlin soon.
- The Cemetery Department has completed the computer uploads and scanning for easier access to records.
- The dam project Friends of the Winooski have been trying to move forward with has been delayed possibly through to 2027.

Bern Rose mentioned the storm drain issue on Allen St. Waterflow has cause corrosion creating a sink hole.

New Business;

A. Volunteer Appointment(s) - Cemeteries Committee, DRB

- Taylor Dexter, Cemeteries Committee. There is one vacant seat with a June 30, 2028 expiration date.

Motion to approve to the volunteer appointment of Taylor Dexter to the Cemeteries Committee with a June 30, 2028 expiration date was moved by Councilor Hilgartner seconded by Councilor Bergeron, approved

- Spencer Billings, Development Review Board At-Large seat. There is one vacant At-Large seat with a June 30, 2030 expiration date.

Motion to approve the volunteer appointment of Spencer Billings to the DRB with a June 30, 2030 expiration date was moved by Councilor Deering seconded by Councilor Spaulding approved

- Michael Ornitz, Development Review Board Ward III seat. There is one vacant Ward III seat with a June 30, 2030 expiration date.

Motion to approve the volunteer appointment of Michael Ornitz to the DRB with a June 30, 2030 expiration date was moved by Councilor Deering seconded by Councilor Spaulding approved

B. Approve sale of Hope Cemetery Fountain lot – Tom Baker

Giuliano Cechinelli approached the City to purchase the out-of-service and in disrepair fountain at Hope Cemetery. Mr. Cechinelli has studied historical photos of the fountain and plans to restore it and transform it into an ornamental planter. The packet includes his plan and photos. If approved by the Council, we recommend selling the lot for \$2,950, which is the equivalent cost of a 3-grave lot.

Instead of allowing the full purchase, the Council offered the work and restoration for the cost of the perpetual care.

Motion to allow Giuliano Cechinelli to retain the rights for perpetual care of the Fountain at 20% of the cost of (3) grave lot, was moved by Councilor Bergeron seconded by Councilor Hilgartner approved.

C. Approve Cemeteries Committee request to allocate \$20,000 from the perpetual care fund for monument cleaning and maintenance of Elmwood and St. Monicas – Tom Baker and Starr Parnigoni LeCompte-Committee Chair,

Motion to Approve Cemeteries Committee request to allocate \$20,000 from the perpetual care fund for monument cleaning and maintenance of Elmwood and St. Monicas was moved by Councilor Deering, seconded by Councilor Bergeron approved.

D. Approve firetruck purchase – Keith Cushman

The expected purchase price is \$1,127,048. City staff will recommend lease financing for this purchase at a time closer to the delivery of the new apparatus. It is anticipated that a 10-year lease finance term may result in an approximate annual debt service payment of ~\$140,000. Delivery expected 2030. Replacing the aged Engine 1.

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A motion to approve the purchase of a fire truck was moved by Councilor Deering, seconded by Councilor Gustin, approved.

E. Set FY27 water and sewer rates and approve water system rate study – Brian Baker, Christina Kimball,

Hoping to come closer to leveling the Water enterprise fund deficit, while also providing the resources needed to operate, maintain and improve this infrastructure the group approached the Council with the rate increase outlined below.

- Water: 0% base rate; 10% use rate (last year 3% base and 3% use increase)
- Sewer: 0% base rate; 10% use rate (last year 5% base and 5% use increase, decrease from 21% increase 2 years ago)

After the presentation, Mayor Lauzon countered with a 3% increase for base rate, and 15% increase for usage. A new resolution with the changes will be brought to the Council at the next meeting.

F. Approve FY27 Flood Resiliency Plan (Gustin)

Councilor Gustin outlined the basics of the plan, including completed projects, continued projects, new projects (flood gage and bridge design) and future plans for flood mitigation. The plan is a work in progress with components shifting or changing as needed but maintains a bookmark for measuring progress.

G. Discuss CDBG-DR Round III applications – Manager Nicolas Storrellicastro

The three focus point for the grant applications continue to be North End elevations, North End buyouts and 143 N. Main St options for use and improvement.

Executive Session -Acting City Manager

Motion for finding for executive session moved by Councilor Spaulding, Seconded by Councilor Hilgartner, approved

Motion to enter executive session moved by Councilor Hilgartner, Seconded by Councilor Deering, approved

Video paused at 7:51pm

Video resumed at 9:04pm

Motion to exit executive session moved by Councilor Hilgartner, Seconded by Councilor Gustin, approved

H. Appoint Acting City Manager effective July 18, 2026-deffered

Round Table

Mayor Lauzon – Enjoy the Heritage Festival –

Agrees that ICE should pull back and suspend. No one should celebrate someone's death.

Councilor Deering- Enjoy the Heritage Festival 24th-26th

Councilor Hilgartner- Thankful to Neighborly Barre for the grants

The walking garden tour and teas was a success

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Thankful for the Barre FD for securing the area around her home after a powerline fell.
The pool mural is beautiful.

Councilor Gustin- July 18th – Quilting Bee at the Barre Social club-Circle will benefit

States her opposing ICE entering communities and killing people without regard.
As her family who were also immigrants who also settled in Biddeford ME this
hit close to her heart.

Councilor Bergeron – Congratulations to Barre Community Baseball for the hard work and playing into the
Finals.

Councilor Spaulding – Thank you to the City and DPW for installing sidewalks on Camp St.

Would City Hall light up with the colors representing the winners of the World Cup?

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilor Spaulding, seconded by Councilor Deering, approved.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm

Next regular meeting is scheduled for July 28th, 2026, at 6pm.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Metivier, City Clerk