

To be approved at the next Barre City Council Meeting

Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council (Draft)
Held March 11, 2025 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, Councilor Emel Cambel and Councilor Sonya Spaulding (remote); from Ward II, Councilor Amanda Gustin and Councilor Jeff Bergeron; and from Ward III, Councilor Samn Stockwell and Councilor Michael Deering. City staff members present were City Manager Nicolas Storrellicastro (remote), Assistant Manager/Finance Director Dawn Monahan, Police Chief Brad Vail, Fire Chief Keith Cushman, Facilities Director Tom Baker and Clerk/Treasurer Cheryl Metivier.

Absent: none

Adjustments to the Agenda – Correct warrant weeks to reflect;

Ratify week 03/05/2025

Approve week 03/12/2025

Remove item 8A.

Add Real Estate to executive session topics

Visitors & Communications – none

4. Consent Agenda

- Approval of Minutes
 - i. Meetings of 02/25/2025
- B. Clerk's Office Licenses & Permits -none
- C. Reappoint Amy Galford and Peter Anthony (alternate) to the CVSWMD board
- D. Authorize the Manager to execute contract(s)

Motion to approve consent agenda moved by Councilor Deering, seconded by Councilor Bergeron, approved.

4-a. Approve City Warrants

- i. Ratify week of 03/05/25
- ii. Approve week of 03/12/25

Motion to approved City Warrants moved by Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Deering- Approved (Councilor Spaulding abstaining)

5. City Clerk & Treasurer Report

*The BUUSD and CVCC elections official results may be view on the Barre City website, under the Elections option.

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Over all, the adjustment to using the lower level was successful and with the knowledge gained throughout the election the process will be improved for future elections.

*Dog licensing renewals are still being accepted timely through March 31. With a updated rabies certificate and fees you may come into the Clerk's office for this service, or the payment may be online, however please allow 7-10 business days for processing.

*Looking forward, Saturday, May 3rd is Green-Up Day. The Clerk's office has a sign-up sheet for areas you intend to cover, and green bags for the collected items during the Event.

6. Liquor/Cannabis Control Boards

Champlain Farm – 15 S. Main St. – 2nd Class Liquor, Tobacco, Tobacco Substitute

Champlain Farm – 169 Washington St. - 2nd Class Liquor, Tobacco, Tobacco Substitute

Champlain Farm – 475 N. Main St. - 2nd Class Liquor, Tobacco, Tobacco Substitute

Dente Market – 406 N. Main St. - 2nd Class Liquor

7. City Manager's Report

The Manager thanked City staff for the assistance in getting the necessary equipment for his unexpected trip which allowed him to stay connected and participate in City meetings.

8. New Business

A. Flood Resiliency Plan – hydrology study (Gustin)

As part of our regular Flood Resiliency Plan updates, Roy Schiff and support staff, presented an update the Council on the hydrology study that the City commissioned in 2024. The presentation outlined the (3) chosen focal points, Berlin St. bridge (and surrounding areas), Willey St. bridge (and surrounding areas) and Gunner Brook (and surrounding Maple Ave, Brook St.). The presentation gave a synopsis of the outcomes from the proposed work to be done including, removal of Berlin St. bridge, removal of the trestle down river both would prevent debris build up, and the reconstruction of the Willey Street bridge. All projects included creation of resting area for water during flooding events, but none of them offered complete flood free zones.

B. Ratify collective bargaining agreement with FOP

Upon review of the policy terms of a 3-year contract negotiated with the FOP, the union representing our Police Department (police, dispatch, meters enforcement). The two parties have reached a resolution.

Motion to Ratify the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) was moved by Councilor Cambel, seconded by Councilor Gustin – approved.

C. Update on City Hall security cameras

Police Chief Brad Vail offered supporting evidence in favor of the use of cameras throughout the City, but specifically the camera recently installed and replacing a nonfunctioning outside City Hall. With the quality of life issues the City faced last summer, and continues to face, a surveillance camera can offer supporting documentation of unlawful activities within the surrounding areas, and would welcome more than just the camera installed as a Pilot program.

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However, community members voiced concerns of violation of privacy and who could or would have access to the footage and whether there was written policy within the City for usage. The placement of warning signs was strongly suggested.

D. FY26 budget

A preliminary tax rate increase of 5.9% was introduced by the Manager and Assistant Manager Dawn Monahan, followed by the Power Point presentations as listed;

i. Department presentations (PD, FD, Facilities)

PD – Chief Brad Vail

The Police department, dispatch and meter enforcement consumes 25 % of the overall budget. Wages, health insurance and benefits are fixed and determined between collective bargaining units and the City managing staff. Between the reduction of overtime, vehicle maintenance, fuel and staffing without compromising the quality of service, the overall savings for the PD should be \$118,715 for the FY2025-2026.

FD – Chief Keith Cushman

As with all City departments, wages, health care and benefits are fixed and on the increase annually for approximately 5%. To date, call volumes are on the increase, and staffing not at ideal capacity, the Fire department hope revenue from ambulance billing will increase, though reimbursement through Medicare and Medicaid are fixed and usually under billed fees.

With the purchase of the new fire truck savings will come from the updated equipment with less maintenance or replacement. Savings will also come from reduced overtime and fuel usage for a combined savings of approximately \$121,485.

Facilities – Tom Baker

The facilities department cares for all City buildings (including surrounding lands and lawns), parks playgrounds and cemeteries. The staff maintains the upkeep and provides necessary change of use to arenas such as the BOR and Auditorium when seasons change. The quality of care in maintaining the local Cemeteries to reflect the importance and grandeur of the artistry in the monuments, for families, local community members and tourist are demanding but worthy. Facilities staff has a fixed and contract negotiated wages and benefits.

Savings of \$73,800 can be seen with the reduction of the seasonal staff, and less fuel usage.

ii. Partner presentations (Aldrich Library, Partnership, BADC)

Aldrich Library – Kristin Bauman, Garrett Grant, Nancy Pope, David Sickel, Mary Ellen Boisvert and Teddy Waszazak

Robust and bustling with activities and informational material meant to educate, enrich and promote well-being are offered through the Aldrich Library is as requesting \$296,980, a 6% increase from FY25 with increased cost in wages, technology, maintenance and utilities. The use of the library has increased 34% by local community members, and surrounding communities.

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“We project a 5% increase in our revenue for the coming fiscal year, based on steady growth in library usage, continued support from the community, and expected grants and donations. However, this still leaves us with a projected budget deficit of \$37,560. We are actively exploring options to address this gap, including seeking additional grants, engaging in fundraising efforts, and increasing community partnerships. We are confident that through these efforts, we will mitigate the deficit and ensure the library’s long-term viability.”

Barre Partnership – Tracie Lewis, Shannon Alexander

The Barre Partnership works year round to coordinate events to bring business, visitors and new residents to the City of Barre for continued growth and vitality. Events like Food Trucks & Concerts in the Park, Farmers Markets, the Heritage Festival, Granite City 5K, ribbon cuttings and more, bring community members together in addition to drawing attendees from neighboring communities for the recreation and enjoyment. Income for the organization is driven through sponsorships of banners, vendor fees, grants and donations, even so, the gap for funding is there.

Looking ahead to level spending in wages, rent, insurance, advertising and utilities the Barre Partnership is asking for an increase in funding of 3% for a total sum of \$72,100 which will be applied to the increased expense of events and programs.

*Council members would have preferred more data driven information.

Barre Area Development Corporation (BADC) – Carl Rinker, Al Flory, Bob Lord, Steve MacKenzie

The objective of the BADC is to promote the City’s lure for business growth, relocation or launching of new. The non-profit puts the City’s best foot forward to bring and maintain a healthy, vibrant downtown full of activities and commerce. Not only does the BADC seek new innovative ways to build a better community, they strive to build the housing a bigger and better community would mandate, spearheading projects such as, Prospect Heights.

The expenses for operation has kept the organization in the red, however, this is not a surprise. The asked \$67,881 for funding is an increase of \$7,000+. Most income is govern by grants or donations leaving the gap, and the need for support funding from the City.

*Council members would have preferred more data driven information.

F. Review proposed charter changes

The City shall be governed by an elected Council and by an appointed City Manager and by such other officers and employees as may be duly appointed pursuant to this charter, City ordinances or general laws of the State of Vermont.

Within the limitations of the foregoing, the council shall have the power to; (e) Appoint and remove the clerk.

The City Council may authorize the sale or lease of any real or personal estate belonging to the City, and all conveyances, grants or leases of such real estate shall be signed by the Mayor or another councilor as agreed upon by a majority vote of the City Council.

At the close of the fiscal year, unless otherwise disposed of in the manner provided by law or set in reserve by

To be approved at the next Barre City Council Meeting the City Council, any unexpended funds remaining from the City budget [may be retained if approved by vote of the City Council, as an undesignated fund balance for future use. Any funds retained pursuant to this provision shall be limited to an amount not greater than five percent of the City budget. Any amount remaining in excess of five percent in the City budget must be used in the subsequent budget to cut the tax rate] shall be carried forward as revenue in the General Fund for the next ensuing fiscal year. Any deficit existing at the end of the fiscal year shall be liquidated in the manner provided by law.

G. Discussion of governance committee (Stockwell)

Purpose-Charter and ordinances have no periodic or systemic review, yet the City remains responsible for the content. Revision happens now when a new ordinance or a charter change is proposed. The writing and revision is done by the person proposing the change, and this may be a fine process, but greater oversight and uniformity would be achieved by a standing committee.

After discussion of possible legal issues stemming from changing, adjusting or omitting ordinance language the proposal was withdrawn by Councilor Stockwell.

H. Funding requests for town meeting (Clerk)

The Council was presented with the list of non-profit organization in the area requesting supplemental funding from the City of Barre for the fiscal year 2026. This ask will be place in an article for the Annual Election Ballot.

Barre Area Senior Center	\$ 7,500
Barre Partnership	\$ 5,000
Capstone Community Action, Inc.	\$ 3,000
Central VT Adult Education	\$ 7,700
Central VT Council on Aging	\$ 18,000
Central VT Home Health & Hospice Kelly Circle	\$ 28,000
Community Harvest of Central Vermont	\$ 2,000
Elevate Youth Services	\$ 1,500
Family Center of Washington Co.	\$ 5,000
Good Samaritan Haven	\$ 3,500
Mosaic Vermont	\$ 1,500
OUR House of Central VT	\$ 2,500
People's Health & Wellness Clinic	\$ 500
Rainbow Bridge Community Center	\$ 3,000
VT Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired	\$ 3,000
Washington Co. Diversion Program	\$ 1,000
Washington Co. Mental Health	\$ 2,500
	\$ 10,000
TOTAL	\$ 105,200

Motion to approve the non-profit funding to be place on the Annual Election ballot moved by Councilor Bergeron, seconded by Councilor Deering, approved.

Upcoming Business;

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Round table;

Councilor Gustin – Neighborhood Flood Walks schedule;

March 15 – Orange St & Liberty St @ 1pm
March 16 – Tremont St & Sheridan St. @ 1pm
March 29 – Berlin St. & Railroad St. @ 1 pm

Gathering for warm drinks and snacks followed by a walk in the neighborhoods inviting residents to describe the movement of water during flooding or rain events.

Councilor Spaulding – Thank you for voting

Finding for the need for executive session was motioned by Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Gustin, approved.

Motion to go into executive session moved by Councilor Cambel, seconded by Councilor Stockwell, approved.

Motion to exit executive session moved by Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Bergeron, approved

Motion to adjourn moved by Councilor Gustin, seconded by Councilor Deering, approved

Meeting adjourned at 11:51pm

Next regular meeting is scheduled for March 25th, 2025 at 6pm.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Metivier, City Clerk