

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held August 25, 2015**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order by Mayor Thomas Lauzon at 7:00 PM at Barre City Hall. In attendance were: From Ward I, Councilors Charles Dindo and Paul Poirier; from Ward II, Councilors Michael Boutin and Michael Smith; and from Ward III, Councilors Anita Chadderton and Lucas Herring. Also in attendance were City Manager Steve Mackenzie and Clerk/Treasurer Carolyn Dawes.

Absent: NONE

Adjustments to the Agenda: Mayor Lauzon said there would be an action item related to painting the ceiling of the BOR added at the end of new business.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

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

- Minutes of the following meetings:
 - Regular meeting on August 11, 2015.
- City Warrants as presented.
- 2015 Licenses & Permits issued through the clerk's office.
 - Entertainment Licenses
 - ReSource, 30 Granite Street. CD release party, August 29th from 6 – 11 PM.

The City Clerk/Treasurer Report – Clerk Dawes reported on the following:

- Firetruck election results from the August 18th special election are in the packet and on the website.
- First quarter property tax payments were due by August 17th. The delinquency rate is 6.19%, which is the highest rate in 5 years. Most of the high rate is due to four properties with quarterly tax bills of \$10,000+ that were not paid timely.
- The auditors are scheduled to be on site September 14th – 30th.

Approval of Building Permits – Council approved the following building permits on motion of Councilor Smith, seconded by Councilor Dindo. **Motion carried.**

<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Address</u>
Roy Scott & Lori Southworth-Scott	8 Harrington Avenue
Philip Kerin	46 Summer Street
Barre Historical Society	46 Granite Street
Mark & Bonita Alexander	234 Camp Street
Enough Ministries	92 Summer Street

Liquor Control – Council approved an Educational Sampling Event Permit application from the Barre Opera House for a fundraising event on September 12th from 4 – 6 PM on motion of Councilor Smith, seconded by Councilor Herring, **Motion carried with Councilor Boutin abstaining.**

City Manager's Report –

Manager Mackenzie reported on the following:

- The aerial fire truck has been ordered following last week's voter approval.
- Following a successful mediation session, a proposed police union contract will be presented to Council in executive session at next week's session.
- The Vermont Economic Resiliency Initiative (VERI) report on flood mitigation proposals for Gunner Brook has been finalized and released. A link to the final report is on the City website.

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- A meeting regarding flood mitigation steps will be held in September with state representatives.
- There will be a walk of lower Gunner's Brook on Thursday to identify debris to be removed.
- Submitted a town highway grant requesting \$200,000 to assist in damage repairs stemming from the July 19th flooding
- Received verbal confirmation of acceptance from the person offered the City Planner position. They are scheduled to start November 2nd.
- The work in Enterprise Aly will be moving to zones 2 & 3 tomorrow, which will call for the closing of Williams Lane for approximately 2 weeks.
- Planning is ongoing for the fall yard waste disposal options. The City is once again hoping to offer residents the opportunity to bring debris to the Barre Town stump dump, and will be doing a week of curbside pick-up, probably in late October.

Visitors & Communications –

Councilor Dindo asked that there be an opportunity for the community to see the new high water vehicles once they are received. He asked if the Granite City Garden Club is available to maintain the traffic islands around the Route 62/North Main Street/Maple Avenue area. Manager Mackenzie said the Club is doing all the work it can handle. Councilor Dindo said there is still mud along Route 62 left over from the July 19th flooding. Manager Mackenzie said he will contact the state about getting it removed.

Old Business – NONE

New Business –

A) 7:15 PM Final Public Hearing Vermont Community Development Grant.

Mayor Lauzon opened the public hearing at 7:18 PM. Barre Area Development Corporation executive director Joel Schwartz said the hearing is a necessary part of the closeout of the grant. The planning grant in the amount of \$30,000 went towards costs associated with design and engineering work for the Enterprise Aly project.

Mayor Lauzon asked for any comments from the public or the Council. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing at 7:22 PM.

B) Proposed City Fee Changes.

Clerk Dawes reviewed the proposed fee changes and said there will be a few more for consideration at next week's meeting. Council approved the fee changes on motion of Councilor Herring, seconded by Councilor Smith. **Motion carried.**

C) Designation of Flood Donations.

Clerk Dawes recommended the donations totaling \$7,325 be designated to Capstone Community Action for use through the Flood Relief Center. Council approved the recommendation on motion of Councilor Herring, seconded by Councilor Dindo. **Motion carried.**

Mayor Lauzon asked that Capstone provide the Clerk with an accounting once the funds are expended.

D) Authorization to Engage Engineering Services for Flood Mitigation Study.

Council approved engaging Dubois & King for engineering services for Phase I of the Gunner's Brook flood mitigation study at a cost not to exceed \$25,000 on motion of Councilor Chadderton, seconded by Councilor Smith. **Motion carried.**

E) Update on the DPW Director Search.

Manager Mackenzie said he has winnowed the pile of applications down to six possible candidates. He will ascertain whether they are still interested and schedule interviews in the next 2-3 weeks. The selection is expected to be completed by October 1st. Councilor Smith offered to serve on the selection committee.

There was discussion about other City vacancies, including the technician position in the engineer's office. The Manager said it is his intention to let the new DPW director fill that position.

Mayor Lauzon noted that all staff members have stepped up during the city planner and DPW director vacancies, and he offered a special thank you to DPW assistant director Steve Micheli and Zoning Administrator Janet Shatney for their additional service.

F) Water and Sewer Abatement Requests.

Manager Mackenzie reviewed his memo from June 22nd discussing two abatement requests. He reviewed the June discussion and noted Council chose at that time to retain authority with regards to abatements. He also reviewed a memo and recommendation from Water & Sewer Department staff. Mayor Lauzon asked water billing clerk Clint Smith for the staff's recommendation with regards to Robert Marsh's abatement request. Mr. Smith said staff noted the high level of water flow at the property and contacted Mr. Marsh out of state to notify him. Upon his expedited return, Mr. Marsh found that his furnace had stopped working and the alarm system failed, thereby allowing water pipes to freeze and break. The ensuing water bill totaled \$1,126.92. Mr. Smith said staff determined most of the water at Mr. Marsh's property did not enter the domestic sewer system, and therefore recommended abatement of \$372 from the sewer portion of the bill in question.

There was discussion about insurance coverage, failure of the alarm system, and the frequency with which the Water & Sewer Department addresses similar situations on a quarterly basis.

Mr. Marsh said he feels comfortable paying half of the total bill and requested abatement of the other half. Mayor Lauzon said in light of Mr. Marsh's attempts at due diligence by having an alarm system in his home, he recommends abating half of the total bill, or a total of \$563.46. Mr. Smith said these types of instances are not unusual and department policy is to not abate. He said the department strives to treat everyone fairly, and asked the Council to take that into consideration.

Councilor Poirier made the motion to abate \$563.46 from Robert Marsh's bill, seconded by Councilor Dindo, with no penalty or interest charges accruing provided payment is made in full by September 3, 2015.

Councilor Smith said he will vote against the motion as it is setting a precedent.

Council voted on the motion as presented. The motion carried with Councilors Smith and Herring voting against.

Council then considered the Gingras abatement request for 7 Osborne Road in Barre Town. Mr. Smith said the City provides water service only to this property, and said the bill amount in question is over \$4,000. He said the property recently sold, and the sellers and attorneys are aware of the outstanding bill and have escrowed the funds waiting for a result of this abatement hearing. Mayor Lauzon said this situation is different as there is no evidence of the same level of due diligence as in the Marsh request, and he recommended no abatement.

Council voted to deny the Gingras abatement request on motion of Councilor Poirier, seconded by Councilor Smith. **Motion carried.**

Councilor Herring thanked the Water & Sewer Department for their customer service.

Other) Contract to Paint BOR Ceiling.

Manager Mackenzie said the City received only one response to its RFP for painting services, and recommended Council award the contract to bidder Dunham Brothers Painting. He said the bid is

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substantially higher than anticipated, and the City will likely take up the overage with the previous contractor or through the previous contractor's insurance company. The painting is to be completed by October 1st with the rink scheduled to open on November 1st.

Council awarded the contract to Dunham Brothers Painting with the October 1st completion date on motion of Councilor Herring, seconded by Councilor Dindo. **Motion carried.**

Round Table:

Councilor Herring asked about the status of the marketing position. Manager Mackenzie said it's in the hands of the Civic Center Committee and he will get an update. Councilor Herring asked on the progress of the list of ongoing projects requested a few meetings ago. The Manager said he will have it for the Council in two weeks. Councilor Herring said September is Archeology Month and there are two archeological events happening in the City.

Councilor Smith thanked those who came to the polls and voted at last week's special election.

Councilor Boutin said he rode along with Capt. Cetin looking at chicken coops and discussing the ordinances around chickens and other animals.

Councilor Chadderton reminded everyone that school has started again and to be alert for children's safety.

Executive Session:

Councilor Smith made the motion to find that premature general public knowledge of personnel issues to be discussed would clearly place the City of Barre at a substantial disadvantage should the discussion be public. The motion was seconded by Councilor Herring. **Motion carried.**

Council went into executive session at 8:40 PM under the provisions of 1 VSA sec. 313 to discuss personnel on motion of Councilor Herring, seconded by Councilor Smith. **Motion carried.**

Manager Mackenzie was invited into the executive session.

Council came out of executive session at 9:28 PM on motion of Councilor Herring, seconded by Councilor Smith. **Motion carried.**

No action was taken.

The Council meeting adjourned at 9:28 PM on motion of Councilor Smith, seconded by Councilor Herring. **Motion carried.**

An audio recording of this meeting is available through the Clerk's Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk