

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held May 5, 2020**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order on video conference by Mayor Lucas Herring at 7:00 PM. In attendance, participating via video or phone conference, were: From Ward I, Councilors Jake Hemmerick and John Steinman; from Ward II, Councilors Michael Boutin and Teddy Waszazak; and from Ward III, Councilor Ericka Reil. Also present via video or phone were City Manager Steve Mackenzie, Fire Chief Doug Brent, Deputy Fire Chief Joe Aldsworth, Planning Director Janet Shatney, Assessor Joe LeVesque, Board of Civil Authority chair Peter Anthony, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: From Ward III, Councilor Rich Morey.

Adjustments to the Agenda: Manager Mackenzie asked for the addition of a discussion on a proposed hospitality grant application.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

Council approved the following consent agenda items on motion of Councilor Steinman, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried on roll call vote, with all voting in favor.**

- Minutes of the following meetings:
 - Regular Meeting of April 21, 2020
- City Warrants as presented:
 - Ratification of Week 2020-17, dated April 29, 2020:
 - Accounts Payable: \$256,918.65
 - Payroll (gross): \$103,699.89
 - Approval of Week 2020-18, dated May 6, 2020:
 - Accounts Payable: \$184,578.89
 - Payroll (gross): \$96,107.58

The City Clerk/Treasurer Report –

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- Fourth quarter property taxes are due by May 15th.
- City Hall is closed to the public, but offices are open reduced hours with limited staff. Most services are available. Appointments are being accepted for access to land records in the vault. Access is available on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

Liquor Control – NONE

City Manager's Report - Manager Mackenzie reported on the following:

- Construction contract signed for the municipal pool refurbishment project.
- Street painting will begin as soon as weather permits.
- Continuing to monitor the COVID-19 impact on the FY20 budget. Also reviewing the voter-approved FY21 budget for probable COVID-19 impacts and necessary adjustments. The pandemic will likely have an impact on development of the FY22 budget, also.
- Beginning to reschedule negotiations on the police collective bargaining agreement.
- Reminder that plastic flowers and wreaths in the cemeteries are to be removed by May 15th. Due to staffing furloughs the City will not be planting flowers in the cemeteries this year.
- Last Saturday's scrap metal drop-off was a success, with all four dumpsters filled. The event benefited the Washington County Sheriff's office.

- City residents may bring yard waste to the Barre Town stump dump drop-off beginning this Saturday from 9AM – noon, and continuing the remaining Saturdays through the month of May. There will be no curbside yard debris pickup this spring, nor any curbside pickup of Green Up Day bags. The City is making arrangements for a dumpster for the latter.
- COVID-19 personal protective equipment expenses have reached a high enough level that the City qualifies for 75% reimbursement.
- The COVID-19 Advisory Task Force is now meeting by conference call once a week.
- Due to budget constraints and staff furloughs it is expected there will be reductions in City services through the spring and into the summer.

Visitors and Communications – Chief Brent said there is no statewide ban on burning, but there is a request for no large open burning. Backyard fire pits are allowed, and require a fire permit from the Fire Department.

Old Business – NONE

New Business –

A) Board of Abatement Meeting: Warned for 7:15 PM.

i. **Ratification of Abatement of Late Penalties and Interest Charges on Delinquent Taxes and Water/Sewer Bills.**

Board Chair Peter Anthony called the Board of Abatement meeting to order at 7:23 PM. Clerk Dawes confirmed the requirements for a quorum were met with the attendance of the Councilors, Assessor, and Treasurer.

Chair Anthony said the Board is being asked to abate water & sewer bill late penalties and interest charges that accrued as of May 1, 2020. The Board approved the abatement on motion of Board Member Boutin, seconded by Board Member Reil. **Motion carried on roll call vote, with all voting in favor.**

Chair Anthony said the legislature has passed emergency legislation that will allow municipal governing bodies to make such abatements during the pandemic, without calling a Board of Abatement meeting. The legislation is awaiting the Governor's signature to become law.

Chair Anthony adjourned the Board of Abatement meeting at 7:30 PM.

B) Annual Rental Registry Invoices – Action re. Abatement of Late Penalties and Interest Charges.

Chief Brent asked Council to waive the late penalties and interest charges associated with the annual rental registry invoices, which are scheduled to be mailed later this week. There was discussion on the potential financial impact, and taking abatement requests on a case-by-case basis based on need. Council deferred any action. Chief Brent said the invoices will be sent out with the usual language about late penalties and interest charges.

C) Ratification of Submission of Police Grant Applications.

Manager Mackenzie reviewed the memo from Deputy Police Chief Eastman on applications recently submitted for the following grants:

1. Occupant Safety / DUI.
2. Distracted Driving.
3. Bulletproof Vests.

The OP/DUI and distracted driving grants require no local match. The bulletproof vest grant requires a 50% match, which is included in the budget. Manager Mackenzie said the applications have already been

submitted, due to timing constraints, and he is seeking Council ratification of the submittals. Council will have the opportunity to review and approve the grants when awarded.

Council ratified submission of the grants listed above on motion of Councilor Hemmerick, seconded by Councilor Steinman. **Motion carried on roll call vote, with all voting in favor.**

D) Coin Drop Request Date Changes.

Mayor Herring reviewed the memo from Clerk Dawes, outlining the coin drop schedule changes due to COVID-19. The Mayor noted the rescheduled dates are outside the Council's policy which dictates coin drops shall not be less than three weeks apart, and asked Council to approve the revised schedule. It was recommended if any of this year's groups are unable to hold their coin drops because of current circumstances, they should be allowed to apply again next year, regardless of Council policies. Council approved the schedule and hold-harmless conditions on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried on roll call vote, with all voting in favor.**

E) Council Policy Review.

Mayor Herring went over the list of policies scheduled for review at the May 19th meeting. He asked Councilors to let him know if they will be ready to review those policies assigned to them at that time, or if they should be postponed to a future date.

F – added) VT Hospitality Coalition Emergency Funding & Local Purchasing Grant application to support Vermont restaurants.

Manager Mackenzie reviewed the email and application from Keith Paxman of Cornerstone restaurant, and said the City has been invited to endorse the application. Councilor Hemmerick recused himself from the discussion due to conflict of interest. There was discussion on how best to support all local businesses. Councilors deferred official endorsement. Mayor Herring will coordinate a response.

Round Table –

Councilor Reil said she is excited to be living in Barre at this time when neighbors are helping neighbors.

Councilor Boutin said he's been reviewing a list of City-owned properties with the possible eye towards marketing them for sale.

Councilor Waszazak urged people to remain cautious as different sectors open up from the pandemic.

Executive Session – NONE

The Council meeting was adjourned by Mayor Herring at 8:15 PM.

There is no audio recording of this meeting. The meeting was recorded by the video conference platform.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk