

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held May 18, 2021**

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 on video or phone, were: From Ward I, Councilors Emel Cambel and Jake Hemmerick; from Ward II, Councilors Michael Boutin and Teddy Waszazak; and from Ward III, Councilor Ericka Reil. City staff members present via video or phone were City Manager Steve Mackenzie, Buildings and Community Services Director Jeff Bergeron, Fire Chief Doug Brent, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: From Ward III, Councilor Samn Stockwell.

Adjustments to the Agenda: Appointment to the Public Art Committee is deferred, and the Manager's report will be moved to later in the meeting.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

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

- A. Minutes of the following meetings:
 - a. Regular meeting of May 4, 2021
 - b. Special meeting of May 13, 2021
- B. City Warrants as presented:
 - a. Ratification of Week 2021-19, dated May 12, 2021:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$226,643.61
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$121,903.40
 - b. Approval of Week 2021-20, dated May 19, 2021:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$182,107.18
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$123,472.01
- C. 2021 Licenses & Permits: NONE
- D. Certification of Local Government Approval – Mosaic Vermont Emergency Housing Project.

The City Clerk/Treasurer Report –

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- Fourth quarter property taxes were due yesterday. The delinquency rate currently stands at approximately 7.5% with more payments expected through the mail over the next few days.
- The Barre Unified Union School District budget re-vote was held on May 11th. When the Barre City and Barre Town vote tallies were combined, the budget failed to pass. The budget will be re-voted on June 9th and again will be held as a drive-through in the BOR. Absentee ballots will be mailed to those who received them for the most recent re-vote.

Liquor Control – Council approved a request for alcohol in Rotary Park for a BCEMS retirement party on June 11th on motion of Councilor Cambel, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried on a roll vote, with Councilor Boutin abstaining.**

Visitors and Communications –NONE

Mayor Herring rearranged the schedule to allow more time before the public hearing warned for 7:15 PM.

New Business –

I) Accept/Award the Bid for the Sale of the City owned East Montpelier Property.

Councilor Boutin made the motion to award the bid to purchase the City-owned property in East

Montpelier to Josh and Ashley Devers and authorize the Manager to engage the City Attorney to consummate the property transfer, the net proceeds to be allocated for use to be approved by the Council. The motion was seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried on roll call vote, with Councilor Hemmerick voting against.**

Old Business –

A) Second Reading and Public Hearing Warned 7:15pm – Ord. #2021-03: Chapter 17 Traffic.

Mayor Herring opened the second reading and public hearing at 7:14 PM and invited questions and comments from the public and council. There was discussion on the proposed language that was removed from section 17-39, formatting section 17-26, and developing the fees called for in the draft revisions. Clerk Dawes said Council will be reviewing the City fee schedule in the near future, and talked about the timeline for when ordinance revisions go into effect and when fee changes go into effect, and she recommended the ordinance changes be effective when the fees go into effect.

Council approved warning a new 2nd reading and public hearing for June 8th, at which time they will also consider fees associated with the ordinance, on motion of Councilor Hemmerick, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried on roll call vote, with all voting in favor.**

New Business – continued

A) Appointment of Alexander Raeburn to the Public Art Committee.

This item is deferred.

B) Update from the VT Dept. of Health.

Joan Marie Misek from the VT Department of Health thanked the City for allowing use of civic center facilities for COVID testing and vaccinating clinics over the past year. Ms. Misek said regular programs are on hold while VDH staff have been redeployed to cover COVID responses. There was discussion on boards of health and health officers and how they can support the community, making sure VDH data is kept and reported by town and not by region, enforcement of mask mandates, and lessons learned during the pandemic. Ms. Misek said communities should devote time to building on their work with the Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC), develop communications networks, train staff on health safety, disseminate accurate information, and promote unity in the community. There was discussion on VDH's ability to do research to help address community health issues, and conducting health inspections. Fire Chief Doug Brent thanked Ms. Misek for her significant assistance during the pandemic.

C) Committee Charge and Priorities.

- i. Tree Stewardship Committee**
- ii. Garden Committee**
- iii. Civic Center Committee**

Amanda Garland shared information about the Tree Stewardship Committee including photos of trees being planted on North Main Street, and the newly created tree nursery at the Dix Reservoir in Orange. The nursery allows the committee to grow trees for placement in the City rather than purchasing larger trees, as a cost savings measure. Ms. Garland said the committee has planted more than 65 trees since its inception, and is working on placing guards around the trees along North Main Street to protect them from damage caused by sidewalk plowing. Mayor Herring noted the committee's charge and priorities were included in the Council packet. Council approved the charge and priorities on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Reil. **Motion carried on roll call vote, with all voting in favor.**

Ms. Garland shared information about the Community Garden Committee, saying there are eight plots in the Elmwood Cemetery garden, two plots at Garfield playground, and four plots on Brook Street. The committee is starting a perennial garden on a small parklet next to Mathewson School. There was discussion on making gardens accessible, and interest by the North Barre Manor residents for a

community garden in their neighborhood. Council approved the charge and priorities of the Committee on motion of Councilor Cambel, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried on roll call vote, with all voting in favor.**

Sue Higby shared information about the Civic Center Committee, and noted the facility binds the community together and serves as a welcome wagon for neighboring regions. The Civic Center is an economic development tool, and the board members have decades of business leadership experience to offer the City. There was discussion on holding a walk-through of the facilities for the Council in the near future. Council approved the charge and priorities of the Committee on motion of councilor Cambel, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried on roll call vote, with all voting in favor.**

D) Buildings and Community Services Update.

Buildings and Community Services Director Jeff Bergeron said reconstruction of the municipal pool is on target, and the pool is expected to open this summer on its usual schedule. Mr. Bergeron said he's received no bids for replacement of the pool house roof, and is going back out to bid for the project. Cornerstone Field is being prepared for use this summer by 9 and 10 year olds, and the tennis courts are being used by Spaulding High School as their home courts. There have been trash and vandalism issues with Rotary Park, and some vandalism to structures in Charlie's Playground. The temporary ramp installed at the auditorium for the vaccination clinics is being removed. The BOR was used heavily this spring for batting practice, and last week's school budget revote. Four people have been hired as summer employees for the cemeteries and parks, and volunteers are planting flowers in the cemeteries. Spaulding High School is holding its senior prom in the auditorium on June 5th, and CDL testing and food distributions continue at the Civic Center. There was discussion on the impact of allowing dogs in the cemeteries, creating a yard waste disposal site for City residents, and doing more tree trimming to allow better sightlines for signs around the City.

E) Aldrich Library Quarterly Update.

Aldrich Library executive director Loren Polk gave a Powerpoint presentation on recent library activities, highlighting circulation during COVID. Ms. Polk said the plan is to reopen for book browsing and checkout beginning June 16th, the library will again serve as a summer meal site and continues to offer appointments for computer and wifi access.

F) Barre Area Development Quarterly Update.

BADC executive director Cody Morrison gave a Powerpoint presentation on recent activities including expanding and consolidating their web presence, advertising in Vermont Business Magazine, building partnerships, and sponsoring and participating in the Vermont Manufacturing Summit.

G) Barre Partnership Quarterly Update.

Partnership executive director Tracie Lewis said they have welcomed several new board members recently, and noted some new businesses have opened in the City in the last few months. They have been raising money for flowers and are working with the Granite Center Garden Club on getting them planted around the downtown. Concerts in Currier Park and Food Truck Thursdays at the park begin on July 8th, and the farmers market in the Pearl Street Pedway starts on June 2nd. In lieu of the Heritage Festival, there will be a Fall Festival September 30th through October 2nd, and the Partnership is looking to develop a "restaurant bingo" game to encourage people to dine at local establishments.

H) Update on Bond Projects Status and Expenses.

Due to the late hour, the Mayor deferred this item.

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

- COVID update: issued an updated memo to staff regarding COVID safety protocols in and around City facilities.
- Will bring recommendations for City-wide reassessment to Council at the June 1st meeting.
- Will be re-advertising for an assessor.
- Attended VLCT workshop on American Rescue Plan guidance for federal funds.
- Annual bike path inspection and maintenance has been performed.
- Parking meter clock changeouts should be completed shortly.
- Outlined recent professional development activities.
- Attended a review of the state's pension funds with State Treasurer Beth Pearce.
- Third session of police union contract negotiations is scheduled for later this week.

Clerk Dawes said H.444, the bill that includes the City's charter changes approved by the voters in March, is up for its third reading in the House tomorrow, and once passed will go to the Senate for approval. The House removed the section on flags, and tweaked the section on speed limits to bring it into compliance with Agency of Transportation requirements.

Round Table –

Councilor Reil reminded everyone of the housing and transportation Zoom forum she and Councilor Hemmerick have put together for tomorrow evening.

Executive Session – NONE

The Council meeting was adjourned by Mayor Herring at 10:02 PM.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk