

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held May 25, 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 (arrived 7:37 PM) and Teddy Waszazak; and from Ward III, Councilors Ericka Reil and Samn Stockwell. City staff members present via video or phone were City Manager Steve Mackenzie, Bill Ahearn, Stephanie Quaranta, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: NONE

Adjustments to the Agenda: Manager Mackenzie asked that financing for a wastewater permit be added under new agenda items. Mayor Herring said the Public Art Committee will not be presenting its charges and priorities this evening.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

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

- A. Minutes of the following meetings:
 - a. Regular meeting of May 18, 2021
- B. City Warrants as presented:
 - a. Approval of Week 2021-21, dated May 26, 2021:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$589,907.32
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$124,161.52
- C. 2021 Licenses & Permits: NONE

The City Clerk/Treasurer Report –

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- The Barre Unified Union School District budget will be re-voted on June 9th and again will be held as a drive-through in the BOR. Absentee ballots have been mailed to those who received them for the most recent re-vote.
- Council is holding a grand list training meeting next Tuesday, June 1st, at 6PM with VT Department of Taxes Property Valuation and Review District Advisor Barbara Schlesinger.

Liquor Control – NONE

Visitors and Communications – Mayor Herring said Barre Area Veterans are holding their Memorial Day ceremonies at the Youth Triumphant memorial on Sunday, May 30th, beginning at 11AM.

City Manager's Report - Manager Mackenzie noted his weekly report is now being given in writing as part of the Council packet. He noted the last date for this spring's yard waste drop off is this Saturday, May 29th.

Old Business –

A) Update on Bond Projects Status and Expenses.

Manager Mackenzie reviewed a list of recently approved bonds, expenses incurred against them, and available balances remaining. There was discussion on the City Hall rearrangement project, funds currently allocated for Merchant's Row design work and reallocating them based on future TIF project changes, and when the requests for quotes for various projects will be issued.

New Business –

A) Committee Charge and Priorities.

i. Dog Park Committee Charge and Priorities.

Dog Park Committee member Jeff Cochran said the park was closed most of last year due to COVID, they completed the lean-to and installed new gates. They are hoping the City will provide labor and equipment to level the entrance way, and would like to explore options for getting water and lighting on sight. There was discussion on finding ways to bring water to the park from the nearby stream, and space on the committee for at least 2 new members.

Council approved the committee's charge and priorities on motion of Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Reil. **Motion carried on roll call vote, with all voting in favor.**

Councilor Boutin arrived during the following.

ii. Barre City Energy Committee Charge and Priorities.

Energy Committee members Conor Teal and Romni Palmer offered a data presentation on energy usages and costs, emissions, transition to electric vehicles, and weatherization. Mr. Teal said the committee has been working closely with Efficiency Vermont over the past year, and will be holding another LED lightbulb swap this year. They are looking to advocate for a micro-transit system similar to what's in place in Montpelier, offer public outreach on rebates through EV, and improve the webpage. There is a need to transition to electric heating systems and heat pumps, and to educate landlords and tenants on heating and weatherization. The committee is seeking funding from the City to engage a facilitator for a landlord/tenant workshop, and asked each Councilor to provide the name and contact information for one landlord so the committee can offer them an energy walkthrough of their properties. The committee will be offering proposals for use of the American Rescue Plan funds. There was discussion on having the Council draft a letter about the landlord/tenant workshop and sending it out using the rental housing registry mailing list.

Council approved the committee's charge and priorities on motion of Councilor Hemmerick, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried on roll call vote, with all voting in favor.**

iii. Paths, Routes and Trails Committee Charge and Priorities.

Committee member Dan Sousa said the committee was formerly named the Semprebon Bike Path Committee, but the new name more accurately reflects the breadth of its work. Mr. Sousa said they are working on the Metro Way segment of the path and evaluating options, and are receiving great support from City staff.

Council approved the committee's charge and priorities on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried on roll call vote, with all voting in favor.**

iv. Public Art Committee Charge and Priorities.

This item is deferred.

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

Alexander Raeburn expressed his interest in serving on the Public Art Committee, and his relevant experience. Council approved the appointment on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried on roll call vote, with all voting in favor.**

C) Appointment of Hannah Morgan to the Community Garden Committee.

Mayor Herring noted Hannah Morgan isn't present this evening, and said this appointment will be deferred.

D) Granite City Grocery Update.

Granite City Grocery president Nick Landry said there are currently only two board members, and they are both leaving the board unless new board members are elected at the annual meeting on June 10th. Mr. Landry said the organization does not have enough board members or energy to continue, and the landscape for co-ops has changed. There was discussion on the size and fate of the current fund balance, donating the fund balance to the Vermont Foodbank, possible collaborations with Capstone Community Action, and the statutory requirement for at least five board members or the organization will be disbanded. Details about the June 10th annual meeting are on the GCG website.

E) Clerk/Treasurer Annual Review, Set Compensation.

Clerk Dawes reviewed her memo about her compensation history, work in her offices, and goals for the next year. The Clerk requested a 3% raise, which is the same amount as the US Steelworkers in her departments. Council approved the raise on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Reil. **Motion carried on roll call vote, with all voting in favor.**

Added F) Wastewater Permit Funding.

Manager Mackenzie reviewed the memo in the Council packet. The Manager said this is an interim measure, and that the City is seeking a funding commitment from the VT Agency of Natural Resources, but the funding deadline falls before the ANR funding would be available. The request is to allow up to \$50,000 from unallocated funds. Council authorized the expenditure of up to \$50,000 of unallocated reserves from the Enterprise Funds to guarantee financial capacity until CWSRF loan money can be obtained on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried on roll call vote, with all voting in favor.**

Round Table –

Councilor Waszazak said the photos of the municipal pool refurbishment look great. He said he's sorry about the loss of the Granite City Grocery.

Councilor Hemmerick said he appreciated the Fire Department's ad on Facebook encouraging people to get their burn permits. He invited other Councilors to join him and Councilor Cambel in sponsoring a youth writing contest, asking kids to write an essay on "The Future I Want for My City".

Councilor Reil noted today is the one-year anniversary of the death of George Floyd, and encouraged people to continue to work against systemic racism and to have discussions from the heart.

Mayor Herring said the City is still soliciting for volunteers to serve on various committees and boards. He said last week's transportation and housing forum was recorded and is available for viewing. The municipal pool ribbon cutting is set for June 27th, and the Rotary Club is looking at grant opportunities to help repair vandalism at Rotary Park. The first in-person Council meeting will be June 29th.

Executive Session – NONE

The Council meeting was adjourned by Mayor Herring at 9:52 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