

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council  
Held February 1, 2022**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in person and via video platform by Mayor Lucas Herring at 7:00 PM at Barre City Hall. In attendance were: From Ward I, Councilor Jake Hemmerick; from Ward II, Councilors Michael Boutin and Teddy Waszazak; and from Ward III, Councilors Ericka Reil and Samn Stockwell. City staff members present were Manager Steve Mackenzie, Human Resources Director Rikk Taft, Public Works Director Bill Ahearn, Finance Director Dawn Monahan, Deputy Fire Chief Joe Aldsworth, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

**Absent:** From Ward I, Councilor Emel Cambel.

**Adjustments to the Agenda:** Mayor Herring said the old agenda items related to rearrangements in City Hall and cover of the annual report will be taken up later in the agenda. Manager Mackenzie said the consent agenda item associated with the capital improvements consultant RFP will be deferred.

**Approval of Consent Agenda:**

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

- A. Approval of Minutes:
  - i. Regular meeting of January 25, 2022
- B. City Warrants as presented:
  1. Approval of Week 2022-05, dated February 2, 2022:
    - i. Accounts Payable: \$182,035.57
    - ii. Payroll (gross): \$123,142.38
- C. 2022 Licenses & Permits: NONE
- D. Approve and Authorize Release of Capital Improvements Consultant RFP [N.B. this item is deferred]
- E. Authorize Manager to Execute/Submit Step III (Construction) CWSRF NMPS Loan Application.

**City Clerk & Treasurer Report –**

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- Town meeting information is on the election page of the City website, including sample ballots.
- Absentee ballot requests are still rolling in. Ballots will be available by February 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Third quarter property taxes are due by February 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Dog licenses are available. All dogs must be licensed by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Liquor Control Board -** License renewal applications were mailed out today. This is the last year license renewals will involve paper applications. The Division of Liquor Control is moving to an online licensing platform.

**City Manager's Report –**

Manager Mackenzie said there were a couple items to add to his written report:

- There will be a tour of the Wheelock building next Tuesday at 6PM before the Council meeting.
- Tour of the new home for People's Health & Wellness at 51 Church St. on February 18<sup>th</sup> at noon.

**Visitors and Communications –**

Public Works Director Bill Ahearn spoke of the approach being put in place for the snow storm predicted for later this week. Mr. Ahearn said it will be a long duration storm, which will stress the staff for street and sidewalk clearing. Rapid accumulation and changing temperatures will call for judicious use of salt, and drivers should be aware of snow accumulations on the street and drive accordingly.

Resident Bernadette Rose reminded everyone February is Black History Month, and encouraged people to observe the month by watching relevant movies and reading relevant books.

**Old Business –**

**A) Appointments for Consideration and/or Action:**

- i. **Charles “Chip” Castle – Homelessness Task Force**
- ii. **Candace Gale – Homelessness Task Force and/or Dog Park Committee**

Charles “Chip” Castle and Candace Gale spoke of their interest in and past experiences associated with homelessness. Ms. Gale also spoke of her love of dogs, and her visits to the dog park.

Mayor Herring noted there are two candidates interested in the one open seat on the Homelessness Task Force, and he recommended Council go into executive session at the end of the meeting to discuss appointments. It was noted one of the current appointees to the task force hasn’t attended any meetings, and this should be discussed in executive session, also. The Mayor thanked Mr. Castle and Ms. Gale, and said the City will be in touch with them about their appointments following tonight’s executive session.

**New Business –**

**A) Warned for 7:15pm: Second Public Hearing Proposed Charter Changes.**

Mayor Herring opened the public hearing at 7:34 PM. Clerk Dawes reviewed the processes associated with proposing charter changes. The Mayor invited any comments or questions from the public or Councilors. Hearing none, the Mayor closed the public hearing at 7:36 PM.

**Old Business, continued –**

**B) City Hall (Old Police Station) Rearrangement Plans.**

Manager Mackenzie said the staff has developed a programming plan for reorganization of the offices and work spaces in City Hall. The Manager said the project began several years ago as a way to address the vacant space that used to house the police department, and grew to encompass the entire building. The plans are meant to address the following:

1. Auditor recommendations to consolidate collections;
2. Enhanced and streamlined customer service;
3. Security for staff and facilities;

Human Resources Director Rikk Taft reviewed the draft plan and noted it addresses the historic nature of the building, numbers of staff per department, ADA compliance, security, signage, and a phased approach. There was discussion on designing and budgeting for the project, improvements to the Council chambers, soliciting professional assistance for design and budget development, and funding sources beyond \$100,000 included in a previously approved bond.

Manager Mackenzie said he wants to flesh out the proposal with staff, and will keep the Council updated on next steps.

**C) Approval of Cover Photo of Annual Report.**

Council reviewed a series of possible photos for the annual report, and approved four photos for the inside and outside of the front and back covers on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

**New Business, continued –**

**B) Staff Presentation of Strategic Planning Consultants Short-List.**

Manager Mackenzie said a team of three department heads reviewed and scored the proposals received in response to the RFP, and created a short list of 3 recommendations. The Manager suggested Council review the top 3 and make a selection. Council will make a final decision at next week’s meeting.

**C) Authorize FY23 Semprebon Fund Allocation to the VYCC.**

Clerk Dawes noted Council allocated \$13,000 for expenses associated with the Rural Development Community Visit, and there is just under \$10,000 left. Mayor Herring said he would like Council to reallocate the remaining funds for use of the River Access task force, which may involve the Vermont Youth Conversation Corps. There was discussion on the various sources of Semprebon funds, and what projects have been approved in the past. Clerk Dawes said she will send out a list.

Council approved reallocating the balance of the Community Visit funds for the River Access task force on motion of Councilor Boutin, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

**Round Table –**

Councilor Boutin thanked Councilor Reil and Ward 3 council candidate Michael Deering for appearing on the Barre Beat podcast.

Councilor Reil said she had fun appearing on Barre Beat, and reminded everybody about Black History Month.

Mayor Herring said Gov. Scott declared this Career and Technical Education Month, and he noted the previously approved speed signs have been ordered.

**Executive Session –**

Councilor Hemmerick made the motion to find that premature general knowledge of personnel issues associated with committee appointments would clearly place the City of Barre at a substantial disadvantage should the discussion be public. The motion was seconded by Councilor Waszazak.

**Motion carried with Councilor Boutin voting against.**

Council went into executive session at 8:58 PM to discuss personnel under the provisions of 1 VSA sec. 313 on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried.**

Manager Mackenzie was invited into the executive session.

Council came out of executive session at 9:06 PM on motion of Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

Mayor Herring said the Council considered the Policy on Municipal Bodies & Appointments in light of the Homelessness Task Force member who is not attending meetings. The Mayor said as per the policy, the seat is now considered vacant, creating two vacancies on the task force. Councilors appointed Mr. Castle and Ms. Gale to the Homelessness Task Force and Ms. Gale to the Dog Park Committee on motion of Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Reil. **Motion carried.**

It was noted Kerry Kelly is the task force member who hasn't been attending meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 PM on motion of Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried.**

The meeting was recorded on the video meeting platform.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk