

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held September 28, 2021**

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, Councilors Emel Cambel and 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 City Manager Steve Mackenzie, Police Chief Tim Bombardier, Deputy Police Chief Larry Eastman, Fire Chief Doug Brent, Deputy Fire Chief Joe Aldsworth, Planning Director Janet Shatney, Finance Director Dawn Monahan, Public Works Director Bill Ahearn, Human Resources Director Rikk Taft, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: NONE

Adjustments to the Agenda: NONE

Approval of Consent Agenda:

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

- A. Minutes of the following meetings:
 1. Regular meeting of September 21, 2021
- B. City Warrants as presented:
 1. Approval of Week 2021-39, dated September 29, 2021:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$101,608.79
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$133,122.33
- C. 2021 Licenses & Permits: NONE
- D. Authorize Submission of Design Implementation Block Grant (DIBG) Letter of Commitment for Auditorium Stormwater Mitigation Project.
- E. Approval of Strategic Planning Facilitator RFP.
- F. Authorization to Engage TIF Parking Consultant.
- G. Accept Elks Club Donation for FY23 Community Picnic.
- H. Accept Resignation of Marichel Vaught from the Diversity and Equity Committee.
- I. Accept Resignation of Alexander Raeburn from the Police Advisory Committee.

The City Clerk/Treasurer Report –

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- Water/sewer payments are due by September 30th.

Liquor Control – Council approved an outside consumption permit application from The Quarry for this Friday and Saturday as part of the Fall Festival on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried, with Councilor Boutin abstaining.**

City Manager’s Report - Manager Mackenzie said there was nothing to add to his written report. Councilors thanked Buildings and Community Services Assistant Director Stephanie Quaranta for her thorough report on the municipal swimming pool season following the recent refurbishment.

Visitors and Communications – NONE

Old Business –

A) Discussion and/or Acceptance of BOLA Policy.

Police Chief Bombardier said they used existing policies from other police departments as templates, and

noted the draft policy received unanimous approval from the Police Advisory Committee. Councilors agreed the policy should be formatted as a police department administrative policy, and doesn't need Council approval.

New Business –

B) Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition.

Justin Srsic said he is an Americorps Vista volunteer with the Coalition. He reviewed statistics around the burden of housing and utilities costs, and low availability of housing stock. Mr. Srsic said the Coalition is engaged in statewide advocacy, and has set up the #Housed802 initiative to host monthly meetings to develop advocacy and access to services. There was discussion on transportation to and from evening meetings, working with groups not usually engaged in housing issues, and referring people to service providers.

A) Neighborhood Revitalization Program.

Central Vermont Habitat for Humanity executive director Zach Watson said the organization focuses on lack of affordable housing in Washington and Orange Counties. They are currently rehabilitating the property at 11 Highland Avenue, and invited the Councilor to volunteer for a work day on October 23rd. Mr. Watson said they are working to identify neighborhoods for rehabilitation throughout the City, and are hoping to begin a pilot program whereby the City donates property to HFH for construction of new affordable homes. There was discussion on funding sources, financial qualifications for potential new homeowners, the "benefits cliff" for those who don't qualify due to slightly higher household incomes, and identifying properties that might meet the requirements for the proposed pilot program.

C) Additional Affordable Housing Coalition Update.

Barre City Planning Commissioner David Sichel said the commission has started discussions on housing issues in the City, and has drafted a white paper to share with the Council. Commissioner Amanda Gustin reviewed the white paper and noted it is meant to provide direction by tying together potential sources of funding, interested parties, and directives from the municipal plan. The white paper includes housing sales data from the last three years, potential zoning changes to remove barriers to development, and creation of a revolving loan fund.

Landlord Samantha Davis-Hiscock asked that landlords be included in the discussions and planning. Ms. Davis-Hiscock said taxes are very high and it's difficult to find funding for making improvements to rental properties. There was discussion on use of American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds as forgivable grants; changes to zoning, density, and parking requirements; and changes to setbacks and minimum lot sizes.

D) Locker Searches & Inspection Policy.

Human Resources Director Rikk Taft said the reference to "reasonable suspicion" needs to be changed to "probable cause" to meet restrictions associated with getting search warrants. It was suggested an attorney review the draft with an eye towards making sure the language is in compliance with recent changes in employment laws. The draft will come back to Council for consideration after legal review.

E) Department Head Update and FY23 Budget Preview/Review.

Fire Chief Doug Brent reviewed department activities in FY21, including calls for service, ambulance revenues, mass vaccination centers, and confined space rescue training. The Chief noted the FY21 budget was underspent, and the draft FY23 budget shows an increase of 2.2%. There was discussion on overtime, increased fuel costs, and cycling out gas vehicles for electric as they are replaced in accordance with the equipment replacement plan.

F) Preliminary Informational Review of the Twin Cities EMS Televate Report Assessment.

Manager Mackenzie said the Central Vermont Public Safety Authority recently completed a communications assessment, which will be presented at a joint Barre City/Montpelier City Councils meeting on October 19th. The Twin Cities team, consisting of Barre City/Montpelier police leadership, fire leadership and city managers, has been meeting to discuss communications needs, which mirror those included in the Televate report. There was discussion on needs for replacement dispatch consoles, radios, and towers within our municipalities. Chief Brent said the most immediate needs are the radio and console replacements. There will be more discussion at the joint meeting on October 19th.

Round Table –

Councilors thanked those who participated in this evening's enlightening discussions on affordable housing.

Councilor Hemmerick quoted the most recent Vermont statistics surrounding COVID and encouraged people to get vaccinated.

Councilor Waszazak encouraged people to attend tomorrow's All In For Barre forum at the auditorium; part of the Community Visit program.

Mayor Herring made the following announcements:

- The Fall Festival is throughout the City this weekend.
- VT League of Cities and Towns annual town fair is next week.
- There is no City Council meeting next week.
- The bulk trash drop-off event last Saturday was highly successful.
- People have been thanking the Department of Public Works for trimming around intersections to provide better line of sight.
- There have been preliminary conversations with Barre Area Development Corporation about serving as the ARPA coordinator on behalf of the City.

Executive Session – NONE

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 PM on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried.**

The meeting was recorded on the video meeting platform.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk