

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held December 14, 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 Manager Steve Mackenzie, Finance Director Dawn Monahan, Fire Chief Doug Bent, Deputy Fire Chief Joe Aldsworth, Interim Police Chief Larry Eastman, Health Officer Robert Howarth, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: NONE

Adjustments to the Agenda: It was requested to move the ARPA discussion earlier in the meeting, and to add a review of the upcoming meeting schedule and agendas. Upon request the start of this coming Saturday's budget workshop was moved from noon to 10:00 AM.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

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

- A. Approval of Minutes:
 - i. Special meeting of December 7, 2021
 - ii. Regular meeting of December 7, 2021
- B. City Warrants as presented:
 1. Approval of Week 2021-50, dated December 15, 2021:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$2,051,072.00
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$127,207.83
- C. 2022 Licenses & Permits:
 1. Food Establishment Licenses:
 - i. Delicate Decadence, 14 N. Main Street
 - ii. Espresso Bueno, 248 N. Main Street
 - iii. Community Kitchen Academy (Capstone), 20 Gable Place
 2. Food Take Out Licenses:
 - i. Cumberland Farms (2 locations), 135 S. Main Street & 524 N. Main Street
 3. Waste Disposal Collector's Licenses:
 - i. Casella Waste Management, 16 pick-up vehicles
 - ii. MK Trucking, 3 drop-off vehicles
 4. Commercial Swimming Pool Licenses:
 - i. RehabGYM, 219 N. Main Street
- D. Authorize Manager to Execute Step III (Design) Agreement for Design of N. Main Pump Station.

City Clerk & Treasurer Report –

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- Town Meeting election information is posted on the City website, including a list of officers to be elected, nominating petitions, and consent of candidate forms.
- Water bills are due by January 3rd.
- Following the proposed creation of the Central Vermont Career Center School District, and the impact on the 18 proposed member communities with regards to election processes.

Liquor Control Board - Council approved a new 1st class liquor license for Paramount Theater on motion of Councilor Cambel, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried with Councilor Boutin abstaining.**

City Manager’s Report –

Manager Mackenzie said there are no additional updates beyond the previously distributed written report, and noted a correction with regards to the timeline for reporting to the Council on water/sewer rates.

Visitors and Communications –

Mayor Herring said he received a note from Bernadette Rose acknowledging last night’s volunteer appreciation event, and thanking all the City’s volunteers.

Old Business – NONE

New Business -

A) Warning 7:15pm - #2021-06 First Reading Ch. 3 Animal and Fowl Ordinance.

Mayor Herring opened the first reading at 7:12 PM, noting it was a little early, but anticipating the discussion would run past the warned start time. The Mayor noted the City Attorney reviewed the draft revisions, and his comments have been incorporated.

Animal and Fowl Task Force member John LePage reviewed the revision process, and fielded questions and comments. Task Force members Heather Pipino and Heather Runk, and Health Officer Robert Howarth were in attendance to participate. There was discussion on the role and authority of the Animal Control Committee, proposed revisions in the poultry section, and best ways to handle animal bites.

Councilor Boutin made the motion to remove the added language from section 3-13 regarding second animal bites, seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. Councilor Waszazak offered a friendly amendment to add the word “vicious” so as to refer to “vicious animal” as defined in the ordinance. The friendly amendment was accepted. There was continued discussion on establishing benchmarks for enforcement, and other possible language revisions. Councilor Waszazak withdrew his friendly amendment.

Councilors approved the original motion to remove the added language. **Motion carried with Councilor Cambel voting against.**

There was discussion on variance language in the poultry section, and whether appeals should go to the Animal Control Committee or Development Review Board. Councilor Waszazak made the motion to revise sec. 3-24(9) to read “Rule on variance requests forwarded by the Health Officer or upon appeal.” The motion was seconded by Councilor Boutin. Councilor Hemmerick offered a friendly amendment to add language about notifying abutting property owners with regards to variance requests. The friendly amendment was not accepted by the mover and seconder. The original motion was withdrawn.

Councilor Boutin made the motion to add the following sentence to the end of sec. 3-18(a): “Adjoining property owners shall be notified and maintain appeal rights to the animal control committee.” The motion was seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. Councilor Waszazak offered a friendly amendment to change all references of “variance” to “waiver”. The friendly amendment was accepted by the mover and seconder. **Motion carried as amended.**

Council approved moving the ordinance changes as amended on to a second reading and public hearing at the December 21st meeting on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried.**

B) FY21 Audit Presentation.

Finance Director Dawn Monahan and Auditor Fred Duplessis from Sullivan, Powers & Co. offered a brief overview of the FY21 audit. Mr. Duplessis noted this is a clean audit with no findings, and said the

audit now includes information on education taxes collected and passed through to the schools. He noted there were no material weaknesses, and all issues referenced in prior audits have been addressed. There are some recommendations with regards to processing delinquencies, reviewing administrative charges to the enterprise funds, and documenting internal controls, which are being addressed by City staff.

Council accepted the FY21 audit, with thanks to the Finance Department for the clean report, on motion of Councilor Cambel, seconded by Councilor Reil. **Motion carried.**

There was discussion on allowed uses for the FY21 fund balance, and establishment of a reserve fund. Mr. Duplessis said such surplus funds can be used to maintain a fund balance in the general fund, create a “rainy day” fund, or be transferred to the capital fund.

F) Discussion &/or Action on ARPA Program Community Requests Process.

Manager Mackenzie reviewed his PowerPoint presentation on ARPA fund restrictions, proposed projects for funding, and development of a process for moving forward. There was discussion on long-term infrastructure needs, allocating an amount for outside-of-municipal usage, supporting housing improvements and development, and establishing priorities. Diversity & Equity Committee chair Joelen Mulvaney suggested funds could be set aside for the work of City committees.

It was decided Council will hold a workshop on developing ARPA priorities in lieu of regular business at the January 11th meeting. Discussion on Downstreet’s funding request will be pushed to a later meeting.

D) Discussion Regarding a Community Needs Assessment.

Ms. Mulvaney said the Diversity & Equity Committee is interested in conducting a needs assessment as a tool for the committee’s work. They are currently offering training to City departments with regards to use of the equity assessment tool previously adopted by Council, and they have noted shortcomings with the tool. A needs assessment will help fill in missing data points, and collect data that will assist in future grant seeking. Ms. Mulvaney said she has reached out to the VT State Data Center and they are interested in helping conduct the assessment. Councilor Cambel volunteered to participate in developing the assessment.

C) Discussion and/or Approval of Voter Approved Funding Language.

Clerk Dawes reviewed the process and timeline as laid out in the policy, and noted Council needs to schedule a time to review the funding request submissions well in advance of the January 25th meeting, at which the town meeting warning will be approved. Council will take up the discussion at a special meeting at 6PM on January 11th. The Clerk will put the submitted packets in the ShareDrive.

E) Discussion re: Council Preference for Strategic Planning Consultant Selection Process.

Manager Mackenzie said they have received 11 responses to the strategic planning RFP, and suggested staff review the submissions and make a recommendation of the top three to Council for final acceptance. Council agreed to the process.

Other) Mayor Herring reviewed the meeting schedule and agendas through the end of January.

Round Table –

Councilor Boutin thanked those who have helped wrap presents for the Christmas for Kids program.

Councilor Waszazak noted this is the 9th anniversary of the school shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School. He also noted the holiday decorations at the Aldrich Library look great.

Councilor Hemmerick thanked all the volunteers acknowledged at last night’s recognition event. He said

his thoughts are with those in the intensive care units, and offers thanks to health care workers. He noted with regards to the discussion on the animal and fowl ordinance that chickens make great neighbors.

Mayor Herring said the volunteer recognition event last night was wonderful, and one of the suggestions that came out of the evening was for the development of a quarterly City newsletter. He said the holiday lights around the City are beautiful.

Executive Session –

Councilor Boutin made the motion to find that premature general knowledge of personnel to be discussed would clearly place the City of Barre at a substantial disadvantage should the discussion be public. The motion was seconded by Councilor Hemmerick. **Motion carried.**

Council went into executive session at 10:07 PM to discuss personnel under the provisions of 1 VSA §313 on motion of Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Reil. **Motion carried.**

Manager Mackenzie was invited into the executive session.

Council came out of executive session at 10:25 PM on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Reil. **Motion carried.**

There was no action.

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 PM on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Reil. **Motion carried.**

The meeting was recorded on the video meeting platform.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk