



# *City of Barre, Vermont*

## *“Granite Center of the World”*

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### **Manager’s Statement Regarding the Hiring Process of Barre City Police Chief Braedon Vail**

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This statement is in response to a recent news release by vtdigger regarding the hiring of Braedon Vail, former Deputy Police Chief of the Town of Hartford, VT as the new Barre City Police Chief. Specifically, the issue is the fact that I, as leader of the search process, did not disclose to the Search Committee organized by me, nor subsequently to the City Council, the existence of a dated, seven-year-old video in which then Hartford Deputy Chief Vail, in a closed door setting with members of the Hartford Police Department, repeated vulgar and offensive language made by a third party.

The existence of the video was known to me during the search process. During a private conversation with candidate Vail, he was very forthcoming and transparent to me about the existence of the video. He was very apologetic, and acknowledged it was a regrettable lapse in judgement on his part.

The existence of the video was also known to both the Town of Hartford Selectboard and the new Police Chief who was hired approximately 6 months after the video was taken. Dpty Chief Vail underwent performance counseling at that time by the new Chief. Further, the existence of the video and the circumstances surrounding it were disclosed to me in a reference check with the current Town Manager of Hartford, for whom then Deputy Chief Vail was employed at the time of the reference check. Lastly, the existence of the video was also disclosed in a very thorough, third party personal and criminal background check by a private investigator and 25 year retired veteran of the Vermont State Police. The investigator did not believe that this one incident, in an otherwise spotless 32-year career, did not warrant disqualifying Mr. Vail from consideration for the position of Barre City Police Chief.

I took Mr. Vail’s assurance that the repeated language was not his nor a reflection of his beliefs or value system, and was a regrettable, one time lapse in judgement. In consideration of the totality of the background information and circumstances made known to me, I too did not see this as a disqualifying incident, nor one that warranted forwarding to the Search Committee nor City Council. The release of the video seven years ago, and again this week, appears to me to be nothing more than an attempt at character assassination by a disgruntled third party.

I have full-faith and confidence in the professionalism and the professional law enforcement qualifications, expertise, and demeanor of Chief Vail and stand behind the selection process and my appointment of Braedon Vail as Barre City Police Chief. I consider him an asset to the Barre City Police Department.

Steven E. Mackenzie  
Barre City Manager