

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held August 27, 2024
Council Chambers-Barre City Hall**

The scheduled Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in person and via video platform by Mayor Thomas Lauzon at 6:00 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall, Barre, Vermont. In attendance were: From Ward I, Councilor Sonya Spaulding; from Ward II, Councilors Amanda Gustin and Teddy Waszazak ; and from Ward III, Councilors Samn Stockwell and Michael Deering .City staff members present were City Manager Nicolas Storellicastro, and Clerk/Treasurer Cheryl Metivier.

Absent: Ward 1 Councilor Emel Cambel

Adjustments to the Agenda: Remove Approval of the August 26th Special Council Meeting minutes-will ratify at next meeting.

Visitors & Communications:

*State Representative Peter Anthony gave a heartfelt plea to save the historical “Round” granite shed, located next to the DPW garage, that is slated for removal or demolition. He would like time to find interested and capable supporters to repurpose the building possibly elsewhere. The historical value would be an asset to our community.

*Tess Taylor brought the councils attention to the end of the State’s Emergency Housing Program will end September 15th. With the younger population headed back to school, upholding this program is vital to The young members of our communities.

*Michael Boutin would like registered voters to cast a “yes” vote for the BUUSD budget.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

- A. Clerk’s Office License & Permits – Entertainment License – Slowpoke Exchange LLC (N Main) Art exhibit Sun. Sept 1st 6pm-10pm – Special venue license issued by VT Liquor
- B. Authorize Manager to execute contracts-none
- C. Set Managers FY25 salary retroactive to July 1, 2024 - 5% increase
- D. Errors & Omissions; 531 N Main Street & 1 Third Street
- E. “Gopher” grant application support from Council

Motion moved by Councilor Deering, seconded by Councilor Stockwell

4-a. Approval of City Warrants

A. Approval of warrants from Week of August 28th, 2024

Moved by Councilor Spaulding, seconded Councilor Gustin – Approved

City Clerk & Treasurer Report

*Tax bills were mailed Friday, August 16th with a Q1 due date of September 16th.

*The BUUSD budget revote is scheduled for September 17th.The absentee ballots will be mailed out soon. Please, vote the ballot and return to one of (2) convenient drop boxes located outside of City Hall.

*The State of Vermont intends on mailing ALL registered voters in Vermont the ballots for the General election. The Secretary of State’s office recommends registered voters create an account on the “My Voter Page” to review your information and update if necessary.

City Managers Report

*Pool season is over. The staff was admirable and though had a tough start, grew to be outstanding and exemplary role models. Hoping they all return next year!

*FEMA has set up space at the Auditorium, on the basement level, for community members to visit and discuss Assistance.

*EPA grant application was submitted last week.

*Some of the City staff will participate in an exhibition game with the Bennington Martins. This is intended to be a fund raiser for flood victims in the area. During break periods, games and fun are planned by local merchants and community members. Carol Dawes is scheduled to sing the National Anthem.

New Business

A. Introduction of the New BUUSD Superintendent- JoAn Canning is the new superintendent of the Barre Unified Union School District (BUUSD) in Barre, Vermont. She started her role on July 1, 2024, after the board unanimously agreed to hire her to replace Chris Hennessey. She introduced herself to the Council and local community. She has ambitious plans to create community and inclusion within the school, among both staff and students.

B. RIVER- Updates to the “Top 10” list of flood mitigation projects were presented with additional bullet point of details and steps to make it easier for residents to digest, including;

Berlin St bridge removal

Willey Street restructure

Harrington & Brook St trash rack adjustments

Creating flood plain where Deserreau Machine now stands

Hydrology & hydraulic study

The timeline for decisions are nearing, and moving forward means focusing on the recommendation of the City and City Council.

Further inspection of the streams and brooks in the Currier Park area, flagged areas to be focused on for immediate flood mitigation.

C. Authorization of an expenditure of up to \$80,000 in ARPA funding for a hydrology study.

Motion moved by Councilor Gustin and seconded by Councilor Waszazak - approved

D. Approve local hazard mitigation plan.

Motion to move w/ recommended FEMA changes if needed, by Councilor Waszazak and seconded by Councilor Gustin - approved.

E. Public hearing warned –Interim zoning revisions to revise density, parking and housing requirements.

Planning & Permitting Director Janet Shatney, David Sickel the Planning Commission Chair and Becky Wigg Vice Chair, presented an interim proposal to revision to allow home owners to add accessory apartments and more parking allowances per dwelling in hopes to relieve the housing crisis within the city, but still ensuring building code safety and minimal street congestion. The interim proposal would hopefully become permanent in the future.

State Representative Peter Anthony on support list.

Motion moved by Councilor Spaulding and seconded by Councilor Gustin – approved.

F. Public hearing warned-Revisions to substantial damage threshold and underground tank requirements for the Flood hazard Area Regulations.

Planning & Permitting Director Janet Shatney, David Sickel the Planning Commission Chair and Becky Wigg Vice Chair presented revisions that would require both above ground and below ground fuel tanks to be anchored down, preventing flood waters from washing them down river, down streets in hopes to prevent fuel from leaking and contaminating waters and surrounding soil.

Motion moved by Councilor Gustin and seconded by Councilor Stockwell – approved.

G. Review proposed changes to Minimum housing Ordinance (Stockwell) discussion only.

Councilor Samn Stockwell would like the City to adopt changes to these ordinances, enforcing stricter fines to property owners for violations, including but not limited to minimum heating thresholds and safety violations. Community members and rental unit owners Hebert Heath, Collin Dolittle, Larry Lozier and Samantha Hiscock came to the table to discuss the rental unit inspection processes and questioned whether a need of clear cut details of a possible check list of what to determine their focus could be prior to the inspections and more authority to force tenants to keep apartments safe during their tenancy and hold them accountable for damages or alterations which may make a unit unsafe. The members ask for consistency and transparency from the City inspectors Nick Copping and Arthur Young. Samantha Hiscock would like to see a check list similar to what the State of Vermont has developed be implemented as a standard guide for landlords.

The discussion lead to tabling the discussion and reverting to allowing City attorneys to review and advise.

Upcoming Business-

Mayor Lauzon – email housing discussion

Councilor Spaulding - *water & sewer rates discussion*winter parking ban discussion

Councilor Stockwell – *EPA grant details*vacant commercial building ordinances-fines?

Councilor Waszazak – confirming next meeting to be September 10th.

Roundtable-

Councilor Spaulding – Vote for the BUUSD budget September 17th.
Request to receive documents up for discussion sooner

Councilor Deering – School year has begun, please be mindful to buses, children walking and crossing streets.

Executive Session – (Real estate) moved by Councilor Waszazak seconded by Councilor Stockwell – approved

Enter Executive Session - moved by Councilor Waszazak seconded by Councilor Stockwell – approved

Exit Executive Session - moved by Councilor Waszazak seconded by Councilor Stockwell – approved

Adjourn - moved by Councilor Waszazak seconded by Councilor Stockwell – approved

To be approved at 09/10/24 Barre City Council Meeting

Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 10th, 2024.

The open portions of the meeting were recorded on the video platform.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Metivier, City Clerk

DRAFT