**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council**

**Held January 10, 2023**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in person and via video platform by Mayor Jake Hemmerick at 7:00 PM at Barre City Hall, Barre, Vermont. In attendance in person or virtually were: From Ward I, Councilors Emel Cambel and Thom Lauzon; from Ward II, Councilors Michael Boutin and Teddy Waszazak; and from Ward III, Councilors Michael Deering and Samn Stockwell. City staff members present were City Manager Nicolas Storellicastro, Interim Fire Chief Joe Aldsworth, Assistant Manager Dawn Monahan, Buildings and Community Services Director Jeff Bergeron, Buildings and Community Services Assistant Director Stephanie Quaranta, Police Chief Braedon Vail, Deputy Police Chief Larry Eastman, Planning Director Janet Shatney, Human Resources Director Rikk Taft, Public Works Director Bill Ahearn (arrived 8:27 PM), and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

**Absent:** NONE

**Adjustments to the Agenda:** NONE

**Visitors and Communications –**

Heather Slayton from Washington County Mental Health said she attempted to submit their annual funding request application and support materials by the January 3rd deadline, but there appear to have been technical difficulties and the packet wasn’t received by Clerk Dawes. Ms. Slayton requested the Council place WCMH’s $10,000 funding request on the town meeting ballot. She noted WCMH served

1,125 Barre City clients in the last year.

Dan Barlow, executive director of People’s Health & Wellness Clinic said they missed the deadline for submitting their funding request application and support materials, and requested the Council place PH&WC’s $3,000 request on the town meeting ballot. Mr. Barlow said they served 155 Barre City residents in the last year.

There was discussion on the application process, the option to petition for placement on the town meeting ballot, and Council’s authority to include any ballot items they deem eligible. Mayor Hemmerick said Council will take these requests up for action later in the agenda, before discussion on the FY24 budget.

**Approval of Consent Agenda:**

Council approved the following consent agenda items on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by

Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried.**

A. Approval of Minutes:

i. Regular meeting of January 3, 2023. B. City Warrants as presented:

1. Approval of Week 2023-02, dated January 11, 2023:

i. Accounts Payable: $112,163.12 ii. Payroll (gross): $130,580.18

C. 2023 Licenses & Permits: NONE

D. Approve Letter of Intent for Northwest Vermont Transit-Oriented Development grants.

**City Clerk & Treasurer Report –**

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

 Information on offices up for election at the 2023 annual town meeting are available on the City’s website. The deadline for petitions to place public questions on the ballot is January 19th, and the deadline for nominating petitions is January 30th.

 Postcards were mailed to all active voters, encouraging them to request absentee ballots for town meeting. The Clerk said a large number of requests have been received via phone and online since the postcards began landing in mailboxes.

**Liquor Control Board/Cannabis Control Board –** NONE

**City Manager’s Report –**

Manager Storellicastro noted the following:

 There is currently a water main break at the intersection of Prospect and North/South Main

Streets. Water service will be interrupted this evening while repairs are being made.

 There was a second open meeting law/zoom training for members of City committees this evening before the Council meeting. Current emergency open meeting law legislation is scheduled to expire on January 15th, so committees are being trained on the imminent changes. Clerk Dawes said the legislature is considering a bill that would extent the emergency measures, but it’s unlikely the bill will be approved before the January 15th expiration date.

 The Manager noted there was a firearm incident at Spaulding High School. Police Chief Braedon

Vail said a student brought an airsoft pellet gun to school. The gun discharged and a teacher was struck in the back by a pellet. There is an ongoing investigation, and charges will be filed as necessary.

**Unfinished Business –** NONE

**New Business –**

**A) Barre Area Development Corporation (BADC) FY24 Budget follow up.**

BADC executive director Aimee Green reviewed their FY24 budget request, including funding to support the marketing director position currently held by Shannon Alexander. Ms. Green noted BADC’s focus

for FY24 is economic strategy, housing, business development, and strategic planning, and she reviewed recent accomplishments. She noted Barre City has provided marketing support in the past when money

was approved by the voters for the Barre Rock Solid campaign, and she spoke of marketing strategies and

investments for FY24.

Manager Storellicastro said the current FY24 budget draft includes a 15% increase for BADC, which is the largest increase for an outside organization included in the budget. The Manager spoke of managing the budget and making difficult decisions, and noted the 15% increase is the same amount Barre Town will include in its FY24 budget.

There was discussion on BADC seeking other sources of revenue. Ms. Green said BADC is looking to establish itself as a 501(c)(3) organization to be eligible for fundraising and certain grants.

There was discussion on maintaining a balance between Barre City and Barre Town with respect to annual allocations to BADC, making the additional funding request contingent upon receiving the same amount from Barre Town, estimating the Prospect Heights project’s impact on the grand list, accessing currently available federal and state funding, developing metrics and evaluation methods, and placing the additional funding on the ballot as a separate line item.

Councilor Boutin made the motion to add the additional funding to the ballot as a separate line item. He withdrew the motion before it was seconded.

There was additional discussion on the proposed budget amount, investing in economic development, and balancing competing needs, and encouraging BADC to seek other revenue sources.

Councilor Boutin made the motion to put the full BADC request in the FY24 budget, seconded by Councilor Lauzon. **Motion did not pass, with Councilors Boutin and Lauzon voting in favor, and Mayor Hemmerick and Councilors Deering, Cambel, Waszazak and Stockwell voting against.**

Councilor Boutin made the motion to put the additional funding request above what is included in the Manager’s draft FY24 budget, an amount of $20,492, on the ballot as a separate line item, seconded by Councilor Lauzon. **Motion carried with Councilors Boutin, Lauzon, Waszazak, Cambel and Deering voting in favor, and Mayor Hemmerick and Councilor Stockwell voting against.**

**B) ARPA Community Engagement Report.**

Manager Storellicastro reviewed the report including information on the timeline, public forum, survey, and request letters. The Manager proposed $250,000 be allocated to Downstreet Housing’s Granite City Apartments housing project in the former Ward 5 school building, $200,000 for innovation projects proposed by the community, and the balance be made available for infrastructure improvements from the

capital plan.

There was discussion on prioritizing ADA improvements, possibly dividing the $250,000 between multiple housing initiatives, and developing an application and review process for the proposals included in the innovation request letters. Council informally agreed to develop the application and review process over the next 90 days.

City Manager Emeritus Steve Mackenzie said it’s important to remember the timelines for use of ARPA funds – that contracts for projects must be executed by December 31, 2024, with projects completed by December 31, 2026. Clerk Dawes noted opioid settlement funds may be available to fund the request for support from Turning Point.

**C) Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Presentation.**

Manager Storellicastro reviewed the charter language regarding the CIP, and the timeline of the development process. The Manager said the focus is on a three-year period of time, and this is an opportunity to take advantage of one-time federal and state funding. The plan does not include the public

works facility, as the amount needed is unknown at this time. Included is an annual line item for project

management support.

There was discussion on including audio improvements for the council chambers, continuing work on development of a public works campus, next steps for using the federal earmark funds for auditorium and water line improvements, how streets to be paved are identified, finding ways to bundle projects to economize and free up funding for other needs, and adding funding sources to future drafts of the plan.

**Other) Consideration of Placing Funding Requests on Town Meeting Ballot.**

As requested under Visitors & Communications, Council approved placing a $10,000 funding request for

Washington County Mental Health on the town meeting ballot on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

As requested under Visitors & Communications, Council approved placing a $3,000 funding request for People’s Health & Wellness Clinic on the town meeting ballot on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried with Councilor Lauzon abstaining due to conflict of interest.**

**D) Approve FY24 Budget for Town Meeting Warning.**

Councilor Boutin made the motion to approve the FY24 budget for the town meeting warning, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. The motion was withdrawn to allow discussion.

Manager Storellicastro reviewed the timeline for the budget development process. There was discussion on projected highway revenues, previously approved $149,000 transfer from the fund balance to pay off the interfund note for purchase of 16 Enterprise Aly, and projected revenues from delinquent tax collector fees and parking meters.

Council approved the FY24 budget for the town meeting warning on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried with Councilor Lauzon being recorded as present.**

**Upcoming Business –**

 In lieu of a Council meeting on January 17th, the Council will take a tour of the wastewater treatment facility.

 The January 24th meeting will include presentation of the strategic plan, and consideration of dedications for the annual report.

 The January 31st meeting will include approval of the town meeting warning.

**Round Table –**

Councilor Deering said there’s a meet and greet with town meeting candidates this Saturday afternoon at

Delicate Decadence.

Councilor Waszazak said there are a number of candidate-related events this weekend, and he wished everyone a Happy New Year. He said there was a good Police Advisory Committee meeting last night, and the group is working very well together and accomplishing good things.

Mayor Hemmerick said it’s best practice to not electioneer at Council meetings. The Mayor reviewed the requests to place funding items on the town meeting ballot, and said the Council should be cautious about placing funding request items on the ballot because of the impact on the tax rate.

Manager Storellicastro thanked the department heads for their hard work on developing the FY24 budget.

**Executive Session –** NONE

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Stockwell.

**Motion carried.**

The meeting was recorded on the video platform.

Respectfully submitted, Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk