

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council  
Held January 24, 2023**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in person and via video platform by Acting Mayor Michael Boutin at 6:03 PM at Barre City Hall, Barre, Vermont. In attendance in person or virtually were: From Ward I, Councilors Emel Cambel and Thom Lauzon (arrived 6:36 PM); from Ward II, Councilors Michael Boutin (Acting Mayor) and Teddy Waszazak; and from Ward III, Councilors Michael Deering and Samn Stockwell. City staff members present were City Manager Nicolas Storrellicastro, Human Resources Director Rikk Taft, Police Chief Braedon Vail, Corporal Jacob Frey, Sergeant Steven Durgin, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

**Absent:** Mayor Jake Hemmerick.

**Other Present:** Jack Parlon, Labor Specialist, National Fraternal Order of Police.

**Executive Session** – Councilor Stockwell made the motion to find that premature general public knowledge of personnel issues would clearly place the City of Barre at a substantial disadvantage should the discussions be public. The motion was seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried.**

Council went into executive session at 6:04 PM to discuss personnel under the provisions of 1 VSA § 313 on motion of Councilor Cambel, seconded by Councilor Deering. Manager Storrellicastro, Chief Vail, Corporal Frey, Sergeant Durgin, and Mr. Parlon were invited into the executive session. **Motion carried.**

Council came out of executive session at 6:45 PM on motion of Councilor Deering, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

No action was taken.

Acting Mayor Boutin recessed the meeting at 6:46 PM until 7:00 PM.

Acting Mayor Boutin called the meeting back into session at 7:00 PM.

**Adjustments to the Agenda:** Discussion on the outside organization funding policy is deferred. Council will discuss the Downtown ARPA fund allocation, and then table any action until the full Council is available.

**Visitors and Communications –**

Resident Jesse Rosado said he is following up on his previous visit with Council to discuss current Green Mountain Transit bus service cuts effecting the City. Mr. Rosado said GMT told Council services would be brought back to regular levels when staffing vacancies could be filled, but no changes have been seen to date. He said GMT is chasing Medicaid transportation business and ski area transportation instead of providing local routes. There was discussion on reaching out to congressional and legislative representatives to call attention to the decreases in service, inviting the GMT Operations Manager to attend a forum to hear from the public on transportation needs, and reviewing GMT's Barre City services and funding. Ericka Reil confirmed GMT has been providing Medicaid transportation services for many years. Clerk Dawes said GMT provides information on services with its funding request application, and she'll share that information with the Council.

Rainbow Bridge Community Center Co-CEO Shawn Trader, and Financial Officer Stephanie Otten asked the Council to place a \$25,000 funding request for the community center on the Town Meeting ballot. Ms. Trader spoke of the recent establishment of the center, and the challenges in funding a new

organization. There was discussion on the process for placing funding requests on the ballot, funding request amounts for future years, and differences between the two budget proposals provided by RBCC. Councilor Lauzon said he is working with the organization on their financial records. Several Councilors expressed their support of the organization and concerns over placing the request on the ballot without following process. There was additional discussion on other possible funding sources, and creating a matching fund program. No action was taken to place the funding request on the Town Meeting ballot.

Bernadette Rose read a statement noting at its January 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting the ADA Committee voted unanimously to put the committee on hiatus until the Council can give a clear charge to the ADA coordinator. Ms. Rose said she is tendering her resignation from the committee effective this evening, and that the committee hiatus will free those who have been serving on the committee to continue their work without the onus of adhering to the laws and rules around holding meetings.

Ericka Reil read a statement of resignation from the ADA Committee. There was discussion on what the City could do in the future to support the work of the committee. It was noted federal law requires the City to have an ADA Coordinator and transition plan, and provide training opportunities. Ms. Rose said guidance provided by the committee to date has not been listened to.

Councilors thanked Ms. Rose and Ms. Reil for their service to the community.

#### **Approval of Consent Agenda:**

Councilor Lauzon asked that the ratification of last week's Council actions be taken separately.

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

- A. Approval of Minutes:
  - i. Regular meeting of January 10, 2023.
- B. City Warrants as presented:
  1. Ratification of Week 2023-03, dated January 18, 2023:
    - i. Accounts Payable: \$599,615.51
    - ii. Payroll (gross): \$134,708.55
  2. Approval of Week 2023-04, dated January 25, 2023:
    - i. Accounts Payable: \$699,546.61
    - ii. Payroll (gross): \$138,925.23
- C. 2023 Licenses & Permits:
  1. Food Establishment Licenses:
    - i. Gusto's, 28 Prospect Street
    - ii. Ladder 1 Grill, 8 S. Main Street
    - iii. Maria's Bagels, 260 N. Main Street
  2. Entertainment Licenses:
    - i. Barre Partnership, annual license
    - ii. Barre Unitarian Universalist Church, 2 Church Street, annual license
    - iii. Gusto's, 28 Prospect Street, annual license
    - iv. Ladder 1 Grill, 8 S. Main Street, annual license
  3. Fireworks Permits:
    - i. Barre Partnership/Heritage Festival, July 28, 2023 (rain date August 5, 2023)
- D. Authorize purchase of power load system for Ambulance #1

Council ratified their 1/10/23 action to place a \$10,000 funding request for Washington County Mental Health on the 2023 annual town meeting ballot on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Deering. **Motion carried with Councilor Lauzon voting against.**

Council ratified their 1/10/23 action to place a \$3,000 funding request for People's Health & Wellness Clinic on the 2023 annual town meeting ballot on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried with Councilor Lauzon abstaining due to conflict of interest.**

#### **City Clerk & Treasurer Report –**

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- The deadline for annual town meeting nominating petitions is January 30<sup>th</sup>, and ballots will be available by February 15<sup>th</sup>. The Council will approve the warning at next week's meeting.
- Holiday free parking donations have been tallied, and the amount raised to benefit the Renita Marshall Helping Hands Foundation is \$3,890.
- The City is working with Senate Economic Development, Housing & General Affairs Committee on a request for an extension on the incurrence of debt deadline for the TIF district.

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

#### **City Manager's Report –**

Manager Storrellicastro noted the following:

- Application has been submitted for a master plan update grant that could provide up to \$100,000 in funding.
- Participated in last week's EPA community engagement meetings.
- With the snow storm being predicted for later this week, the Manager reminded people of the winter parking ban that disallows parking on City streets and parking lots from 1AM – 6AM, except with an overnight permit for specific locations.

#### **New Business –**

##### **A) Strategic Plan presentation.**

Jim Berman from Fio Partners LLC gave a Powerpoint presentation on the draft strategic plan, including a review of the process and timeline, vision for the City, vision for City government, mission statement, and five goals with strategies. There was discussion on adding housing initiatives to the strategies, and using the plan to focus and lead the work of department heads. The next step is for people to suggest proposed edits, and bring the plan back for formal Council adoption in a few weeks. Mr. Berman said he will continue to work with the design team on what the first year's work is, top priorities, and developing metrics and measurables.

##### **B) Authorize the allocation of \$250,000 in ARPA funding to Downstreet in support of the Granite City Apartments project.**

Manager Storrellicastro reviewed his memo and recommendation for the allocation of ARPA funds for the Granite City Apartments project, noting the project will create 9 new apartment units in the historic Ward 5 school building. The Manager said the building is currently owned by Barre Housing Authority and is not on the grand list. Once finished, the Granite City Apartments will have a taxable value of approximately \$400,000 based on the state's housing formula. The Manager said the project was submitted during the ARPA project solicitation timeframe, and received the highest score on the community survey.

Nicola Anderson, director of real estate for Downstreet Housing and Community Development, said the building covenant only allows it to be used for housing now and in the future. Downstreet hopes to begin construction in June 2023.

There was discussion on the return on investment in property tax collections, local need for different types of housing, public-private partnerships, investing in infrastructure instead of housing, placing the question on the ballot as a non-binding resolution, construction costs, and improving the neighborhood.

Councilor Waszazak made the motion to table the discussion until the full Council is in attendance, seconded by Councilor Lauzon. Acting Mayor Boutin asked that the motion be withdrawn to allow for additional public comment. The motion was withdrawn.

Jesse Rosado said construction costs are high and public projects are expensive, and the value of the project goes beyond the 9 housing units.

Councilor Lauzon made the motion to approve the allocation, seconded by Councilor Cambel. Councilor Lauzon withdrew his motion.

Councilor Waszazak made the motion to table the discussion, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

**C) Discussion of the City of Barre Outside Organization Funding Policy.**

This item is deferred.

**D) Review draft 2023 Annual Town Meeting warning.**

Clerk Dawes reviewed the draft warning, and noted the final version will come to Council for approval at next week's meeting.

**E) Approve the dedication, *in memoriam*, and photos for the FY22 Annual Report.**

Council approved dedicating the annual report to former City Manager Steve Mackenzie, and the *in memoriam* to former executive assistant Jody Norway, who passed away in June 2022, on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

Councilors reviewed possible photos for the front and back covers of the annual report. Councilors approved photo #8 of the farmer's market in the Pearl Street Pedway for the front cover on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

Council approved photo #2 of the Pearl Street Pedway in the evening for the back cover on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

**Upcoming Business –**

- Councilor Stockwell asked for more information on the Barre City/Barre Town water/sewer rate agreement.

**Round Table –**

Councilor Deering said last week's tour of the wastewater treatment facility was great, along with the meetings with stakeholders. He also enjoyed meeting recently with Barre Town Representative Galfetti.

Councilor Cambel said she appreciates everyone who works at the wastewater and water treatment facilities. She also thanked the staffers who oversee the TIF district accounting and reporting requirements.

Acting Mayor Boutin thanked the Manager for being on his podcast recently.

**Executive Session – NONE**

To be approved at 01/31/2023 Barre City Council Meeting

The meeting adjourned at 9:11 PM on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Deering.  
**Motion carried.**

The meeting was recorded on the video platform.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk

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