

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held March 14, 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, Assistant Manager Dawn Monahan, Buildings and Community Services Director Jeff Bergeron, BCS Assistant Director Stephanie Quaranta, Planning Director Janet Shatney, Deputy Fire Chief Joe Aldsworth, Human Resources Director Rikk Taft, BOR Foreperson Rowdie Parker, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: NONE

Others Present: NONE

Adjustments to the Agenda:

Manager Storellicastro asked to move new agenda items A & B to immediately follow these adjustments to accommodate those in attendance.

New Business –

A) Resolution honoring the Spaulding High School girls hockey team on the occasion of winning the 2022-2023 state division I championship.

Councilor Deering read the resolution, and official copies were given to all members of the championship hockey team, along with several standing ovations. Couch David Lawrence said this is a special group of kids, and they treat each other as a family. Rep. Peter Anthony said the team will be honored with a legislative resolution next Friday at the statehouse. Councilors enthusiastically adopted the resolution on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Boutin. **Motion carried.**

B) Resolution recognizing the service of Rowdie Parker on the occasion of his retirement.

Clerk Dawes read the resolution, and an official copy was presented to Mr. Parker, along with a standing ovation. The SHS girls' hockey team presented Mr. Parker with a hockey jersey in honor of his decades of service to the BOR ice rink and the teams who call that space home. Councilor adopted the resolution on unanimous consent.

Visitors and Communications – NONE

Approval of Consent Agenda:

Mayor Hemmerick asked the acceptance of the FY24 municipal planning grant be taken up separately, as he will recuse himself during discussion and approval due to conflict of interest.

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

- A. Approval of Minutes:
 - i. Regular meeting of March 14, 2023.
- B. City Warrants as presented:
 - 1. Ratification of Week 2023-12, dated March 22, 2023:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$205,438.48
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$129,560.62
 - 2. Approval of Week 2023-13, dated March 29, 2023:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$232,454.67
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$180,574.97

C. 2023 Licenses & Permits:

1. Food Establishment:
 - i. Mulligan's, 9 Maple Ave
2. Fireworks:
 - i. Barre Partnership, Heritage Festival, July 29, 2023
3. Entertainment:
 - i. Mulligan's, 9 Maple Ave, annual license
 - ii. Barre Partnership, annual license
 - iii. Baked With Love (Barre Pride), June 10, 2023, City Hall Park 9AM-3PM
 - iv. The ReHab Gym, May 20, 2023, private parking lot behind gym, strength meet

- D. Authorize contract with Televate for dispatch staffing and training study
- E. Authorize contract with White + Burke for TIF consulting services
- F. Ratify application for Fall 2022 VTrans Transportation Alternatives Grant
- G. Authorize planned purchase of two Public Works vehicles
- H. Accept FY24 municipal planning grant (moved to separate action below)

Councilor Boutin assumed chairing the meeting as Mayor Hemmerick stepped aside due to conflict of interest. Council approved acceptance of the FY24 municipal planning grant on motion of Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried, with Mayor Hemmerick recused.**

Mayor Hemmerick resumed chairing the meeting.

City Clerk & Treasurer Report –

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- The BUUSD budget revote is scheduled for May 9th to coincide with Barre Town's town meeting elections. Voting in Barre City will take place at the Old Labor Hall on Granite Street. Ballots will be mailed out automatically to all those who voted early absentee for the March 7th elections.
- Water/sewer bills are due by March 31st.
- The Manager and Clerk are testifying tomorrow before House Ways & Means on the City's request for TIF extensions, S.94. The bill passed out of the Senate before crossover.

Liquor Control Board/Cannabis Control Board – Council approved the following license renewals on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried with Councilor Boutin abstaining.**

License holders	1st class	2nd class	3rd class	outside consumption permit	tobacco	tobacco substitute
Asian Gourmet	yes		yes	yes		
Bella Campo Food Products		yes				
Beverage Baron		yes			yes	yes
Champlain Farms - 169 Washington St		yes			yes	yes
Champlain Farms - 15 S. Main St		yes			yes	yes
Cumberland Farms- 524 N. Main St		yes			yes	yes
Cumberland Farms - 132 S. Main St		yes			yes	yes
Dente's Market		yes				
Dollar General #15340 - 540 N. Main St		yes			yes	
Dollar General #11046 - 74 S. Main St		yes			yes	
Jiffy Mart		yes			yes	yes
The Meltdown LLC	yes			yes		
Mr Z's	yes					
Mutuo	yes		yes			

North End Deli Mart		yes			yes	yes
Walgreens		yes			yes	

City Manager’s Report –

Manager Storellicastro noted the following:

- There were three water main breaks over the past several days. All have been repaired. Customers in South Barre are on a boil water order until the samples are declared safe.
- Met with representatives from USDA – Rural Development for an informational meeting on the federal earmarks allocated for improvements at the auditorium.
- There will be an informational meeting on the Garfield playground on April 4th on zoom to discuss plans for bringing the playground back to life.
- Street cleaning has started.
- Paving bids are due by tomorrow, with the contract scheduled to come to Council for approval on April 11th.

New Business, continued –

C) Presentation and acceptance of an AED donation.

Buildings and Community Services director Jeff Bergeron said the City has purchased AED defibrillators from Reynolds & Son for City facility buildings. Brad Morse from Reynolds donated an AED to the City for use at the pool. Deputy Fire Chief Joe Aldsworth said Reynolds has been working with the City on special pricing to provide AEDs for a number of non-City facilities throughout the area. Councilors thanked Mr. Morse and Reynolds & Son for their generosity.

D) Approval of 2nd round application form for the ARPA Community Innovation Fund.

Manager Storellicastro reviewed the final version of the application form, and said it will be shared with those individuals and organizations that submitted preliminary letters of interest earlier this year. The completed 2nd round applications are due back by May 1st. Councilors suggested some edits and corrections. Councilor approved the application as amended on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

E) Request to have Barre City placed on the next GMT agenda to discuss service cuts.

Councilor Waszazak said several Councilors, the Manager and other community members attended last week’s GMT board meeting to follow up on concerns around Barre area service changes that went into effect last summer. He said they were unable to be heard at the meeting because GMT process requires municipal request for placement on the agenda. Councilor Waszazak is seeking Council approval to request being placed on the April GMT board meeting agenda to discuss service restoration, Barre City board representation, and working towards common goals.

GMT general manager Clayton Clark thanked the Council for raising these issues, and noted joining the board requires a larger financial contribution than what is currently being provided by Barre City. Mr. Clark said the service reductions are tied to staffing losses due to retirements and the inability to hire new drivers. There was discussion on fixed routes vs. demand response services, the recent hiring of a rural operations director, what’s involved in being a volunteer driver, and how board members are selected. Mr. Clayton said routes will be restored as drivers are hired.

Washington County board member Christian Meyer introduced himself and said he’s new to the GMT board, and also the new executive director of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.

Jesse Rosado asked if there could be additional local representation on the board. He said his empathy is with the riders at the bus stops who aren’t getting service. He suggested the Council stand in solidarity with riders, write to Governor Scott to inform him and the administration of the circumstances, and raise public awareness. Mr. Rosado said GMT prioritizes demand response services over bulk transport.

Connor Dwyer said while searching for work he wasn't able to take some of the available jobs because of the lack of a reliable bus system. Mr. Dwyer asked for a concrete plan for restoring services? He asked about the drivers working the Mountain Road route in Stowe, and why they couldn't be reassigned to this area now that the skiing season is coming to an end. Mr. Clark said those drivers are hired on temporary seasonal contracts and not part of the union that oversees the local drivers. Most of the seasonal drivers work to enjoy the benefits associated with being near the ski areas, and aren't interested in continuing to drive after the season is over.

There was discussion on benefits and starting wages for drivers, and hearing from people who are affected by the service reductions.

Councilors voiced unanimous consent to request placement on GMT's April agenda for further discussion with the GMT board.

F) Discussion on next steps in the prospective sale of the Wheelock House.

Manager Storellicastro said the deadline for accepting offers for the Wheelock House was March 10th, and said realtor Michelle Hebert is here to work with the Council to prepare a list of questions to be posed to prospective buyers for discussion in an upcoming executive session. Councilors suggested questions to be included.

There was discussion on incorporating public presentations from all prospective buyers, keeping financial information private as per exemptions allowed by statute, and reflections on the process used when the City sold the old firehouse. Craig Durham said he is the realtor for one of the prospective buyers, and Mr. Durham said his client would be happy to participate in a public presentation.

Councilors agreed informally to have private conversations with the prospective buyers and then host public presentations before making any decisions.

G) Committee Re-Set.

Manager Storellicastro and Mayor Hemmerick reviewed the proposed revisions to the current committee structures. There was discussion on placing the ADA duties with the Diversity & Equity Committee and whether the duties are more closely aligned with facilities or transportation committees. D&E Committee chair Joelen Mulvaney said there are no ADA committee members who would be joining the D&E Committee to advocate on behalf of ADA-related issues. There is currently an open seat on D&E, and perhaps that could be reserved for an ADA representative. Former ADA Committee member Ericka Reil said ADA has five areas of focus, and it would be difficult to place it in any one committee.

The proposal of combining the Animal Control Committee and the Board of Health will require further discussion and charter changes.

The Manager said Council last made annual appointments in August 2022, and will need to clean up the lists and ratify the current committee members in the near future.

Chris Russo Fraysier asked for clarification on the Cow Pasture Stewardship Committee and its conservation duties. There was discussion on other conservation properties in the City, and what committee should assume those responsibilities. Cemeteries and Parks Committee chair Giuliano Cecchinelli said it might be possible for that committee to take on some of the conservation duties, and he will discuss it with the committee at their next meeting.

Council approved the committee resets as presented and amended on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried with Councilor Deering abstaining.**

H) Approval of the strategic plan.

Manager Storrellicastro reviewed the plan and key goals, and said the document will guide the work of the staff. The plan will be placed on the April 11th agenda for additional discussion and approval.

Upcoming Business –

- Setting dates for the ward BBQ's. Discuss holding a downtown merchants' gathering.
- Garfield Playground discussion.
- Diversity & Equity Committee advisory recommendation on the IDEAL Vermont program.
- Paving contract approval 4/11
- City fee revisions 4/11
- Community investment ordinances draft 4/25
- Reconsider creation of a governance committee

Round Table –

Councilor Deering said it was a pleasure to honor the SHS girls' hockey team and retiring facility foreperson Rowdie Parker.

Councilor Waszazak thanked the Manager for the new Council chairs.

Councilor Stockwell suggested the Council form a team for the bathtub race during the Heritage Festival.

Councilor Lauzon said it's tax season, and encouraged people to sign up for Vermont's child tax credit.

Mayor Hemmerick said he is in Boston attending a great conference.

Executive Session – Councilor Lauzon made the motion to find that premature general public knowledge of litigation, labor and personnel to be discussed would clearly place the City of Barre at a substantial disadvantage should the discussions be public. The motion was seconded by Councilor Stockwell.

Motion carried.

Council went into executive session at 10:10 PM to discuss litigation, labor and personnel under the provisions of 1 VSA § 313 on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. Manager Storrellicastro was invited into the executive session. **Motion carried.**

Council came out of executive session at 10:47 PM on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

No action was taken.

The meeting adjourned at 10:47 PM on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

The meeting was recorded on the video platform.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk