

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held April 25, 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 and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: NONE

Others Present: NONE

Adjustments to the Agenda: Manager Storellicastro asked to add a new agenda item for approval of a sole source contract to purchase equipment for the Garfield playground. Councilor Boutin asked to vote separately on the consent item on purchase of land to expand the Cow Pasture.

Visitors and Communications –

Councilor Lauzon said he made an inappropriate remark during the April 11th meeting when he was incorrectly identified as the agent for Wheelock House LLC, and he apologized for voicing his frustration. He noted Fox Market co-owner Doni Cain reached out to him to discuss the condition of the Wheelock House, and Councilor Lauzon told Mr. Cain that would be considered ex parte communications, which is not allowed.

Jesse Rosado said he first brought the information regarding Green Mountain Transit's service cuts to the Council's attention in July 2022, and there's been no resolution to the situation to date. Mr. Rosado said he's concerned for the riders who are in crisis due to the lack of services, and the Mayor took the discussion in the wrong direction while attending the GMT board meeting earlier this month. Mr. Rosado said Councilors need to urge the GMT board to get to a solution.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

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 April 11, 2023.
- B. City Warrants as presented:
 - 1. Ratification of Week 2023-16, dated April 19, 2023:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$93,508.66
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$144,233.75
 - 2. Approval of Week 2023-17, dated April 26, 2023:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$307,135.14
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$132,742.63
- C. 2023 Clerk's Office Licenses & Permits: NONE
- D. Accept the resignation of committee and task force member(s)

The following item was acted upon separately.

- E. Authorize the Manager to execute a purchase and sales agreement for the acquisition of 22 vacant lots on Maplewood and Mead Avenues for purpose of expanding the Cow Pasture.

Manager Storellicastro reviewed the history of the parcels being offered for sale, and said expansion of the Cow Pasture is included in the Stewardship Committee's master plan. The Manager said there is value in conserving the land. Councilor Boutin said he will be voting no on this purchase because the purchase price is higher than what the combined parcels were recently sold for. Council approved the purchase on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried with Councilor Boutin voting against.**

City Clerk & Treasurer Report –

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- The May 9th BUUSD budget revote will be held at the Old Labor Hall on Granite Street as the auditorium isn't available on that date. Ballots have been mailed to 617 voters to date, and approximately 230 voted ballots have been returned.
- Fourth quarter property taxes are due by May 15th.
- The Clerk's office will be closed this Thursday to allow staff to attending trainings.
- Assistant Clerk Cheryl Metivier has moved to the senior accounting clerk position in the finance department. The new assistant clerk is scheduled to start May 8th.

Liquor Control Board/Cannabis Control Board – Clerk Dawes said all license holders have completed their online application renewals and made their local payments of license fees, therefore all renewals have been approved to the Division of Liquor Control.

City Manager's Report –

Manager Storrellicastro noted the following:

- Working on updating appointments to all committees and task forces, and will be opening up solicitations for letters of interest in the latter part of May.
- Continue to work with the EPA on the water main replacement scheduled for Route 302. Exploring opportunities to waive matching requirements.
- Public Works is beginning to prepare for the sidewalk and paving work to be done in the Merchant Street/Warren Street area.
- The yard waste disposal schedule is posted on the website and social media, letting people know when the Barre Town dump site is available to Barre City residents. The City will do a yard waste pick up later this spring. The date is still to be determined.
- Area elementary and middle school students provided art currently on display in the Council chambers.

Sarah Helman asked when pavement on Pleasant Street will be repaired following the recent water break. Manager Storrellicastro said Public Works is waiting for the asphalt plant to open, hopefully later this week.

Jayne Bauer asked how much of Merchant Street is being paved? The Manager said it's mostly around the intersection work near Maple Avenue, and near Warren Street.

New Business –

A) VLCT Training: open meeting law, public records act, and conflicts of interest.

VLCT Municipal Assistance Center (MAC) attorney Garrett Baxter gave a Powerpoint presentation on Vermont's open meeting laws, public records act, and conflict of interest statutes. Mr. Baxter noted his presentation is a brief overview of these topics, and additional information is available on the VLCT website. There was discussion on what qualifies as a public body, what is a public record, who the City's records custodian is, and the distinction between Vermont's public records laws and the federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

B) First Reading Warned 8:00 PM: Ordinance #2023-01 Community Investment Ordinance.

Mayor Hemmerick opened the first reading at 8:32 PM. Councilor Waszazak reviewed the draft ordinance, and said it would be applicable to large-scale infrastructure projects to ensure they meet 21st century workplace guidelines for work conditions and wages.

Walter Smith said he has been a union carpenter for 18 years, and works mostly out of state as there are few such jobs available in the area. Mr. Smith said union positions provide access to benefits, and he would like to see such jobs open up in Vermont. The proposed ordinance would provide those opportunities locally.

Matt Musgrave with the Associated General Contractors of Vermont spoke of how the ordinance would impact local contractors. Mr. Musgrave said many of the provisions included in the draft language are reflected in state statutes on prevailing wages, and are often referred to as “responsible contractor ordinances”. He said AGC/VT is supportive of underrepresented communities, however they are concerned the ordinance would negatively impact smaller companies, and will make projects potentially less attractive to bidders.

Amy Galford said ARPA and infrastructure projects funded through federal and state agencies come with a lot of strings. Ms. Galford recommended reviewing the draft language to identify overlaps with state and federal laws around requirements for advertising jobs and projects, and waiver conditions.

William Toborg said imposing more regulations will price small businesses out of the market.

There was discussion on reconciling the draft language with Davis-Bacon prevailing wage requirements, proposed text amendments, the proposed form and manner of reporting requirements, and concerns about the ability to attract bidders for projects.

Council approved moving the ordinance on to a second reading on motion of Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Cambel. **Motion carried with Councilor Boutin voting against.**

C) Approval of the 2023-25 Strategic Plan.

Clerk Dawes noted this item was placed on the table at the last Council meeting. Council approved removing it from the table on motion of Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

Councilor Waszazak made the motion to approve the plan, seconded by Councilor Cambel.

Manager Storrellicastro noted the latest draft included in the Council packet reflected some proposed revisions. There was discussion on evaluating buildable land throughout the City and how often the plan will be reviewed.

Amy Galford said strategic plans should be kept narrowed and focused. Ms. Galford said the vision and mission statements are generic, the phrase “growing the grand list” should be defined, and use of the word “safer” implies the City is currently unsafe. She said she’s puzzled by how the relationship between the City and Barre Town is noted.

There was discussion on the language characterizing the relationship with Barre Area Development Corporation, and it was suggested the plan reference periodic evaluation of the relationship rather than renegotiation.

Council voted on the motion as made. **Motion carried with Councilor Boutin voting against.**

D) Set dates for ward barbecues.

Clerk Dawes noted this item was placed on the table at the last Council meeting. Council approved removing it from the table on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

Councilors discussed possible dates and locations for ward barbecues. There was discussion on holding the events on the same day or staggered dates. Councilors from each ward will work together to set their dates and locations.

E) Authorize the Manager to execute a purchase and sale agreement for the sale of the Wheelock House to Fox Market LLC.

Manager Storrellicastro reviewed the draft purchase and sales agreement, and the terms and conditions. The Manager said all addenda will come back to the Council for approval. Execution of the P&S will trigger publication of the required 30-day public notice about the sale of real estate.

To be approved at 05/08/2023 Barre City Council Meeting

William Toborg said it seemed strange for the Council to open bids and make a decision on the same evening, as they did two weeks ago. Mr. Toborg said it felt rushed, and he said he urges a reflection period.

There was discussion on renovation and preservation of the building, creating a transparent process, the conditions under which inspection fees might be reimbursed, and carrying out the Council's decision from last week.

Council approved executing the purchase and sales agreement on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried with Councilors Boutin and Lauzon voting against.**

Added) Garfield Playground equipment.

Manager Storrellicastro reviewed the proposal from Pettinelli and Associates for playground equipment to be installed at the Garfield Playground. Council approved the sole source contract on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Boutin. **Motion carried.**

Upcoming Business –

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 8th, as the special school election is Tuesday, May 9th.

- Presentation on the IDEAL Vermont program from the Diversity & Equity Committee (May 8th)
- ClearGov budgeting software presentation (May 8th)
- 2nd reading of the Community Investment ordinance (May 8th)

Round Table –

Councilor Stockwell said she's pleased the Garfield Playground project is moving forward.

Councilor Deering said he is hosting an open gym at the auditorium this Thursday from 1-3 PM.

Councilor Lauzon said the Prospect Heights Development LLC has submitted a \$3M grant application to the Northern Borders Regional Commission. He has been named president of the PHD LLC board.

Councilor Cambel said it's been a good meeting, with the Councilors working well together.

Mayor Hemmerick said he's looking forward to Green Up Day on May 6th.

Executive Session – NONE

The meeting adjourned at 10:13 PM on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk