

**Special Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held May 8, 2023**

The Special Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in person and via video platform by Mayor Jake Hemmerick at 7:15 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 Storrellicastro, IT director Ryan Starr, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: NONE

Others Present: NONE

There were technical difficulties with the Zoom connection. The meeting started at 7:15 PM without the Zoom connection. The Mayor rearranged the agenda in hopes the issues would be resolved shortly.

Adjustments to the Agenda:

- Add discussion on requiring recordings of committee meetings.
- Add discussion on end of state housing and homelessness program.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

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

- A. Approval of Minutes:
 - i. Regular meeting of April 25, 2023.
- B. City Warrants as presented:
 1. Ratification of Week 2023-18, dated May 3, 2023:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$104,651.61
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$133,144.74
 2. Approval of Week 2023-19, dated May 10, 2023:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$594,778.91
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$129,013.22
- C. 2023 Clerk's Office Licenses & Permits:
 1. Food Vendor:
 - i. Crown Ice Cream, ice cream truck
 2. Entertainment:
 - i. Quarry Kitchen & Spirits, 210 N. Main Street, annual license
 - ii. Forbin's Reserve Inc, 21 Metro Way, May 27th outdoor event
 - iii. Forbin's Reserve Inc, 21 Metro Way, June 10th outdoor event
- D. Appoint Captain Nicholas Copping as Health Officer.
- E. Ratify submission of an FY24 AOT Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Program letter of intent.
- F. Ratify the Council's 4/25/23 decision to authorize a sole source purchase for a replacement structure at Garfield Playground.
- G. Accept an ERSA grant award.
- H. Approve Resolution #2023-04 to open an investment account at Union Bank

The technical problems were resolved, and the Zoom connect was established.

City Clerk & Treasurer Report –

Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

To be approved at 05/23/2023 Barre City Council Meeting

- The May 9th BUUSD budget revote will be held tomorrow at the Old Labor Hall on Granite Street. Polls are open from 7AM – 7PM.
- Fourth quarter property taxes are due by May 15th.
- Welcome to new Assistant Clerk Brenda Martineau, who started today.

Liquor Control Board/Cannabis Control Board – NONE

City Manager's Report –

Manager Storellicastro noted the following:

- The Barre Town stump dump yard waste disposal dates run through the rest of this month. The City will offer curbside pickup later this spring. The date is still to be determined.
- Visited the Newport public works garage to look at possible options for new building designs.
- New staff members include TJ LaRose as the Public Works Superintendent, Dave Larrabee as a new DPW mechanic, and Nick Copping as the new Fire Marshal.
- The Prospect Heights project received word it has not been selected to apply for a Northern Boarders grant to support building housing.
- People have noticed the turf conditions at Hope Cemetery. The Manager said a significant grub infestation has led to birds and skunks digging up the ground. The department is working on treating the issues.

There was discussion on requesting an extension of the stump dump dates. Manager Storellicastro will reach out to Barre Town to make the request.

The City is exploring grant funding options to hold bulky waste and tire collections later this year.

Visitors and Communications –

William Toborg said at the April 10, 2023 Barre City Republican Committee Meeting, a resolution was passed unanimously that called upon the City and state to prohibit the government purchase of products made in China and any other country that allows slavery, and to prohibit granting subsidies to pay for any such products.

Te Chen asked the Council to support the anniversary of falun gong, a Chinese meditation and exercise practice. Te Chen serves the community by teaching falun gong at the library, book store, and schools. She condemns communism in China, where falun gong practitioners are persecuted, and encouraged a change of mindset to embrace everyone.

New Business –

A) Upcoming events update from The Barre Partnership.

Barre Partnership executive director Tracie Lewis reviewed the summer events including Flowers in the Downtown, farmers' market in the Depot, Thursday night concerts and food trucks in Currier Park, and the Heritage Festival in late July. Ericka Reil said she'll be in touch with Ms. Lewis to coordinate the Barre Pride event in June.

B) Discuss and approve application to IDEAL Vermont.

Manager Storellicastro said the Diversity & Equity Committee has drafted responses for the IDEAL Vermont application, but is recommending the City participate in VLCT's cohort program before seeking to participate in IDEAL Vermont. D&E Committee chair Joelen Mulvaney said the cohort program is 6 months long and would dovetail with the discussion groups the committee will be starting this summer.

There was discussion on whether the cohort and IDEAL can be dual tracked and whether there's enough bandwidth on the committee and in City staff to carry out both at the same time. It was noted the IDEAL program requires a high level of commitment and staff time.

Ms. Mulvaney said the committee will take the discussion up at its next meeting, and hold a vote on moving forward with the cohort program. The committee will bring back its recommendation and a review of the timeline for implementations.

C) ARPA Community Innovation Fund Round II applications update.

Manager Storelicastro reviewed the history of the community innovation fund, including the timelines and letters of interest/applications submitted. The Manager showed a list of the projects on the list, their requested amounts and required matches. He noted Studio Place Arts is asking that their project matching requirement be waived as the project is on City property.

Gary Hall said the fence at the Vine Street playground needs replacing. Mr. Hall said he'd like to see a basketball court installed at the playground, and there should be picnic tables, and the benches need repairs. He is willing to volunteer his time and donate some materials to make improvements at the playground.

There was discussion on inviting requesters to make brief presentations to the Council, interest in funding projects out of the City, balancing the projects with needs of those experiencing homelessness, and encouraging Barre Town to contribute a matching amount to any allocation from the City towards installing lights at the Bond athletic field. William Toborg said it would be good to hear from the requesters, and Emily Reynolds said the athletic field is important to both Barre City and Barre Town kids.

Manager Storelicastro will schedule the applicants to attend the next regular Council meeting.

Other) Recording meetings of municipal committees.

Councilor Boutin said committees using Zoom for their meetings should be required to record them. There was discussion on public records laws and archiving recordings. Joelen Mulvaney said any such policy would need to address situations where intellectual property presented at a meeting can be protected. Ellen Kaye said the Council would need to assure any such rule is applied evenly. Ericka Reil said staff liaisons need open meeting law training, similar to what was provided for committee chairs.

Other) Homelessness in Central Vermont – potential impacts on municipal services.

Manager Storelicastro said the City is working with Berlin and Montpelier on plans to address the end of the state's housing program for those experiencing homelessness, and the impacts on municipalities. There is a press conference on this issue in Montpelier tomorrow afternoon. There was discussion on how many households and individuals will be impacted, lack of available beds in local shelters, needs for medical and mental health services, lack of reliable data, needs for a regional approach, developing camping locations, and the lack of a transition plan from the state.

Gary Hall said he lived in the system for 2 ½ years, and it's a statewide problem. Mr. Hall said vacant housing could be turned into housing for those who are experiencing homelessness.

Ericka Reil said safe camping sites need to be developed, and folks need access to medical and mental health services.

Joelen Mulvaney said the emergency shelter at the auditorium should be opened as it would be in any other emergency situation.

There was discussion on the City's emergency management plan, use of the auditorium or school as a shelter, staffing and services required for a shelter, what level of government is right to address this issue, costs associated with opening an emergency shelter, and creating a series of briefings over the coming weeks.

Colleen Boyd said she is concerned about this travesty, and there's a need to find fairly quick solutions and safe sleeping locations.

Upcoming Business –

- Second reading of the contractor ordinance
- Interviews and appointments to City committees
- Demonstration of budgeting software

Round Table –

Councilor Deering said there were great Green Up Day activities at Green Acres last Saturday, with the Barre City police and fire/EMS departments participating.

Councilor Stockwell said the Aldrich Library spring fling was a great event.

Councilor Waszazak agreed on the spring fling. He said we shouldn't criminalize homelessness, and people should reach out to the Senate Appropriations Committee to tell them to fund a solution.

Councilor Boutin said last Saturday's Blow Up to Glow Up event was great.

Councilor Cambel said this evening's conversations have been sobering and heartbreaking.

Executive Session – NONE

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM on motion of Councilor Lauzon, 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