

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held September 12, 2023**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in person and via video platform by Mayor Jake Hemmerick at 6:00 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 Storrellicastro, Fire Chief Keith Cushman, Fire Marshal Nick Copping, Human Resources Director Rikk Taft, Planning Director Janet Shatney, Buildings and Community Services (BCS) Assistant Director Stephanie Quaranta, IT Support Specialist Kris Kirby, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: NONE

Others Present: NONE

Adjustments to the Agenda: NONE

Visitors and Communications

Joelen Mulvaney, chair of the Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Committee, said the committee is discussing inequities that came to light after the flooding. They invite anyone experiencing or aware of such inequities to attend the upcoming committee meetings. The committee meeting schedule and zoom link are posted on the City website.

Jesse Rosado said Green Mountain Transit recently announced service cuts will again impact the Barre area. Mr. Rosado said people who depend on public transportation are being shortchanged, and he recommended the Council reach out to GMT leadership to advocate for restoration of full service levels. There was discussion on the lack of support on the GMT board, where there is only one Washington County representative.

Ericka Reil said a local 33-year-old homeless person passed away on the streets, and their passing is tragic. Shawn Trader, executive director of the Rainbow Bridge Community Center, said the loss of a City resident indicates the City can do better to support its residents.

Katie Fleury said she relies on the bus, and can't assure potential employers that she has reliable transportation.

Turning Point Center recovery coach Mark Farley said he deals with transportation for those in early recovery to get to meetings and jobs, and the bus schedule doesn't support the needs of people in recovery.

There was discussion on what methods are most effective when communicating with the GMT board, including attending the public comment period at meetings, and holding press conferences. Heather Slayton said increased service in Montpelier was brought about by petitions and letters from people and service providers.

It was requested that this topic be on the next Council meeting agenda for further discussion.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

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

- A. Approval of Minutes as corrected:
 - i. Regular meeting of August 29, 2023.
- B. City Warrants as presented:
 - 1. Ratification of Week 2023-36, dated September 6, 2023:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$273,901.08
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$139,989.54
 - 2. Approval of Week 2023-37, dated September 12, 2023:

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- i. Accounts Payable: \$392,532.80
- ii. Payroll (gross): \$151,158.04
- C. 2023 Clerk's Office Licenses & Permits: NONE
- D. Ratify the August 29, 2023 approval of a contract with Sanborn head to provide geotechnical services related to flood recovery
- E. Approve amendments to the City of Barre Procurement Policy
- F. Errors & Omissions – 207 Washington Street
- G. Accept the resignation of committee/commission volunteers:
 - i. Michael Hellein: Planning Commission, Development Review Board, CVRPC TA, and CVRPC alternate

City Clerk & Treasurer Report –

City Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes reported on the following:

- First quarter property tax installments are due by October 2, 2023.
- Water/sewer bills are due by October 2, 2023.
- Accepting abatement requests from flood-impacted property owners. Have received 36 to date.
- The Board of Civil Authority is meeting tomorrow at 5PM to begin the property tax assessment appeals process. Two appeal requests have been received. The BCA will also review the voter checklist so as to mail out challenge letters to those who may no longer live in the City.

Liquor Control Board/Cannabis Control Board –

Council approved an expanded outside consumption permit for Quarry Kitchen & Spirits for the Heritage Festival weekend, September 22nd and 23rd on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Deering. **Motion carried with Councilor Boutin abstaining.**

City Manager's Report –

Manager Storellicastro reported on the following:

- Parking will be banned overnight on N. Main Street during some of next week to accommodate street sweeping in advance of the Heritage Festival.
- Committee and board vacancies are being advertised, and the deadline for applications is this Thursday. Appointments will be on the next Council agenda.
- New IT Support Specialist Kris Kirby started this week.
- VT Council on Rural Development is facilitating a community flood recovery discussion tomorrow evening in the Barre Opera House beginning at 5:30 PM.
- The recent water break on Berlin Street is being repaired and repaved. There was no negative pressure, so no boil water order was issued.

There are ongoing water appearance issues in sporadic locations throughout the service area. Hundreds of tests have been performed, and the water is safe to use. It was requested that there be a presentation on water quality and the recent rate increases at the next Council meeting. Shawn Trader asked if the test results can be made public. Manager Storellicastro will see what's available to share, as the test results are fairly technical in nature.

New Business –

A) Volunteer Appointments:

i. Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Committee

Jaquan Johnson said he is interested in serving on the committee. He is a senior at Spaulding High School, and is president of the student council. Council approved the appointment on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

Spaulding High School student Leah Deering said she has an interest in serving on the committee, but recent changes to her schedule have created conflicts with the meeting dates and times. Ms. Deering said she is

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withdrawing her application at this time. Councilors thanked her for her interest, and encouraged her to reapply in the future. Committee chair Joelen Mulvaney expressed her gratitude to both students for coming forward.

B) Flood Recovery Updates.

Manager Storellicastro gave a Powerpoint presentation on the flood update including:

- Public assistance damage assessment.
- Debris and waste disposal opportunities:
 - Bulky waste and tire disposal this Saturday, September 16th, at the Civil Center from 9AM – 3PM. Barre City residents only.
 - Wheels for Warmth tire drop off this Saturday, September 16th, at Granite Museum from 8AM – 4PM. Open to all.
 - Yard waste disposal at Barre Town yard waste disposal site. Dates and times are posted on the City website.
- Landslides – the City is engaging in the buyout process for two Pike Street homes effected by landslides. Additionally, the City has contracted with a geotechnical firm to conduct analysis of other locations.
- Assessments of residential damage – 363 structures containing 517 units sustained some level of damage.
- Flood impact on City budget – staff analysis of expected impacts will be presented to Council at next week’s meeting.
- Water system disruption.
- FEMA individual assistance application deadline extended to October 12th. FEMA disaster recovery center will remain at the Civic Center Auditorium until October 11th.

There was discussion on ways to increase revenues in recreation. Councilor Deering said Barre Youth Sports Association (BYSA) is interested in putting removable turf in the BOR to allow rental of the space in the bridge seasons before and after skating.

Amy Galford asked if there will be maps available at the community forum tomorrow evening that show flood plain and damage areas. This might facilitate discussions on rebuilding and repairs.

Sarah Helman said there should be brainstorming around how to address the rivers and streams to avoid similar flooding events in the future. Manager Storellicastro said that will be part of the next tier of conversations, and will involve the state, FEMA, and other stakeholders.

C) Presentation by the Barre Up Long-Term Recovery Group and consideration of appointment to the steering committee.

Barre Up Long Term Recovery Group steering committee members Amanda Gustin, Shawn Trader (Rainbow Bridge Community Center), Major Keith Jache (Barre Salvation Army), and Pamela Wilson gave a Powerpoint presentation on the organization, which is a FEMA-compliant long term recovery group, providing a way for philanthropy, volunteerism, rebuilding labor/training and monetary/material donations to plug directly into local needs. They grew out of emergent municipal, grassroots, faith-based and non-profit volunteer coordination efforts in the immediate days following the July flood. The presentation spoke of what has been accomplished to date, and what the needs will be over the next 2-3 years.

Next steps include the community forum being held tomorrow evening at the Opera House, collating data, canvassing unmet needs, social media ramp-up, resource navigation, and identifying gaps.

An independent non-profit is being formed and an organizational model is being developed. Coordination is ongoing with other LTRGs around the area, and the intention is to hire a dedicated FEMA case manager to work with several volunteer case managers.

Ms. Gustin said they are seeking City representation on the steering committee. Councilor Boutin made the motion to appoint Manager Storellicastro and BCS assistant director Stephanie Quaranta, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. Councilor Lauzon said this is an independent non-profit, and doesn’t require appointment by the

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Council. He offered a friendly amendment; rather than making appointments the Council would approve acknowledging and supporting Manager Storrellicastro's and Ms. Quaranta's representation on the steering committee. The friendly amendment was accepted by the mover and seconder.

Councilor approved the motion as amended. **Motion carried.**

D) Rescind August 29, 2023 vote on Councilor Waszazak's motion to approve the revisions to the accessory dwelling unit section of the Unified Development Ordinance, and move them to a second reading and public hearing at the next Council meeting.

Mayor Hemmerick said he supports the proposed ordinance revisions as they will help grow the grand list, and noted the revisions were voted out of the Planning Commission unanimously. He said the results of the Council vote will be different with a full body, and interim zoning is an option if the parking provisions become a friction point.

Clerk Dawes said approval of the rescission would move the proposed ADU revisions back to a first reading and public hearing, without the need to go back to the Planning Commission.

Councilor Waszazak made the motion to rescind the 8/29/23 vote, seconded by Councilor Stockwell.

Councilor Lauzon said he continues to object to the removal of parking language, as there is no requirement to notify neighboring properties. There was discussion on zoning signage and appeal opportunities.

Council approved rescinding the 8/29/23 vote with Councilor Boutin voting against.

E) Rescind the June 20, 2023 reappointment of Michael Hellein and Raylene Meunier to the Planning Commission.

Councilor Lauzon called for a point of order, and distributed documentation on statutory language disallowing rescission of an appointment. He said statute allows the Council to remove an appointee on a unanimous vote, and he would not vote in favor of removing Raylene Meunier from the Planning Commission. Clerk Dawes confirmed the information in statute, and advice provided by the VT League of Cities and Towns.

Councilor Cambel said Ms. Meunier swore at and about the Mayor in public, and she hates to see that sort of attitude representing the City of Barre. She said she's heard from constituents that Barre City residents should serve on City committees. Councilor Cambel withdrew the rescission from consideration.

Mayor Hemmerick ruled the rescission agenda item out of order.

Upcoming Business –

- The Mayor said he would support having the removal of Ms. Meunier on a future Council agenda.
- Report on flood impacts on City budget and finances at next Council meeting.
- Discussion on Green Mountain Transit service cuts at next Council meeting.
- Presentation on water quality and rates at next Council meeting.
- Councilor Deering said all Barre City committee and board members should have their social media reviewed.
- There was discussion on adopting a policy limiting membership on City committees, board, and commissions to City residents. It was also suggested to draft proposed charter language to create the same limitations.

Round Table –

Councilor Waszazak said the Police Advisory Committee met yesterday, and were informed the City will be receiving grant funds to assist with the purchase of body cameras. They also approved an additional 7 department policies.

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Councilor Boutin said he researched water rates and found Barre City's rates are the lowest rates in Washington County. He participated in the BYSA football coin drop over the past weekend.

Councilor Lauzon thanked his wife, Karen, and Manager Storellicastro for going above and beyond to assist a local resident whose home had experienced flood damage. He said he's proud how far the City has come in the 60 days since the flooding. Councilor Lauzon said he'd like the Council to devote time focusing on housing.

Councilor Deering said they raised over \$3,600 during last weekend's coin drop, and will use the funds to purchase football uniforms and equipment for the kids.

Councilor Stockwell said the University of North Carolina website has a dashboard for comparing water/sewer rates by median incomes all over the country. She said neighborhoods need to be planned around decent infrastructure and amenities.

Mayor Hemmerick said the City needs to address traffic noise downtown; it's a question of environmental justice. He said he's been reviewing past housing proposals, and knows of a developer who is ready to construct 15 houses if 15 lots could be identified. Redevelopment of the North End needs to be reimagined by the neighbors. He said he recently read all the City's past stormwater plans, and there's a lot of good material available for future planning. The Mayor said he has been frequenting the dog park recently, and it's a special space to create happy memories.

Executive Session – NONE

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 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