

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held January 9, 2024**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in person and via video platform by Acting Mayor/Ward II Councilor Michael Boutin at 6:00 PM at Alumni Hall, Barre, Vermont. In attendance were: From Ward I, Councilors Emel Cambel (arrived 6:04 PM) and Thom Lauzon; from Ward II, Councilor Teddy Waszazak; and from Ward III, Councilors Michael Deering and Samn Stockwell. City staff members present were City Manager Nicolas Storrellicastro, Assistant Manager Dawn Monahan, Buildings and Community Services Director Jeff Bergeron, BCS Assistant Director Stephanie Quaranta, Police Chief Braedon Vail, Deputy Police Chief Larry Eastman, Planning Director Janet Shatney, Fire Chief Keith Cushman, Deputy Fire Chief Joe Aldsworth, Public Works Director Brian Baker, Human Resources Director Rikk Taft, IT Specialist Kris Kirby, and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Absent: Mayor Jake Hemmerick

Adjustments to the Agenda:

- Add approval of resolution 2024-01 to the consent agenda; a joint Barre City/Montpelier City resolution in support of flood relief legislation. To be ratified next week.
- Add executive session for litigation.

Visitors and Communications:

Bernadette Rose thanked those who participated in canvassing over the weekend through the flood-impacted neighborhoods in advance of next week's forum on gateway redevelopment.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

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

- A. Approval of Minutes:
 - i. Regular meeting of December 19, 2023.
- B. City Warrants as presented:
 1. Ratification of Week 2023-52, dated December 27, 2023:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$250,129.14
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$151,184.70
 2. Ratification of Week 2024-01, dated January 3, 2024:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$193,899.64
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$153,274.45
 3. Approval of Week 2024-02, dated January 10, 2024:
 - i. Accounts Payable: \$104,825.53
 - ii. Payroll (gross): \$153,213.39
- C. 2024 Clerk's Office Licenses & Permits: NONE
- D. Approval of resolution 2024-01 (added under adjustments)

City Clerk & Treasurer Report –

City Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes reported on the following:

- Accepting absentee ballot requests for all 2024 elections. Information on requesting ballots and registering to vote is on the City's website.

Liquor Control Board/Cannabis Control Board – NONE

City Manager's Report –

Manager Storrellicastro reported on the following:

- The North End Public Engagement meetings are scheduled to begin next week. There will be a kick-off meeting at the Labor Hall on January 17th, followed by meetings in the three wards.
- The house at 22 Hill Street has been demolished in advance of a new house being built there by Central Vermont Habitat for Humanity.
- Legislative advocacy has started, with focus on flood recovery and housing.
- Barre City will begin recognizing Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, starting next Monday, January 15th. City offices will be closed that day.

New Business –

A) Review list of funding requests for annual meeting ballot.

Clerk Dawes distributed a list of organizations that submitted timely applications and support materials to request placement of their FY25 funding requests on the 2024 town meeting ballot. The Clerk noted due to a change in staffing, Good Beginnings did not submit their application by the deadline, but may ask that the Council place their request on the ballot.

B) Name Councilors to work on charter changes for town meeting consideration.

Councilors Cambel and Stockwell volunteered to work on the proposed charter changes. There was a brief discussion on the proposed sections associated with youth voting and limiting committee membership to City residents.

C) Set legislative priorities.

Manager Storlicastro reviewed the matrix of legislative priorities, and rankings submitted by three Councilors. There was discussion on seeking matching funds for the Sen. Sanders' appropriations, and deadline extensions in light of flooding. Maggie Lenz from Leonine Public Affairs said they are focusing on flood recovery, and many of the other items on the priorities list have ties to this focus. The list of priorities based on rankings:

1. Forgone revenue
2. Housing development/Gateway project
3. Capital infrastructure (Public Works Garage)
4. Transportation infrastructure (bridges, trestle, Barre-Montpelier bike path)
5. Substance abuse/public safety

Council approved the list on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Lauzon. **Motion carried.**

D) Budget seminar.

Manager Storlicastro reviewed his Powerpoint presentation, and the proposed reductions and restorations. There was discussion on expanding Friday evening parking enforcement, seasonal cemetery staffing, and sidewalk maintenance. Council restored cemetery seasonal staffing at 50%, which increased the projected tax rate increase to 5.1%.

There was discussion on the benefits of changing the annual meeting date from Town Meeting Day to May 14th to allow additional time to tighten the budget, and have a firmer grasp on potential legislative assistance for operations. Council approved moving the date to May 14th on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

Councilor Lauzon made the motion to ratify this action on next week's consent agenda, seconded by Councilor Deering. **Motion carried.**

To be approved at 01/16/24 Barre City Council Meeting

Clerk Dawes noted there will still be an election on March 5th for the Vermont presidential primary, Barre Unified Union School District elections, and Central Vermont Career Center School District elections.

Upcoming Business –

- Capital Improvement Plan update next week
- Flood recovery volunteer update next week
- Discussion on safe injection sites at a future meeting
- Vermont Emergency Management/Agency of Natural Resources presentation on river science at a future meeting

Round Table –

Councilors Stockwell and Cambel spoke of their experiences participating in last week's canvassing in the flood-impacted neighborhoods.

Councilor Deering said he recently attended the Welcoming & Engaging Communities cohort, and customer service is of paramount importance.

Executive Session – Councilor Lauzon made the motion to find that premature general public knowledge of litigation issues 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 Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

Council went into executive session at 7:15 PM to discuss litigation under the provisions of 1 VSA § 313 on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Deering. Manager Storrellicastro, Assistant Manager, and Clerk/Treasurer Dawes were invited into the executive session. **Motion carried.**

Council came out of executive session at 7:45 PM on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Lauzon. **Motion carried.**

There was no action taken.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 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