

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council  
Held April 23, 2024**

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 City Hall, Barre, Vermont. In attendance 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, Homelessness and Housing Coordinator Tess Taylor (arrived 6:30 PM), and Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

**Absent:** NONE

**Adjustments to the Agenda:**

- Add an executive session for real estate.
- Move the committee terms item under new business to the consent agenda.

**Visitors and Communications:**

Ellen Kaye offered congratulations to the Central Vermont Medical Center staff nurses and technicians for successfully negotiating their new union contract.

**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, 2024.
- B. City Warrants as presented:
  1. Ratification of Week 2024-16, dated April 17, 2024:
    - i. Accounts Payable: \$320,714.12
    - ii. Payroll (gross): \$150,756.61
  2. Approval of Week 2024-017, dated April 24, 2024
    - i. Accounts Payable: \$360,203.15
    - ii. Payroll (gross): \$155,204.29
- C. Clerk's Office Licenses and Permits: NONE
- D. Ratify Council's 4/11/24 approval of a lease finance agreement
- E. Accept warranty deed from Marilyn Ford for purchase of Duffy Avenue lots
- F. Authorize the Manager to execute an LOI with DEW to develop the Seminary Street and Campbell Place parking lots
- G. Stagger committee terms to provide appointment balance (moved from new agenda items)

There was discussion on how committee terms will be staggered, and confirming enough sewer capacity for the proposed Seminary Street housing project.

**City Clerk & Treasurer Report –**

City Clerk/Treasurer Dawes reported on the following:

- Annual meeting ballots are available. Nearly 500 of them went in the mail today. Sample ballots are posted on the City website.
- Annual meeting elections will be held on May 14<sup>th</sup>. Polls will be open at the auditorium from 7AM – 7PM. The elections will include all City business, and revote on the Barre Unified Union School District budget.
- The City has submitted an application to the state for reimbursement of \$44,483 in flood-related

education tax abatements. Any approved reimbursement will be deducted from the final school payment made by the end of the fiscal year.

- Green-Up Day bags are available in the Clerk’s office.
- Fourth quarter property taxes are due by May 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Liquor Control Board/Cannabis Control Board –**

Taylor Beaudet, new owner of Campo di Vino, appeared before the Council to introduce herself. Ms. Beaudet said she also owns Taste Vermont, which specializes in charcuterie and catering. She plans on co-locating her businesses at the Campo de Vino location in the Wall Street complex, and expanding to include food and drink service. Councilors welcomed her to the City.

Council approved the following liquor and tobacco licenses on motion of Councilor Deering, seconded by Councilor Lauzon. **Motion carried with Councilor Boutin abstaining.**

License holder	1st class	2nd class	3rd class	outside consumption permit	tobacco	tobacco substitute
Asian Gourmet	yes		yes	yes		
Campo di Vino	yes	yes				
Beverage Baron		yes				
Champlain Farms (169 Wash)		yes			yes	yes
Champlain Farms (15 SMS)		yes			yes	yes
Dente's Market		yes				
North End Deli Mart		yes			yes	yes
Paramount Theater	yes					

**City Manager’s Report –**

Manager Storlicastro reported on the following:

- Continue to work with Vermont Emergency Management on buyout applications for the Swift Current program. Applications are due to be submitted by April 30<sup>th</sup>.
- The Barre Town yard waste drop off site is now open and available to Barre City residents on Saturdays. See the flyer on the City website for details.
- A new playground structure has been installed at the Garfield Playground, and was opened to the public this past weekend.
- There is a department head flood after-action review on May 7<sup>th</sup> led by Vermont Emergency Management and Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.
- The police department has started using body-worn cameras.

**New Business –**

**A) VLCT Welcoming & Engaging Communities cohort presentation.**

Joelen Mulvaney, chair of the Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Committee, said the City is participating in VT League of Cities & Towns’ welcoming & engaging communities cohort. The cohort defines a problem and strategic plans to address the problem. The issue identified is civil discourse. Councilors Deering, Stockwell, & Waszazak are participating. Councilor Stockwell gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining the Kindness Campaign work, and noted restoring trust and making people feel welcome is important to fostering a sense of community. Three actions have been identified:

1. Listen more than speak;
2. Ask questions that welcome conversation;
3. Move forward to solutions, not backwards to blame.

The cohort is a six-month program, and there may be opportunities for the City to participate again in the future.

**B) Authorize buyout applications of landslide-impacted properties.**

Manager Storrellicastro recommended Council authorize buyout applications for the properties impacted by landslides during the July 2023 flooding and severe rain events. The properties are 5 Portland Street, 25 Oswald Street, and 106 Currier Street. If purchased through the FEMA buyout program, the properties would be owned by the City, and be forever green spaces. They would be removed from the grand list, and there would be no opportunity to redevelop the parcels, even with mitigation efforts to stabilize the landslides. The Manager said there's no commitment yet from the state to cover the required local matches.

State Geologist Ben DeJong said he visited the properties to demonstrate imminence based on FEMA standards, and on all three properties he determined it would be prohibitively expensive to mitigate the landslides. Mr. DeJong recommends the three properties be offered FEMA buyouts.

There was discussion on possibly moving the house at 106 Currier Street to another location, the stability of the old railroad bed along the west side of the City, recent tree removals done by Green Mountain Power, addressing storm water accumulations in the swale that runs alongside the old railroad bed, and repairing or replacing culverts under the railroad bed.

Andrea Young, owner of 106 Currier Street, said there are cracks along the second floor of her home, and it might not be structurally sound enough to move the building.

Amy Galford said she used to walk along the old railroad bed, and said the quality of the fill in that area is questionable.

Ellen Kaye asked what happens to the lots once they go through the FEMA buyout program. Manager Storrellicastro said they would be permanently owned by the City, and would remain forever greenspaces with very limited options for use. Clerk Dawes said there are seven such properties in Barre City; two on Hilltop Avenue and five in the Brook Street area where the flood mitigation project is located.

Council approved authorizing buyout applications for 5 Portland Street, 25 Oswald Street, and 106 Currier Street on motion of Councilor Waszazak, seconded by Councilor Boutin. **Motion carried.**

**C) Stagger committee terms to provide appointment balance.**

Moved to consent agenda

**D) 2<sup>nd</sup> hearing warned 7:00 PM: Charter changes.**

Mayor Hemmerick opened the 2<sup>nd</sup> charter change public hearing at 7:00 PM and invited comments from the Council and public.

Sonya Spaulding asked about the proposed charter change that would move the annual meeting from March to May. Manager Storrellicastro said it would facilitate building the budget, as more data would be available later in the fiscal year.

Ellen Kaye asked what the turnaround time would be if a budget failed at a May annual meeting, noting the fiscal year ends June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Lisa Liotta said a May annual meeting date would allow additional time and data to craft a budget, but there could be substantial changes to the make-up of the Council following an election, and the new

Council would be responsible for creating a new budget proposal in a short amount of time. There was discussion on similar circumstances surrounding the current March annual meeting date, and allowing the Manager the time necessary to draft a responsible budget.

Mayor Hemmerick said he will vote against the proposed May annual meeting charter change, as the March date is a state holiday, and the May date could have a negative impact on local businesses, and suppress voter turnout.

Amy Galford asked when the state primaries are. Clerk Dawes said the presidential primary is held in March every four years, and the state primary is held in August every other year. Ms. Galford asked about the impact of early or late development on the budget. Manager Storellicastro said early development has less current year actual numbers to inform the draft, and therefore the proposed budget tends to be more negatively conservative. Mr. Galford asked about the impact on bond votes and infrastructure projects of moving to May. Clerk Dawes said there's no impact, as access to voter-approved funds can be had through bond anticipation notes, which are readily available in advance of submitting bond applications to the municipal bond bank.

Councilor Boutin said he doesn't support the charter amendment that would allow youth voting in local elections.

With no additional comments or questions from the Council or public, Mayor Hemmerick closed the public hearing at 7:17 PM.

#### **Upcoming Business –**

There will be a report from the police department at the May 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, and discussion on use of the ARPA funds.

Andrea Young asked what the next steps are for the FEMA buyouts. Manager Storellicastro said the property owners will receive the application forms via email. Once the forms are completed, they'll be submitted to VEMS for processing through FEMA.

#### **Round Table –**

Councilor Deering said the schools are closed for April vacation, and he cautioned people to be safe on the streets with kids out of school.

Councilor Stockwell said there's a coordinated effort to do Green-Up cleaning in ward 3.

Councilor Boutin read an excerpt from Kristin Tousignant, who is not seeking reappointment to the Police Advisory Committee. Ms. Tousignant offered kudos to the members of the committee and Chief Vail for the work they're doing reviewing and adopting policies. Councilor Boutin reminded people of next weekend's Blow Up to Glow Up event on Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Hemmerick announced the following:

- Barre Area Senior Center is holding a fundraiser at the Elks Club on May 4<sup>th</sup>
- Flood recovery data was presented to the Housing Task Force at last night's meeting
- Zachary Lyle-Delong is the new Salvation Army Corps. Officer. The City welcomes him and his wife Caitlin to the community.
- The Additional Recyclables Collection Center (ARCC) in the north end has reopened.

To be approved at 05/07/24 Barre City Council Meeting

**Executive Session** – Councilor Lauzon made the motion to find that premature general public knowledge of real estate 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 Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

Council went into executive session at 7:33 PM to discuss real estate under the provisions of 1 VSA § 313 on motion of Councilor Lauzon, seconded by Councilor Deering. Manager Storrellicastro and Clerk Dawes were invited into the executive session. **Motion carried.**

Council came out of executive session at 7:37 PM on motion of Councilor Deering, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 PM on motion of Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Waszazak. **Motion carried.**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, City Clerk

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