

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council
Held July 16, 2024
Council Chambers-Barre City Hall**

The Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in person and via video platform by Mayor Thomas Lauzon at 6:00 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall, Barre, Vermont. In attendance were: From Ward I, Councilor Sonya Spaulding (via remote) and Councilor Emel Cambel; from Ward II, Councilor Amanda Gustin and Teddy Waszazak; and from Ward III, Councilors Michael Deering and Samn Stockwell. City staff members present were City Manager Nicolas Storrellicastro, and Clerk/Treasurer Cheryl Metivier, Tess Taylor.

Absent: none

Adjustments to the Agenda: Approval of electrical and plumbing permits.

Visitors & Communications:

Chief Cushman & Deputy Chief Aldsworth report of possible flooding with the rain coming in this evening and rather quickly. DPW has been clearing drains and trash racks. Please stay off roads.

James Galfetti of S. Vine St.- commented on the Berlin St. bridges ability to create a damming affect when the river rises due to extreme rainfall. Since the rebuild, and the loss of 4' of clearance under the bridge in that rebuild, and debris is continually building up and getting trapped, causing a dam. He suggested dredging the rivers as they have been done long ago.

Kenneth Lunde of 199 Merchant St.- Informed the council of his efforts to keep the culvert and near his home free of debris left behind by GMP as their contractors cut/trimmed trees around power lines. His work with his excavator has spared Merchant St from flooding and possibly washing away. Can someone follow up on GMP's practice of doing this and remedy the problem.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

- A. Approval of Minutes:
 - i. Regular meeting of July 2nd, 2024. ****Corrected to reflect members of the majority on the Downstreet/DCF project.**
- B. Clerk's Office Licenses and Permits; Entertainment Lic.- Forbin's Finest for July 27th Event
- C. Authorize the Manager to execute contracts; none
- D. Resolution #2024-12: Approve Vermont State Revolving Fund loan agreement.
- E. Resolution #2024-13: Appoint NBRC Authorized Official
- F. Approve indefinite waiver of building and flood hazard permit and registration fees for any emergency repairs related directly to flood damage. (Permits still mandatory)
- G. Authorize Manager to abate water/sewer bills for customers impacted by the flood

Moved for approval by Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Cambel. Approved

- 4-a. Ratify warrants from Week of July 10th, 2024.
- b. Approval of warrants from Week of July 17th, 2024

**Moved for approval by Councilor Gustin, seconded by Councilor Deering. –Approved
(Councilor Spaulding Abstained)**

City Clerk & Treasurer Report –

With the events of last week, the clerk’s office has been busy fielding phone inquiries regarding volunteering, where to get assistance, areas of damage to sidewalks and streets, and where to dispose of flood debris.

Tax bills are closer to creation. Meeting with NEMRC and assessors staff to discuss options for 1st round bills (interim bills) due to the BUUSD budget failing to pass. Planning of having interim tax bills out for end of July or beginning of August.

612 absentee ballots have been mailed, and 229 valid ballots have been received at the office.

Liquor Control Board/Cannabis Control Board – None

City Manager’s Report –

Swim lessons will begin Saturday, July 20 and end Friday, August 2. The cost of lessons is \$40 for residents and \$60 for non-residents. Please fill out an application form. Bring your filled out form and payment to the City Pool to arrange classes with the instructors. If you have been impacted by the July 2024 floods and would like to register your child for classes, please contact the City Manager as limited scholarships will be available.

The interim Zoning hearing on state laws that will apply to city ordinances has been moved to August 6th.

Barre Day-Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) will be at Alumni Hall on July 18th from 8am to 2pm to discuss with targeted residents those on the buyout list or substantial damage list about the the hazard mitigation grant program and to chat with experts about potential projects that can be rolled into the City’s application.

Downstreet has taken some time to provide some volunteer upgrading to the City Hall Gazebo as well as cleaning up the façade of vacant business buildings.

The recovery effort of the City staff has been a solid team effort including the Fire, Police, Public works, Permitting & Planning, Facilities, Finance for expense tracking and City Hall staff.

Discussion on resident clean-up, specifically as to where and how to rid their property of the mud and flood debris, lead to information about strategic placement of some dumpsters for debris and instruction on placing

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the mud and sludge on street edge/curbside for DPW to remove. DPW will be returning to neighborhoods for those who have not had a chance to get the mud/sludge to the curbside.

Hot spots, like the North End will be attended periodically, however, residents in lesser known areas within the City should contact the City to provide the streets in need of pick-up.

Central Vermont Solid Waste is standing up a hazardous waste disposal site at the Barre Auditorium, as well as, tire disposal.

New Business –

A) Storm event and recovery update (Manager)

The Manager outlined a timeline of events;

Pre-impact;

Clearing trash racks & storm basins-checking problem areas around the rivers (trestles-bridges)-preparing Auditorium for shelter-monitoring the forecast-distributing sandbags to residents and businesses.

Impact day; monitoring culverts and storm drains as they were becoming overwhelmed-urging residents to stay off streets and stay home-closed some city streets-performed (12) high water rescues.

Recovery-First steps

Closed Main St and Maple St for mud clean up

Put a boil water notice in effect

Ramped up FEMA compliant operations

Secured dumpsters for debris

Red Cross set up at the Auditorium

Bottled water was made available to residents of central Vermont

Inspection of heavily impacted properties were conducted

Renters were urged to call code enforcement

Current/On Going;

Cleaning up mud and debris

Clearing trash racks and stormdrains

Supporting Barre Up's volunteer efforts to rebuild/and repair

Provide relief to homeowners

Barre Up-update; Pam Wilson, Shawna Trader (Barre Up) Kristen Bauman (Director of Aldrich Library/Treasurer for Barre Up) Matt Russic (Resource construction manager) Prem Linsky (Barre Up construction manager) Marshall Hartman (Resource construction)

Kristen Bauman-informed the Council staff at the Library will assist in reporting all damages from the flooding to the 211 call center, and a computer at the Library has been dedicated for that purpose.

This dedicated group of humans have worked tirelessly since the flooding of July 2023, and are heartbroken to see the work they and homeowners impacted then, are now facing more devastating damage due to July 2024 flooding. The group have been working to try and secure homes that sometimes do not feel safe for them to be in, but knowing the resident does not have any alternative living situation, they risk themselves for others. They expressed the challenges of trying to repair homes with limited resources and funding. These individuals will continue to serve, support and direct residents to improve living conditions in their homes. Pleas for more hands on help, structural engineers, and foundation assistance because locally they are hard to find available.

B) RIVER (Resilience Initiative for Vermont Empowerment and Recovery) program update (CVRPC)

Members, Keith, Alex, Roy and Will from the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission presented findings based on a study done since the flooding of July 2023. The study were based on (3) guiding points;

- 1) The what and where of moving things and people. Where will the people go in an already struggling housing crisis?
- 2) Can you drop the local flood level so other surrounding properties and people remain unharmed?
- 3) Can you really change flood capacity and storage?

Several projects were discussed including the Berlin St bridge, Willey St bridge and the rail trestle between the two. Creating flood plains within the areas where buyouts are in process, and where the water could rest without flooding surrounding home were in this list. The group would like the Council and City staff to examine the list to prioritize what we feel would have the greatest and most beneficial impact for the cost so CVRPC staff can use that information when applying for grant money.

C). Discuss draft resiliency plan (Waszazak/Gustin)

Councilor Gustin brought the draft to the forefront for updated information based on input from residents and research. Identifying key neighborhoods and vulnerabilities and the variety of challenges each area faces and combine the suggested projects and apply them to neighborhood areas. An appendix of resources has been added to the draft. Question on how the arrive to the final plan, and how the short, medium and long term projects will be implemented. The plan was defined as always changing, adapting and adjusting to goals reached and projects completed.

D). Discuss Prospect Heights projects next steps (Mayor)

Mayor Lauzon and board member stated the next steps to the Prospect Heights project was appointing Manager Nicolas Storellicastro as the Authorized official. The project is in the due diligent stage, taking a look at the project at a high level. The Manager, Janet Shatney and Emel will participate in NBRC training and start picking up steam. The hope is to design and permit the project this winter and break ground in January. Brian Lane Karnas of Dewolfe Engineering Associates is on the short list of engineering candidates, but has not been interviewed by the full board yet.

Upcoming Business –

Manager- Angie from Downstreet will be discussing a project.
Zoning hearing August 6th conform to State law
Draft for short term housing ordinance should be available.

Councilor Stockwell-Redraft minimum housing ordinance with a focus on heating standards
Rebuilding energy standards

Councilor Spaulding-Keep the \$250,000 Revolving Loan that was tabled last meeting on the radar. Tess and Angie should be ready with more details soon.

Next Council meeting is July 25th, 2024.

Round Table –

Councilor Stockwell- attended the Homelessness meeting. Staffed for Barre Up, found it sad and distressing. Want to be sure

Councilor Spaulding- Thanked Barre Up (they are working as a well-oiled machine, good people doing good work). Volunteered for Barre Up. Listened to a podcast about old rivers and streams and beavers. She recognized we as humans have been doing things wrong for a while.

Councilor Waszazak- Volunteered also, mucking out mud. Wants to thank the Aldrich Library for becoming a resource hub for volunteers and assistance guidance.

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Councilor Cambel- Attended the Homelessness meeting and saw how many organization come together with so many obstacles to navigate through, but showing the movement forward is getting better.

Councilor Gustin- Reflecting on how people have come together for Barre from everywhere. Not fair that we are having to do this again, but thankful for those who step up to the challenge.

Councilor Deering-Gratitude for what we do have, emphasized the need to make sure those around you know you appreciate them and they are important.

Mayor Lauzon-Proud of everyone. Received a text message from Governor Scott, his commitment to the North End is still strong the change is, the sense of urgency. He is confident that together projects for the North End will move forward.

Executive session was proposed by the Mayor in reference to a legal matter; Motion for an executive session was moved by Councilor Stockwell and seconded by Councilor Gustin. Approved by all

Motion to go into Executive session was moved by Councilor Spaulding and seconded by Councilor Gustin at 9:51pm. Approved by all

Motion to end executive session was moved by Councilor Deering, seconded by Councilor Cambel. Approved by all

Motion to adjourn was moved by Councilor Deering, seconded by Councilor Cambel. Approved by all

Adjourned at 9:55pm

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

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Metivier, City Clerk