

To be approved at the next Barre City Council Meeting

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council - Draft
Held January 14th, 2025 at 6pm
Council Chambers-Barre City Hall**

The warned 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, Councilors Emel Cambel and Sonya Spaulding; from Ward II, Councilor Amanda Gustin (remote); and from Ward III, Councilors Samn Stockwell (remote) and Michael Deering. City staff members present were City Manager Nicolas Storellicastro and Clerk/Treasurer Cheryl Metivier.

Absent:

Adjustments to the Agenda – Executive Session is necessary legal matter.

Visitors & Communications –

*Bern Rose- Announcing a Crockpot meal event hosted by BCEMS Principal Brenda Waterhouse on Thursday, January 16th at 5pm, in the school cafeteria. This event is open to all community members. The purpose is to join together and make connection with neighbors, families and community members more frequently.

*Sandra Parry- followed up on a conversation she had with Jenn Conley from VHB, Vermont Director of Transportation Systems in regards to the traffic study completed in relation to the intersection of Prospect St., Berlin St. and Westwood Parkway. She still had concerns for traffic calming measures and the future increase in traffic once the Prospect Heights housing project begins. More discussion to follow during the New Business section of the agenda.

*Ellen Kaye-Announced her resignation from the JEDIB committee later this year, mid-term. She recognizes the continued need in the community.

*Ginger Cloud-Voiced concerns regarding the community based survey the City would like to conduct. The concerns are based on a question about DEI funding within the community, and feels this should not be included or play a part in the survey.

Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Minutes

i. Meeting of 1/7/25

B. Clerk's Office Licenses & Permits-none

C. Ratify Council's 1/7/25 designation of Clerk and Manager as authorized representatives for bond requisition.

D. Accept resignation of Councilor Waszazak effective 11:59PM on 12/31/24

E. Approve legal services policy F. Authorize the Manager to execute contract(s)

Motion to approve consent agenda made by Councilor Cambel, seconded by Councilor Gustin-approved

Approve City Warrants

i. Approve week of 01/15/2025

To be approved at the next Barre City Council Meeting

Motion to approve city warrants-Move made by Councilor Deering, seconded by Councilor Cambel – (Councilor Spaulding abstained) - approved

City Clerk & Treasurer Report –

The Clerk information page on the City's website has been updated to reflect more information regarding the;

*Ward II Caucus scheduled for Thursday, February 13th at 7p.m.

Details on the process including, who may participate, to the nomination of a candidate and, how the voting takes place, all can be found there.

If you are not sure of which Ward you reside in, a Ward map has also been posted for your convenience.

*The Clerk's office has posted some informational documents regarding the BUUSD elections scheduled for March 4th. You may view current board members and the positions they hold, as well as some generalized school budget information.

Updates for both events will be posted as information comes forth. If you have additional questions feel free to email the clerk's office or call.

Liquor/Cannabis Boards-none

Managers' Report-

Due diligence (an investigation, audit, or review performed to confirm facts or details of a matter under consideration. In the financial world, due diligence requires an examination of financial records before entering into a proposed transaction with another party) in regards to the Prospect Heights project has been completed. The project will be moving forward, with much work beginning in May.

Repaving of the N. Main St and Blackwell St will begin Tuesday or Wednesday of next week. A great way to stay informed on this process and any detours that may be put in place is to sign-up for the *Regroup* informational app. The current participants number 799.

The question of compiling budget survey for community members to participate in, and was on the 1/7/25 agenda, was further discussed with an organized power point presentation. Examples of the contents were previewed with opportunities for Council feedback and meeting attendees to ask questions and voice concerns. Some of the concerns that arose;

*Mayor Lauzon-IP addresses restriction would possibly limit participant who use the same computer in a community space (library/schools/community centers)

*Amy Galford-can the community service organization appropriation funding be separated on the ballot.

*Ginger Cloud-how will the vulnerable community members add their voices? Will place be made available to them?

*Tess Taylor-printable versions may be an option for those not computer savvy, and she would be willing to enter the data collected on their behalf.

*Michael Boutin-separate the community service organizations funding requests. The Annual Meeting date is now separate from the BUUSD & CVCC voting, so the ballot would not be too lengthy.

*Joelen Mulvaney-reminder, this survey is considered a satisfaction survey vs scientific data collection survey.

*Councilor Spaulding-how can we capture whether the survey taker is a registered voter in the City of Barre.

New Business-

A. Traffic calming presentation (VHB)

Jenn Conley, from VHB, Vermont Director of Transportation Systems gave a presentation addressing what may cause the need for traffic calming measures, and what could be put in place at the intersection in question, at the corners of Berlin St., Prospect St. and Westwood Parkway. Causes, may be speeding, safety concerns and the enjoyment to freely utilize walking or biking in a safe manner. Challenges are finding balance in maintenance, cost, esthetics, safety and impact on emergency services. A few measures;

*narrowing roadway

*pavement markings/stripping

*signage

*median separations

The hope is to have solid cost effective measures to present the council in 1-2 weeks.

B. Accept charge for PAC

Bob Nelson, and Chief Vail were ready to answer questions or hear concerns in regards to the mission statement presented to the Council in this week's meeting package. No questions came to the table, however many Council members praised the clarity and complete outline for members to follow.

C. State legislative update (Boutin/Waszazak)

State Rep Michael Boutin and State Rep Teddy Waszazak updated the Council and community members on the legislative actions concerning Barre's;

-charter changes,

-funding for flood mitigation and

-education funding (Barre City is considered "Ground Zero" example of why our current method of funding in not working). In addition,

-working on bills to give town more tools to regulate blight and vacant buildings.

-TIF projects and PILOT plans are on the schedule

Touching point of drug addiction, drug related crimes and how to keep the most vulnerable community members safe in their homes and out in public places.

There was an announcement of the 68 million dollars, Senator Peter Welch has secured for the State of Vermont for flood costs.

D. Flood Resiliency Plan update (Gustin)

Councilor Gustin gave a presentation exploring the possibility of making micro-grants available to Community's for them to organized neighborhood events and gatherings and instill a stronger sense of connection, support and belonging. A grant total of \$2500 was suggested with allocations of \$250 per application, until the funds are depleted. Possible uses could be;

*neighborhood yard sale

*Food for a block party

*Supplies for a neighborhood-specific Green-Up

*Flood garden in the wild or unused corner areas

*Broomball Tournament at BOR

*Materials to rebuild a neighbor's porch

E. Public safety forum follow up

The Manager gave a brief outline of the safety forum, and the feedback and ideas from the community. Stating the issue Barre City is having is actually a state wide issue, and each municipality will develop and put in place measures that fit them specifically.

To be approved at the next Barre City Council Meeting

For the most part, citizens want to be able to be safe and feel safe in their homes and while tending to errands, or shopping locally. The law enforcement officers are working diligently to keep our communities safe.

The idea of looking at the wording of an ordinance, which would potentially be put in place, specific to these same issues was presented to the Council for consideration, but a majority were decidedly against this proposal. This ordinance would be meant for the repeat offenders.

Yes-Councilor Deering-Mayor Lauzon-Councilor Gustin

No-Councilor Cambel-Councilor Spaulding-Councilor Stockwell

The consideration was tabled.

Bern Rose-suggested community lockers for the unhoused-Port-a-potty's-better access to food-shelter-transportation

Up Coming

Councilor Stockwell- more updates from police departments

Councilor Spaulding-Protocol for resignation of Council members

Round Table

Mayor-Attended Governor Scotts Inaugural Ball on January 11th at the Barre Auditorium, which looked spectacular. The décor was tasteful and transformative. The Barre Auditorium has an incredible future.

Motion to move findings for executive session for Consideration of alleged OML violation and consideration of possible cure by Councilor Deering, seconded by Councilor Cambel-approved

Motion to enter executive session moved by session by Councilor Cambel, seconded by Councilor Deering-approved

Motion to exit executive session moved by session by Councilor Deering, seconded by Councilor Cambel-approved

**On January 7th the council received a notice of an alleged violation of the Open Meeting Law (OML). City Attorney David Rue continued the City received a written allegation of violating the OML. Of the (2) violations, one pertains to the failure of the City to post the statutory OML complaint procedure, as well as a process may under the OML may be filed with the City. The second pertains to the December 30th meeting alleging the meeting was not properly noticed and was title a "Regular" meeting, when regular meetings are only held on Tuesday nights per charter, and this meeting was held on a Monday night and should have been titled a "Special" meeting. According to the OML upon receipt of an alleged violation, the body (Council) has 10 calendar days to acknowledge the violation by saying it happened and intends to cure it or, no violation occurred. If acknowledged, within (14) calendar days, the body (Council) to cure by ratifying or declaring as void any action taken and adopting measure to prevent future violations.

Recommended to confirm both violations were correct and there were (2) violations in respect to the open meeting law.

In regards to the first, as posting the open meeting law statue the city did have the text of 1 VSA Section 314 on its website as require by section 7 of act 133, but what the City did not have is an explanation of how to file a

To be approved at the next Barre City Council Meeting complaint of the open meeting law. Recommended to admit that violation and adopt the procedure to cure that violation, by ensuring an explanation of how for filing a complaint under the OML is indeed posted on the website and ensure that information about the OML requirements including an FAQ from VLTC is distributed to all new council members, city manager and committee or other chairs that are subject to the OML within a week or so would resolve the first violation.

Entertain a motion to admit that the city did not completely comply with requirements of Section 7 of Act 133 amending the OML and while it posted the text of 1VSA section 314 on its website it did not post an explanation of a complaint of a violation of the OML and to cure the same by posting such information, meaning the instruction for filing a complaint on the City's website and by distributing information about OML requirements specific to VLCT's OML FAQs to all new council members, city manager and committee or other chairs that are subject to the OML. To be completed by on, or about January 21st, 2025.

Motion moved by Councilor Gustin, seconded by Councilor Deering-approved

In regards to the 2nd- Mistake in noticing the meeting scheduled for December 30th, 2024, OML does not make exception for clerical mistakes The December 30th agenda stated it was a Regular meeting when it had to be a Special meeting.

Advised to admit the December 30th meeting was not properly warned. There are three steps that will cure. One is to amend the City ordinance that does not properly provide the time period for posting an agenda for a Special meeting. Currently it has a carryover from a former law that states it had to be noticed within 4 hours when the law is clear, Special meetings need to be warned within 24 hours. Secondly, the City will provide definitions of the different types of meetings allowed, Regular, Special and/or Emergency including the notice period on the City's website and it will develop agenda templates for each of those three types of meetings. So they may be used by all staff member preparing agendas, for Council, all new committees and counselors.

To completely cure this violation of improper warning of that meeting on December 30th, we need to consider motions to ratify the action that were taken at that meeting which is required by the OML. The (3) actions; approving the Consent Agenda-approving warrants-Ratifying a vote on December 17th to pledge \$400,000 for acquiring the property at 143 N. Main St. by the Barre Area Development Corporation subject to a sponsorship agreement. In order to fully cure this, Council should ratify all three of those actions.

Mayor Lauzon entertain a motion to admit that the City did not properly warn the December 30th meeting on its agenda as a Special meeting, but instead warned it as a Regular meeting. To cure that violation is will (1) Amend Section 2.6 of the Barre City ordinances to comply with Vermont statute which is planned to be read at the next Regular Barre City council meeting on Tuesday, January 28th, 2025, (2) provide definitions of Regular, Special and Emergency meetings to include the required notice period on the City website (3) develop three agenda templates one for each type of meeting and make those templates available to all staff member preparing agendas, for Council, all new committees and counselors to be completed by January 21st 2025.

Moved by Councilor Deering, seconded by Councilor Stockwell-approved

As advised by council there should (3) separate votes to ratify items on December 30th agenda.

1). Motion to - Ratify the vote to approve the consent agenda taken at the meeting of December 30th, 2024

Moved by Councilor Cambel, seconded by Councilor Deering-roll call;

Councilor Spaulding – NO

To be approved at the next Barre City Council Meeting

Mayor Lauzon- YES
Councilor Cambel-YES
Councilor Deering-YES
Councilor Gustin-YES
Councilor Stockwell-YES

2). Motion to approve the warrants taken at the meeting of December 30th, 2024

Motion moved by Councilor Deering, seconded by Councilor Gustin-roll call

Councilor Spaulding –abstaining
Mayor Lauzon- YES
Councilor Cambel-YES
Councilor Deering-YES
Councilor Gustin-YES
Councilor Stockwell-YES

3). Motion to ratify Council’s 12/7/2024 vote to pledge \$400,000 for the acquisition of 143 North Main St by BACD subject to a sponsorship agreement taken at the meeting of December 30th, 2024

Motion moved by Councilor Deering, seconded by Councilor Gustin-roll call

Councilor Spaulding –abstaining
Mayor Lauzon- YES
Councilor Cambel-YES
Councilor Deering-YES
Councilor Gustin-YES
Councilor Stockwell-YES

Motion to adjourn moved by Councilor Deering, seconded by Councilor Gustin, approved

Meeting adjourned at 9:13 pm

Next regular meeting is scheduled for January 28th, 2025 at 6pm.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Metivier, City Clerk