

To be approved at the next Barre City Council Meeting

**Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council (DRAFT)
Held March 25, 2025
Council Chambers, Barre City Hall**

1. Call to Order

The warned Regular Meeting of the Barre City Council was called to order in-person and via video platform by Mayor Thom Lauzon at 6:00PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall, Barre, Vermont. In attendance were: From Ward I, Councilor Emel Cambel and Councilor Sonya Spaulding (remote); from Ward II, Councilor Amanda Gustin and Councilor Jeff Bergeron; and from Ward III, Councilor Michael Deering II and Councilor Samn Stockwell. City staff members present were City Manager Nicolas Storellicastro, Assistant City Manager/Finance Director Dawn Monahan, Public Works Director Brian Baker, Planning, Permitting & Assessing Services Director Janet Shatney, and Housing & Homelessness Liaison Tess Taylor.

2. Adjustments to the Agenda

None.

3. Visitors & Communications

- Alan Rubel of Ayers Street complained about students parking on Ayers Street, truck traffic and potholes.

4. Consent Agenda

- Approval of Minutes of the Meeting of 3/11/25

Motion to approve the consent agenda moved by Councilor Gustin, seconded by Councilor Stockwell, approved.

4-a. Approve City Warrants

- Approve Warrants of the week of 3/26/25
- Ratify Warrants of the weeks of 3/12/25 and 3/19/25

Motion to approve the City warrants moved by Councilor Cambel, seconded by Councilor Bergeron, approved (Councilors Gustin and Spaulding abstained).

5. City Clerk & Treasurer Report

None, due to the planned absence of Clerk/Treasurer Metivier.

6. Liquor/Cannabis Control Boards

- Mulligan's Irish Pub, Liquor 1st, 3rd Class
- Mutuo, Liquor 1st, 3rd Class
- Paramount Theatre, Liquor 1st Class

Motion to approve moved by Councilor Bergeron, seconded by Councilor Cambel, approved.

7. City Manager's Report

- Paving bid has been issued, bids due April 3. Includes Allen, Prospect and Berlin Streets, work to begin July 1.
- Attended State public hearing about CDBG-DR state plan.
- Participating in meetings with federal agencies under Thriving Communities program.

8-A. Approve HMGP project applications

Roy Schiff and Alex Marcucci from SLR were present to discuss and seek approval to apply for grant funding for three major flood mitigation projects:

- Removal of the Berlin Street bridge;
- Fortification of the Willey Street bridge; and
- Rebuilding and expanding the Harrington Avenue debris racks and floodplain.

CVRPC will apply for HMGP funding for these projects on behalf of Barre City.

Burnie Allen asked about future traffic flow in the area.

The Manager expressed strong support for the program and indicated that flood mitigation projects are difficult, inconvenient and expensive. Even if the project results in changes to daily routines, the project will have worthwhile flood mitigation impacts. The project has risen to the top of the priority list after an exhaustive process with river engineers.

Amy Galford expressed concerns about public safety issues and said that other alternatives should be considered before removal.

Motion to approve submission of the projects for HMGP grant funding moved by Councilor Stockwell and seconded by Councilor Cambel, approved.

8-B. Approve MOU to remove trestle/Bridge 308

The proposed MOU to immediately remove the trestle/Bridge 308 was described by the Manager.

Amy Galford made a comment about the City's future rights under the MOU.

Motion to authorize the Manager to execute the MOU moved by Councilor Stockwell, seconded by Councilor Deering, approved.

8-C. Update and request for voter-approved assistance from the Granite Museum

Granite Museum Board Members Peter Anthony, Michael Pope and Patrick Bagalio introduced themselves and explained they requested time on the agenda to update the Council about the Museum's activities and to seek community support.

Executive Director of the Museum Scott McLaughlin updated the Council about activities as the Museum using the PowerPoint presentation included in the packet.

The Museum requested that the Council place a voter-approved funding request on the May Town Meeting Day ballot for \$15,000.

Motion to approve the Museum's request for placing a \$15,000 voter-approved assistance line in the Town Meeting Day ballot moved by Councilor Gustin, seconded by Councilor Bergeron, approved.

8-D. FY26 budget

The Manager provided an update on the changes made to the proposed budget since the March 11, 2025 meeting:

- Increased funding to the Aldrich Library to match their full funding request;
- Increased funding to The Barre Partnership to match their full funding request;
- Decrease funding to Barre Area Development Corporation (BADDC) to match last year's funding, and make funding contingent on hiring an executive director; and
- Use approximately \$85,000 of excess fund balance to reduce the FY26 tax increase – this funding will be used to restore proposed cuts to the Cemeteries seasonal staff and to restore year-round use of the Barre Town Yard Waste Disposal Site.

The Manager, Director of Public Works and Director of Planning, Permitting & Assessing Services provided specific updates about their program areas. The Manager also briefly presented the Clerk's office budget in the absence of the Clerk. The following topics were discussed:

- Councilor Stockwell asked about how many DPW staff would be ideal. Director Baker indicated that up to 5 additional staff would make an impact.

- Councilor Gustin asked about how much additional funding would allow DPW to make a dent in street/infrastructure needs. Director Baker indicated that the increase to make measurable impact would be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.
- Mayor Lauzon, Councilor Gustin, and Councilor Deering asked about delinquent rental registry payments.
- Steve Mackenzie, Vice President of BADC, spoke in opposition to the Manager's proposed reduction to BADC, calling the action punitive and asked the Council to reject the Manager's proposal. The Council did not act on Mr. Mackenzie's request.
- Councilor Stockwell asked Mr. Mackenzie how much funding BADC raises from non-municipal sources.

8-E. Legislative update

Representatives Waszazak and Boutin updated the Council about activities at the State Capitol, including charter changes, TIF extensions, the Budget Adjustment Act, State budget, education reform, General Assistance Program, and other topics.

Several Councilors asked questions about the implications of ending the General Assistance Program, which in Barre is expected to result in approximately 94 individuals being exited from motels.

8-F Flood Resiliency Plan – Seminary Street Housing Project

The Manager informed the Council that the City continues to negotiate a development agreement with Downstreet Housing & Community Development, and that plans for a potential TIF component of the project are being worked on and will be presented to the City Council for approval when they are ready.

9. Upcoming Business

- Mayor Lauzon: Focus on the FY26 budget.
- Councilor Stockwell: Update on Police Department crime statistics.
- Councilor Gustin: Upcoming Flood Resiliency Plan updates.

10. Round Table

- Councilor Deering said the school district is looking to hire substitute teachers.
- Councilor Gustin has been working on an oral history project of the COVID pandemic and that today marked the 5th year anniversary of Governor Scott's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" order.
- Councilor Bergeron spent time at the Auditorium for the state basketball tournament games and received compliments about the facility from many participants.

11. Executive Session

None.

12. Adjournment

On motion of Councilor Cambel, seconded by Councilor Deering, the City Council adjourned at 8:59PM.