BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD AGENDA
November 17, 2015

P.I.O.T. Executive Session- labor relations........................................... 6:30 p.m.

1. Call to order 7:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Consider approving agenda.
4. Consider approving minutes from November 10, 2015 meeting.
5. Announcements
6. Receive guests (for non-agenda items).
7. Award presentation: Town Forest.
8. Consider Barre Town Thunder Chickens’ request to use town land for trails.
9. Public hearing about solar array siting approval process.
10. Consider assessor’s request for reconsideration of Novus Barre Town Solar LLC’s property assessment.
11. Consider approving road snow plowing agreement with the Town of Orange.
12. Consider authorizing closing of Sterling Hill Road for winter.
13. Consider approving weekly accounts payable warrants.
14. Miscellaneous- including any licenses and permits.
15. “Round the table”
16. Executive session: (if needed).
17. Adjourn.

BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MINUTES
November 17, 2015

The duly warned meeting of the Barre Town Selectboard of November 17, 2015 was held at the Barre Town Municipal Building, Selectboard Room, in Lower Websterville at 7:00 p.m.

The following members were in attendance: Jeff Blow, Rolland Tessier, Rob LaClair, and W. John “Jack” Mitchell. Tom White was not present.

Attendance for the regular meeting included: Town Manager Carl R. Rogers, Assistant Town Clerk Deborah Lefebvre, Z&P Administrator Chris Violette, Assessor Joe Levesque, Planning Commission members Cedric Sanborn, Charlie Thygeson, John Hameline and Debra Pierce, and Vice Chairman of the Rec. Committee Dave Rouleau.

Also in attendance were Paul Malone, Lee Walther, Sheila Walther, Dolores Frascoia, Regan Howard, Maura Carroll, Val Vallerand, Tobias Paquet, Dave Freeman, Robert Bolus, Joel Rhodes, Jon Joslin, Susan Talmadge, Bruce Talmadge, Paul White, Gladys Agell, Bertil Agell, Matthew Lewis, Joel Schwartz, Philip Cecchini, and Paul McGinley.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (#1)

On a motion by Mitchell, seconded by Tessier, the Selectboard voted to find that premature public knowledge would place the Town at a substantial disadvantage with regards to labor contract negotiations.

On a motion by Mitchell, seconded by LaClair, the Selectboard voted to go into executive session for labor contract negotiations at 6:33 pm. White was not present for the vote.

On a motion by Mitchell, seconded by Tessier, the Selectboard voted to come out of executive session at 6:59 pm. White was not present for the vote.

CALL TO ORDER - The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

The PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by those present.
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CHANGES TO THE AGENDA MINUTES

On a motion by LaClair, seconded by Tessier, the Selectboard voted to approve the agenda as written. White was not present for the vote.

MINUTES

On a motion by Tessier, seconded by Mitchell the Selectboard voted to table the approval of minutes from the November 10, 2015 meeting until next week.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The lawn waste site will be open Saturday, November 21, 2015. The hours are 8:00 a.m. to Noon.

2. The Barre Congregational Church will hold its 5K Gobble Wobble Walk/Run on Thanksgiving morning. Registration starts at 8:00 a.m. in the Municipal Building, Selectboard meeting room. The race begins at 9:30 a.m. from Bolster Road, next to the Municipal Building. The course uses Websterville Road from our building to the cemeteries and follows Graniteville Road from the cemeteries to Rock of Ages. Between 9:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Thanksgiving morning drivers might want to take an alternative route to avoid the race activity in Lower Websterville. Race information can be found on the Church’s website: www.barrecongregational.org.

3. The November issue of the newsletter went to print this week. It contains articles concerning town ordinances, winter maintenance, town forest news, board minutes, project updates and much more.

GUESTS- None

AWARD- TOWN FOREST

Background: The Town Forest Centennial Award recognizes one community in each county that has established a model town forest. The award criteria are:

1. Management and Stewardship planning- apparently the awards committee likes our Town Forest Management Plan.
2. Conservation and Protection- points are earned if there is conservation easement protecting the property; Barre Town has that.
3. Citizen Advisory Group Engagement- Barre Town had that through the Study Committee and Management Plan Committee.
4. Community Use and Engagement- Plenty of use of the forest and many people in a variety of ways are involved in the forest.

Dave Rouleau, Vice Chair of the Recreation Board was present to make the award presentation. He noted the large variety of activities being offered by the Town Forest from hiking, biking, disc golf, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, cross country skiing and more. There is something for everyone and every season.

The Town plans to display the award in the main hall at the town offices.

Mitchell wished to thank all those worked to make the Town Forest a reality, even when it was tough going.

BARRE TOWN THUNDER CHICKENS’ REQUEST TO USE TOWN LAND FOR TRAILS

Background: The proposed usage of town land being requested for the upcoming riding season remains similar to prior years. The only change is very slight. Along Cheney
Selectboard Minutes of November 17, 2015 continued:

Road, one owner asked that the trail not cross their new driveway pavement. The trail will zig out and along Cheney Road, past the driveway and then zag back onto the lawn.

On a motion by LaClair, seconded by Tessier, the Selectboard voted to approve the Barre Town Thunder Chicken 2015-2016 landowner permission request.

On a motion by Tessier, seconded by Mitchell, the Selectboard voted to authorize the Manager to sign the permission form. White was not present for the votes.

SOLAR TASK FORCE INPUT HEARING

Jeff Blow opened the public hearing for Solar Task Force Input.

Handouts were available for some of the material posted on the Town's website. Jeff Blow acknowledged the Planning Commission members. This is not a hearing about any specific project, or a debate. This is in reference to commercial, large scale solar sites, not single family residential or single business installations. The purpose is to get comment from the public regarding the siting of solar installations ahead of writing a letter to the Solar Siting Task Force with regard to what the Town would like to see happen. The Task Force is charged with coming back to the legislature in 2016 with recommendations regarding the siting of solar installations.

Summary of Chris Violette's presentation:
• Act 56 of the 2015 Legislature created the Solar Siting Task Force in response to complaints raised by municipal officials about the process for permitting and siting of renewable energy facilities—particularly solar.
• Vermont's Comprehensive Energy Plan sets out a pathway to obtain 90% of its energy from renewable sources by 2050
• State law established Renewable Energy Standards (RES)
• RES requires a retail electricity provider in Vermont to get 55% of the power it sells from renewable beginning in January 2017. That requirement increases by 4% each year thereafter until reaching 75% by 2032.
• Net Metering requires electric utilities to allow individual customers or group of individual customers to generate their own power using small-scale renewable energy systems. Excess power is fed back to their utilities.
• Net Metering is allowed for projects up to 500Kw of electric generation.
• Net metered projects enjoy limited regulatory oversight by a municipality.
• They are required to go before the PSB and are reviewed under section 248 process and must obtain a Certificate of Public Good (CPG).
• Solar projects are reviewed based on 10 statutory criteria; though there are many waivers of the criteria available and not all proposed projects take the same path.
• Section 248 Criteria Generally:
  Most of the environmental criteria of ACT 250
  Orderly development
  Need
  System stability and reliability
  Economic benefits
• Solar Net Metered 248 application process:
  Less than 150Kw projects: application and a 10 day comment period. Town is notified; Subject to minimum road setback of 40 ft and 25 ft from property lines.
  Over 150Kw up to 500 w systems require a 45 day pre-filing notice period to the PSB, PSD, ANR, adjoining property owners, utility, Selectboard and Planning Commission.
  After 45 day pre-filing applicant files a petition to the PSB that include exhibits and testimony about the project addressing the criteria. PSD, ANR, and the Town receive copies of the petition.
• 21 day comment period after the petition is filed.
• New this year, solar projects between 150Kw and 500Kw must maintain a 100 ft setback from roads and 50 ft from property lines.
• Barre Town has recently seen numerous 500Kw solar projects either in the permit phase.
• First project and the only one finished and online is a 500Kw that the Town of Barre did and is located on land owned by the Town that was formerly owned by Pike Industries in Websterville. This project provides electricity credit to both the municipality and the Barre Town School.
• The next project to come online, which is privately owned, will be 500Kw located in the Wilson Industrial Park, is currently under construction. Electricity from that project will go to a building that the owner has in Randolph.
• Morrison Road and Pine Hill Road both have 500Kw projects. Applications have been filed and are awaiting a decision from the PSB.
• Beckley Hill Road 500Kw project, 45 day pre-file complete and awaiting application.
• Osborne Road 500Kw project is still in 45 day pre-file period.

There is little doubt that solar is here to stay. Most Towns want a lot more say in solar siting. Some things already being discussed to send to the task force are:

- No more solar or at least a moratorium
- Either make solar development follow existing municipal regulations or craft something new that gives Towns more input.
- Limit development in industrial parks
- Allow special case proximity siting
- Better decommissioning requirements
- Local benefit from a project

PUBLIC COMMENT

Robert Bolus, Barre Town Resident:
1. Loves solar electricity- wants it.
2. Doesn't want to see them though. Moratorium until there are some plans/laws in place to address issues.
3. Public good is not served when the site is an eyesore; same as with wind generation.
4. Area does not need to be free of trees; he has two panels in a small cleared area that generate 10Kw daily.
5. Clearing wooded sites for solar panels makes sense because they are shielded and the lumber that is cleared produces economic benefit.

Paul Malone- BCA and Board of Abatement member:
After summarizing the current situation with the Assessment of the Novus Solar Project(on the agenda tonight), Paul asked if all the solar farms being put in the Town will be assessed by the same path of valuation that was required for the Novus project. The answer is yes.
Will there be a serious reduction in revenue for the Town from this valuation? Yes

Lee Walther- Barre Town resident and BCA member:
This is a huge complex issue, has been doing some research online and sees two themes; Environmental impact statements and decommissioning. He feels that in years they will be junk and will need to be disposed of somehow. Also believes that they contain toxic material.
Feels the decommissioning issue needs to be addressed in some detail.

Regan Howard- Daughter of the recently passed Priscilla Paquet:
Along with the rest of the Paquet family they are trying to preserve 150 acres of farm land in Barre Town for future generations. She believes that solar has a place and a
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purpose: Feels that it is a possible good fit for farmers that can use a few acres for solar and generate enough extra income to help with the running of the rest of the farm.

Bertil Agell- Barre Town resident:
- Not here to debate the merits of solar
- Believes it is unrealistic for the State to set the 90% goal by 2050.
- Why is Act 250 process not followed for solar farms when he had to get a permit just to make improvements to a barn?

Joel Rhodes- Montpelier resident, works for Sun Common solar company:
Believes renewable energy is a must, has seen the impacts of coal and natural gas and there are much more drastic that those of any renewable energy sources. Other power infrastructure which is visible around us now goes practically unnoticed because we have become accustomed to it.

Elaine Wang- Barre Town resident:
Climate change is happening and it is costing us huge amounts of money. That being said, she believes Towns should have more control. One approach might be to have more data about how much prime siting acreage is available in each town. This might become part of the town plan and used to determine solar sitings.

The Planning Commission and the Selectboard will have a joint meeting tomorrow night and this topic will most likely be discussed.

Jeff Blow thanked everyone for coming out to listen, learn and give their input.
The public hearing was closed at 8:47 pm.

NOVUS BARRE TOWN SOLAR ASSESSMENT

Background: Joe Levesque asked to have this on the agenda. He was at the meeting and asked that the board reconsider its vote to not change Novus Barre Town Solar's tax assessment from $2,220,900 to $582,200.

The change was included on Errors and Omissions List #2 presented on October 6. The vote to deny the change in assessment on personal property known as 006/050.05 at 229 Websterville Rd was unanimous.

Novus has appealed the B.C.A.'s decision to the state (PVR). The law requires the assessor to use the state prescribed method/formula. The appeal will end with the state hearing officer setting the value at $582,200.

On a motion by LaClair, seconded by Mitchell the Selectboard voted to reconsider its vote to not change the Novus Barre Town Solar's tax assessment. White was not present for the vote.

The Assessor is asking that the assessment for the Novus Barre Town Solar be changed from $2,220,900 to $582,200 because he is required to value it this way.

On a motion by LaClair, seconded by Mitchell, the Selectboard voted to accept the assessors' valuation of $582,200 for the personal property known as 006/050.05 at 229 Websterville Road. White was not present for the vote.

Discussion: Tessier is not happy with the way this came about but will reluctantly support the motion to avoid costing the Town even more money.

Blow is extremely upset with the way the State has handled this. The developers said that they proposed the Barre Town solar array not knowing about this tax reduction.
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That essentially means they were going to be profitable even without this reduction. All
the state has done is to make it more profitable for the developer and not for the Town.
His yes vote on the motion is also a reluctant yes.

SNOWPLOWING- ORANGE

Background: We have arranged with the Town of Orange in the past to share
responsibilities for plowing and sanding several roads that cross our common border. Tate
has asked if we would make the same agreement with Orange again. The Town of Orange
Selectboard has agreed to this.

On a motion by Tessier, seconded by LaClair, the Selectboard voted to approve the
agreement with the Town of Orange as outlined in letter. White was not present for the
vote.

STERLING HILL ROAD

On a motion by LaClair, seconded by Tessier, the Selectboard voted to authorize
the DPW Superintendent to close the steep gravel section of Sterling Hill Road for the
winter when weather dictates. White was not present for the vote.

WEEKLY ACCOUNTS PAYABLE WARRANT

On a motion by Tessier, seconded by LaClair, the Selectboard voted to approve the
accounts payable warrant for November 17, 2015. White was not present for the vote.

MISCELLANEOUS - None

ROUND THE TABLE

Carl- nothing
Jack- Will not be at the meeting Wednesday night as he will be preparing for another
meeting.
   With regards to the GMP project, is Carl happy with the questions/answers that
   were discussed? Carl says yes, they were responsive to the concerns raised.
   Is there a need for a sit down with the School Board to discuss issues with salting,
   paving in parking area and generator? Jeff says the salting issue has been resolved and he
   has reached out to Brent Tewksbury and is waiting to hear back.
LaClair- Spent about an hour with Deputy Commissioner of PSB and he says they have
   heard us loud and clear.
Tessier- nothing
Blow- Would like to thank Carl and Chris for the work for tonight's' hearing. Carl says the
   credit goes to Chris Violette.

ADJOURN

On a motion by Mitchell, seconded by LaClair, the Selectboard voted to adjourn at
9:10 p.m. White was not present for the vote.

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Deborah Lefebvre-Assistant Town Clerk  Selectboard Chair

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Barre Town Selectboard