



# Town of Barre VERMONT

## BARRE TOWN BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024

Tuesday, March 14, 2023

### AGENDA

1. Call to order.....6:00 p.m.
2. Consider approving agenda.
3. Consider approving March 7 meeting minutes
4. Acknowledge guests, if any
5. Questions about material received and reviewed to date
6. Review Ambulance Fund budget, Records Restoration Fund budget, General Fund administration and finance department budgets, other General Fund department budgets
7. Public comment, if any.....7:45 p.m.
8. Recess.....7:50 p.m.
9. Reconvene.....8:20 p.m.
10. Continue review of budgets
11. Adjourn

### MINUTES

The duly warned meeting of the Barre Town Budget Review Committee for the proposed 2023-2024 fiscal year budget was held on Tuesday, March 14, 2023 at the Barre Town Municipal Building, Emergency Operation Center, Websterville, VT.

**Budget Committee Members Present:** Norma Malone, Paul White, Justin Bolduc, W. John “Jack” Mitchell, Mike Gilbar, Chris Neddo, Todd Provencher, Jamie Cushman, and Josh Howard. Those present virtually: Bob Nelson.

**Budget Committee Members Absent:** None.

**Staff Members Present:** Town Manager Carl Rogers, Assistant Town Manager Chris Violette, Town Clerk Tina Lunt, and EMS Director Paul Ginther. Those present virtually: Katelyn Kran.

**Others Present:** None.

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

#### **APPROVE THE AGENDA:**

*On a motion by Josh Howard, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Budget Committee voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.*

#### **APPROVE THE MINUTES:**

*On a motion by Josh Howard, seconded by Todd Provencher, the Budget Committee voted unanimously to approve the March 7, 2023 meeting minutes with minor spelling and grammatical corrections as presented to the clerk.*

**GUESTS:** None.

**QUESTIONS ON MATERIAL:** None.

#### **AMBULANCE FUND:**

Budget review began with the Ambulance Fund.

Town Manager Carl Rogers gave a brief summary of the operation of the EMS Department. EMS has staffing that consists of 1 full time Director, 12 full time providers (8 full time paramedics & 4 full time advanced EMTs) and 19 per diem. The ambulance department has 5 ambulances. Full time employees work 24 hours then are off 48 hours.

The proposed budget has an increase of \$329,610 (12.86%).

Budget Highlights

- \$147,120 increase in wages & salaries.
- \$22,685 increase in Town equipment charges paid to Equipment Fund due to the 5 ambulances
- \$85,655 increase for billing service in anticipation of new contract
- \$11,622 for social security based on increase in payroll
- Barre Town's per capital payment to the Ambulance Fund will increase \$15,050 or 2.5%
- No additional full-time staff
- Large increase in budget offset by rising revenues resulting from a trend in the increase of billable calls and higher rates
- \$39,460 increase for workers compensation insurance

The Committee discussed the Town's current ambulance bill collection process. The Town is working on securing a new EMS billing company, and an RFP is currently in the works. The goal is the new company will help make the billing process more efficient. Additionally, it will "close the loop" that is currently lacking in the Town's billing process.

Revenues: Town contracts, private insurance/self-pay, public insurance (Medicare & Medicaid), paramedic intercepts, special services, and donations.

Town Manager Carl Rogers shared a document that outlined the ambulance contract fees and per capita for the Committee to review. This document compared FY21 through FY24.

Expenses: Wages & salaries (overtime, scheduled overtime, bonus, longevity, annual leave, holiday/floater pay), Town equipment charges (paid to Equipment Fund), equipment repair costs (repair/maintenance of stretcher equipment), equipment replacement (ventilators, cardiac monitors, etc.), large equipment purchase (Zoll x-series monitor), small equipment purchases (scoop stretcher, equipment storage), equipment batteries, supplies (Town ID cards), consumable medical supplies (narcotics, oxygen, tank rental), food & refreshments (holiday meals, VAA meeting), utilities (electrical work to add generator circuit), training registration, travel & lodging, auditing (15% of total contract), legal fees, contracts with other towns, investigative services, health insurance advisory, outside service (billing service), employment practices, employee benefits (workers compensation, unemployment, retirement, health insurance buyout),

***On a motion by Paul White, seconded by Chris Neddo, the Budget Committee recessed the meeting at 7:52 p.m.***

The Budget Committee reconvened the meeting at 8:23 p.m.

There was a brief discussion regarding the 8% wage increase. Committee members shared their feedback on this matter. Chair Malone noted this is the direction the Selectboard went on the other union contracts. Conversation focused on items such as workforce shortages across the State forcing the high increase. Town Manager Carl Rogers noted the Town's EMS pay scale compares to the majority of others in the State.

**RECORDS RESTORATION:**

The proposed budget has an increase of \$430 (2.29%).

2023-2024 is the second year for this fund's budget. By State Law, beginning July 1, 2019 the per page Land Records fee was increased to \$15 per page; \$4.00 of the \$15.00 fee is set aside for Municipal Restoration and is considered designated funds and the Town Clerk has sole discretion on how the theses funds are spent. They are to be used for anything that pertains to records preservation/maintenance support.

The average number of pages recorded over a 3-year period is 7,548.

Expenses: Supplies (printer cartridges, archival paper, records books), Storage & Records (binding grand list and land records system contract).

**GENERAL FUND:**

The proposed budget has an increase of 5.99%.

Town Manager Carl Rogers noted he was hoping to keep this fund at a 5% increase, but it was not possible.

Budget Committee Meeting of March 14, 2023 Continued:

The Committee discussed the \$100,000 increase for baseball field lights. Mr. Bolduc noted this was discussed in Selectboard meetings that this item would be covered by ARPA funds. Additionally, the increase of \$15,350 for building a wall to separate the Finance Office from the mail/copier room is being requested. The Committee discussed this item also being something to consider for ARPA funds.

Revenues: Property taxes (General & Cemetery), delinquent taxes, interest/late charges, licenses & permits, payment in lieu of taxes, non-business licenses (dog license, zoning permits), current use, recording documents, clerk’s office fees (marriage licenses, certified copies, vault fees, DMV registrations), Police & Fire Department income (Thunder Road, other contracts), school resource officer salary, Town of Orange, bulk trash collection, recreation (lights, use of fields, use of picnic shelter, skate park donations), rent (22 Wilson Steet), refunds, interest.

Mr. Roger’s stated there is a notable change in Current Use due to the Town’s 2021 reappraisal. Vacant land did not increase in value when the reappraisal was completed. Therefore, those tax bills went down, and the State is reimbursing the Town on property taxes for land that is enrolled in the Current Use Program. The Town has received a total of \$70,908.00 so far, this fiscal year.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**ADJOURN:**

*On a motion by Todd Provencher, seconded by Josh Howard, the Budget Committee meeting adjourned at 9:48 p.m.*

APPROVED MINUTES

Barre Town Budget Committee

Filed in the Barre Town Clerk’s Office on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023.

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_, Barre Town Clerk.