



Town of Barre VERMONT

BARRE TOWN BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

AGENDA

1. Call to order.....6:00 p.m.
2. Consider approving agenda
3. Consider approving February 6, 2024 meeting minutes
4. Acknowledge guests, if any, for non-agenda items
5. Review Budget Book Appendices
6. Begin Review of Equipment Fund (aka Fleet Maintenance Fund)
7. Public comment, if any.
8. Adjourn

MINUTES

The duly warned meeting of the Barre Town Budget Review Committee for the proposed 2024-2025 fiscal year budget was held on Tuesday, February 13, 2024 at the Barre Town Municipal Building, Emergency Operation Center, Websterville, VT.

Budget Committee Members Present: Norma Malone, Paul White, Justin Bolduc, Bob Nelson, Mike Gilbar, Chris Neddo, Todd Provencher, Jamie Cushman, Josh Howard, and Lindsey Lozier.

Budget Committee Members Absent: None.

Staff Members Present: Town Manager Chris Violette, Town Clerk Tina Lunt, Finance Director Katelyn Kran, Town Engineer Josh Martineau, and Shop Foreman Mike Martel.

Others Present: None.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Chair Malone.

APPROVE THE AGENDA:

On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Budget Committee voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

APPROVE THE MINUTES:

On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Budget Committee voted unanimously to approve the February 6, 2024, Budget Committee minutes with minor spelling and grammatical corrections.

GUESTS: None.

Mrs. Malone asked the Manager to add a “Questions on Material” item to future agendas.

Questions:

Mrs. Malone asked the Manager a few follow-up questions.

1. Mrs. Malone inquired about the year-to-date budget-to-actuals report from the Library. Mr. Violette said they spoke to their accountants, but they currently do not have a program allowing this option.
2. Mrs. Malone asked the Manager if he had received the total budget from CVEDC. He stated he had not but would follow up with the Executive Director.

REVIEW APPENDICES:

Appendix A: 5-Year Equipment Purchase Plan

This plan is used to plan for future purchases and helps with preparing the budget. Currently, this plan is only for four years as the Town looks to review and make sure it is meeting its needs. Additionally, the Manager notes, due to numerous delays in receiving previous purchases the plan needs to be realigned.

Mr. Gilbar inquired about the principal and interest rate schedule for leased vehicles. He asked Finance Director Katelyn Kran if a payment schedule could be provided. Mrs. Kran confirmed this document could be provided for Committee members.

Appendix B: 5-Year Paved Road Plan

The 5-Year Paved Road Plan guides the Town through paving their roads. The Manager notes this plan was put into place many years ago and is essential to keeping the Town roads some of the best in the State. Town Engineer Josh Martineau designs this plan with a meticulous methodology.

The Manager reported there are two roads that have not yet been paved this fiscal year. Mr. Martineau explained the Pike paving contract allowed an option to pave Plainfield Brook Road and Richardson Road in the Spring, and there was a delay with all the rain. Mr. Martineau confirmed these two roads will be paved before the end of FY'24.

This year, Town staff opted to put out paving bids early in hopes of favorable bids. Bids were received much higher than anticipated. After many discussions, the Selectboard approved a paving budget of approximately \$73,000 more than originally planned. The plan that Mr. Martineau has in place will pave all roads that were originally planned to be treated, however, what has changed is the scope of the milling.

Mrs. Malone noted the paving contract was awarded prior to the approval of the Highway Fund Budget. She noted the risks the Town has taken as this fund budget will be much higher than anticipated.

Appendix C: 5-Year Gravel Road Work Plan

Similar to the 5-Year Paved Road Plan, this plan guides the Town as they plan for budgeted gravel road maintenance. Gravel roads conditions are based on observations through mud season.

Appendix D: 5-Year Building Plan

This plan is intended to guide in planning for building maintenance, repair, and upgrades. It is subject to question whether it is really meeting the needs. Currently, this plan is only a four-year plan.

The Manager stated the Town is currently working with Freeman, French, and Freeman an architecture firm who will be providing a building analysis of the Town's facilities. Ultimately, this will help better manage this plan. The budget Committee will decide if this service will be added to the FY'25 budget.

Appendix E: Reappraisal Fund

Every Town receives money from the State of Vermont to pay for town wide reappraisals. This appendix documents the funds received and the balance.

The Committee discussed the possibility of a reappraisal with the drop in the Town's CLA.

Appendix F: Debt Service Chart

This outlines Town debt, most of which is leases on equipment but also various other loans.

Appendix G: Tax Stabilization Agreements

Tax stabilization agreements are typically offered to businesses as incentives to locate here in Barre Town. If a business had an agreement, it offers them a reduced tax liability for a certain number of years. The Town currently does not have any such agreements.

The Manager noted he did have a few conversations with businesses from the City after the flood about relocation.

Appendix H: Housing Loans

Many years ago, Barre Town received grants to provide housing rehabilitation loans. Some of these loans date way back and are in what is considered a deferred status. This means they are only paid upon transfer of the property. There are additional loans managed by Downstreet Housing and Community Development. These are more recent loans that, by agreement, with Downstreet Housing, are fully administered by them.

Mrs. Malone asked if these loans appear as liens on the property. The Manager confirmed they do.

Appendix I: Recreation Facility Maintenance

This plan documents maintenance needs at the Town’s recreation facilities. It also inventories items like the Town’s fences and helps with planning for repairs and to budget for them.

EQUIPMENT FUND (aka FLEET MAINTENANCE FUND):

The Manager reports that the Equipment Fund looks considerably different this year. Historically, the fund has not been operated as it should, and staff have endeavored to correct this. Moving forward, this fund will be known as the Fleet Maintenance Fund and will be solely responsible for maintaining the Town’s vast vehicle fleet. Additionally, this fund will have one full-time employee and another at 80%, both mechanics that work on equipment. Furthermore, it has a share of various administrative salaries. The Manager notes that this fund is considerably lower than last year, mostly due to the equipment that was once purchased from this fund being redistributed to the individual department budgets that use it. There are also other budgeted items that have been redistributed. A large reduction in this fund means many of the other funds will have a significant increase.

Proposed 2024-2025 budget amount: \$756,298 (-56.43%)

The Manager explained various formulas were used for the salary splits. Finance Director Katelyn Kran noted the formulas are based on FY24 budget numbers, and these will be adjusted next year.

Mr. Provencher stated he understands the mechanism of this fund but shared concerns. He noted the Sewer and Water Fund most specifically. He notes the actual expenses are much higher than what is being proposed in the Fleet Maintenance Fund. The Manager noted this is a fair point.

Paul White asked if the Committee has any items to add to the white board for future discussion. Mention was made of the Aldrich Library allocation. Mrs. Malone stated this item will be discussed at a future meeting.

The Manager noted that next week the Committee will plan to review the Highway and Sewer funds. These two budgets were handed out to Committee members for review.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ADJOURN:

On a motion by Mike Gilbar, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Budget Committee meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

APPROVED MINUTES

Barre Town Budget Committee

Filed in the Barre Town Clerk’s Office on this _____ day of _____, 2024.

ATTEST: _____, Barre Town Clerk.