



Town of Barre VERMONT

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

Tuesday, February 6, 2024

AGENDA

1. Call to order.....6:00 p.m.
2. Consider approving agenda
3. Consider approving January 30, 2024 meeting minutes
4. Acknowledge guests, if any, for non-agenda items
5. Presentation by Barre Area Development (6:00 p.m.)
6. Presentation by Barre Partnership (6:30 p.m.)
7. Presentation by Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation (7:00 p.m.)
8. Presentation by Aldrich Public Library (7:30 p.m.)
9. Handout budget booklet
10. Public comment, if any.
11. 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 6, 2024 at the Barre Town Municipal Building, Emergency Operations Center, Websterville, VT.

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

Budget Committee Members Absent: None.

Staff Members Present: Town Manager Chris Violette, Town Clerk Tina Lunt, and Finance Director Katelyn Kran.

Others Present: Aimee Green, Bob Lord, Robert Hutchins, Tracie Lewis, Alicia Calcagni, Shannon Alexander, Kristin Baumann, Nancy Pope, Melissa Bounty, Alan Kessler, and Abby Jenne.

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

APPROVE THE AGENDA:

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

APPROVE THE MINUTES:

On a motion by Mike Gilbar, seconded by Josh Howard, the Budget Committee voted unanimously to approve the January 30, 2024, Budget Committee minutes with minor spelling and grammatical corrections.

GUESTS: None.

BARRE AREA DEVELOPMENT PRESENTATION:

Those present: Aimee Green, Bob Lord, and Robert Hutchins.

Barre Area Development is requesting level funding (\$64,550) for FY25.

Aimee Green, Executive Director gave a brief presentation that highlighted Barre Area Development's (BADC) FY24 Overview and FY25 Budget. A summary of this presentation is below:

- BADC's Benefits to the Barre Community:
 - Promote, sustain, and implement economic development in the Barre Community
 - Collaborate with not-for-profit organizations to provide joint marketing and business recruitment and retention
- Focus in FY25
 - Housing & Economic Strategy
 - Business Development
 - Execution of Strategic Planning
- Accomplishments in FY24
 - Named #1 on the Regional Priorities List for Prospect Heights Housing Project
 - Over 50 businesses targeted and outreached
 - Establishment of Barre Relief Fund
 - Over \$485k raised and \$438k distributed to Barre community
- Business Recruitment & Goals
 - Ongoing outreach to place large scale manufacturer's at Wilson Industrial Park
 - Purchase and sale of Quarry Hill Quick Stop
 - Expansion of the Montessori School
 - Ongoing work with MacAuley Meats
 - National and International businesses relocating to Barre in parallel to work underway to provide workforce housing
- Barre Community Relief Fund
 - BADC directed the marketing campaign
 - Raised over \$485,000
 - \$438,500 granted to businesses and individuals by BCRF Board to date
- FY24/25 Tourism
 - BADC worked directly with tour bus companies, providing guidance to dining/shopping to over 2000 tourists during Foliage Season
 - Planning is underway to bring back for FY25
- Key performance indicators

Budget Committee Meeting of February 6, 2024 Continued:

- Social media highlights
- Strategy FY24/FY25
 - Execution and implementation of Strategic Plan
 - 1st Annual Central Vermont Economic Development Summit - May 2024
 - Building on inventory platform for potential business owner of available commercial spaces
 - Social medial presence / advertising
- Objectives
 - Rebranding
 - Recruitment
 - Highlighting progress
 - Proactively collaborate with business owners
 - Foster housing and business expansion in Barre

Ms. Green noted that the Strategic Plan development process was launched on January 8. A survey will be going out soon to community organizations to help understand the needs and concerns. The goal is to have the Strategic Plan completed by May.

Ms. Green reported the housing crisis is affecting business development in the Barre area. The Prospect Heights project is a future housing opportunity for the Barre area. Ms. Green said if everything goes as planned Prospect Heights is looking to start construction in the spring of 2025.

It is noted that BADC is proposing a level funded request from the City.

BARRE PARTNERSHIP PRESENTATION:

Those present: Tracie Lewis, Shannon Alexander, Alicia Calcagni, and Alan Kessler.

Barre Partnership is requesting level funding (\$5,000) for FY25.

Tracie Lewis, Executive Director of Barre Partnership gave a brief presentation. The highlights are as follows:

- Photos by Shannon Alexander
- Businesses/organizations that Barre Partnership has promoted
- Businesses that have been promoted owned by Barre Town residents
- Resident welcome guide has been completed and has been added to the Barre Partnership website and Facebook page
- Board members that work and live in Barre Town
- Barre Partnership is working with the Town's Rec Director on helping promote Barre Town Recreation events
- Highlight on events
 - Barre Heritage festival
 - Holiday House decorating contest
- Insights on social media
 - 6887 followers on Facebook
- Budget
 - Vermont downtown vibrancy fund \$22,000 for FY25 (currently not passed by Legislature)
 - Rent has decreased due to office relocation after the July flooding

Budget Committee Meeting of February 6, 2024 Continued:

- Social Media position has been added (14 hours per week)
- Programs and events have increased. The goal is to bring bigger and better events to the Barre community.

Mr. White noted Barre City looks fantastic with all the lights. Additionally, Mr. Nelson commented on Tracie's good work within the community.

CENTRAL VERMONT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION PRESENTATION:

Those present: Melissa Bounty and Abby Jenne

Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation (CVEDC) is requesting level funding (\$4,000) for FY25.

Executive Director Mrs. Bounty gave a brief presentation. Highlights are as follows:

- About CVEDC
- CVEDC work
 - Business support services
 - Special projects
 - Summer intern project
 - Events (4 per year required by the State)
- Town of Barre Support
 - Assisted with 18 Town of Barre businesses
 - Access to State and Federal programs
 - Revolving Loan Fund
 - Workforce recruiting and retention
 - Partner support (Capstone, Turning Point, Barre Area Development, and more)
- July 2023 Flooding update
 - Visited Barre and 6 other municipalities to offer support and assess damage
 - BEGAP grant: created data report that was provided to the State
 - Counseling sessions, and grant support continues
- CNPP program, SBTA program (4 Barre Town businesses participating in this program), and RPP program.
- Staffing
 - increased 2-4 due to the flood recovery work that is needed
- What's Ahead:
 - 3 spring events planned
 - continue to advocate and inform about flood impact
- New Website: www.centralvermont.org

Board members asked about CVEDC's total budget. Mrs. Bounty stated she will send over a copy of the budget for Committee members to review.

ALDRICH PUBLIC LIBRARY PRESENTATION:

Those present: Kristin Baumann and Nancy Pope.

Budget Committee Meeting of February 6, 2024 Continued:

Budget request \$210,128. The Aldrich Library budget was shared with Board members for review prior to the meeting.

Library Director Kristin Baumann shared the following statistics with the Committee:

- 8600 circulations in Barre Town
- 8400 circulations in Barre City

Ms. Baumann shared that the Library is looking at doing more outreach to Barre Town residents. The outreach librarian is working on this weekly.

Ms. Baumann gave an update on the York Branch Location in East Barre. She noted this location has been renovated, and the hours have been updated. A Winter Open House is scheduled for Tuesday, February 13th from 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. This is an opportunity to hear from the community regarding their needs for this location.

Mr. Gilbar inquired about a year-to-date budget-to-actuals report. Ms. Baumann stated she will send a revised report to the Manager for the Committee to review. Furthermore, the Library Director advised that the library is looking to be fiscally responsible. They do have challenges on the rise, including sourcing a new internet provider. She reported they are constantly looking for funding opportunities.

Discussion continued as Committee members reviewed and asked questions regarding the budget line items.

Mr. Bolduc asked about the snow removal budget line item. President of Board of Trustees, Nancy Pope said this was due to a new contract that was not well monitored.

Ms. Lozier inquired about the library's recruitment programs. Ms. Baumann stated they have recruited an artist and a poet. Additionally, a flyer will be going out in backpacks soon. Ms. Baumann is working on building relationships within the schools. Furthermore, their newsletter goes out to over 2000 individuals, and outlines programs and events.

Mrs. Malone inquired about the heat source at the York Branch. Mrs. Pope noted this location is not well insulated and is difficult to maintain. She said volunteers use to maintain it, however, with the lack of volunteers it makes it more difficult to monitor. Committee members suggested installing a monitor/controller at this location to help with this concern. The Library Director stated she will contact Efficiency Vermont regarding this matter. Additionally, Mrs. Malone asked if there are any social service agency grant opportunities available to the library? Ms. Baumann stated she has not seen one yet, but her goal is for people to understand this is the work the library is doing, noting that the food programs are grant-funded. Mrs. Pope followed up saying when the Library served as a warming shelter this program was also funded.

Mr. Howard inquired as to why the Library 's budget request for Barre City was level-funded while the request for Barre Town includes a 5% increase over the current allocation. Ms. Baumann indicated the request for Barre City took into consideration the impact of the costs to the City associated with the flooding damage. Mrs. Malone noted that Barre Town is also experiencing budgetary pressures this year related to damage from the flood. Mrs. Pope stated the City plans to try to find the funds to increase their allocation by 5% in the proposed budget.

Budget Committee Meeting of February 6, 2024 Continued:

BUDGET BOOKLET:

The Manager handed out budget books which contained the first four budgets; Fleet Maintenance Fund, Sewer Fund, Sewer Capital Improvement Fund, and Water Fund. The Manager explained he was planning on handing out the Highway Fund at this meeting, however, he is waiting until they have a paving amount added to the budget. Additionally, the budget books included the Appendices.

The plan for next week’s meeting is to review the Appendices and start the review of the Fleet Maintenance Fund.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ADJOURN:

On a motion by Justin Bolduc, seconded by Josh Howard, the Budget Committee meeting adjourned at 8:22 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.