



Town of Barre VERMONT

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

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

AGENDA

1. Call to order.....6:00 p.m.
2. Consider approving agenda
3. Consider approving March 5, 2024 meeting minutes
4. Acknowledge guests, if any, for non-agenda items
5. Review General Fund Budgets
 - a. 417 – Planning & Zoning
 - b. 462 – Recreation
 - c. 411-419 Selectboard; Finance; Town Manager; BCA/Election; Town Clerk; Data Processing; Assessing; Municipal Building
 - d. 441-498 – Solid Waste; Health Officer; Animal Control; Culture; Development; Transportation; Insurances; Employee Benefits; Miscellaneous; Transfers to other fund
6. Handout revised Highway Fund, revised Sewer Fund, and revised Water 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, March 12, 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, Lindsey Lozier, and Josh Howard (arrived at 6:41 p.m.).

Budget Committee Members Absent: None.

Staff Members Present: Town Manager Chris Violette, Town Clerk Tina Lunt, Finance Director Katelyn Kran, Planning and Zoning Administrator Brandon Garbacik, and Recreation Director Johnny Crossley.

Others Present: Those attending virtually: David Rouleau.

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 Todd Provencher, the Budget Committee voted unanimously to approve the amended agenda as follows:

1. Add item #4a. Questions

APPROVE THE MINUTES:

On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Todd Provencher the Budget Committee voted unanimously to approve the March 5, 2024, Budget Committee minutes with minor spelling and grammatical corrections.

GUESTS: None.

QUESTIONS: None.

GENERAL FUND:

Proposed 2024-2025 budget amount: \$4,440,391 (-3.77%)

Planning & Zoning: This budget is proposed to increase slightly this year from last. The increase is almost entirely related to wages with a few other incidentals based on year-to-year cost increases. There are no special requests this year by the Planning and Zoning Administrator.

Mrs. Malone advised revising the permit fees.

Recreation: The Recreation Budget is proposed to increase by less than \$500. The Manager notes that Recreation Director Johnny Crossley did ask for a couple of new purchases. The purchase of a power rake will allow all fields to be tilled when needed without having to contract them out. Mr. Nelson asked about the offset of this item. Mr. Crossley explained there was not a line item that offset this proposed purchase. Additionally, there was a request for the purchase of a sickle bar mower, however, the Manager did not fund this in the proposed budget. Mr. Crossley explained this is an efficiency item. This is not a necessity but would make it easier for staff. Committee members discussed the cons of this item and suggested a few other ideas that may serve the Town better.

The Recreation Board is reviewing the fee schedule. Mr. Crossley stated that in the past, payment for field use was previously done over an honor system. This system will be changed moving forward.

It is noted that \$4,000 was set aside for Capital Improvement to potentially install tennis court / basketball court lighting. A brief conversation took place regarding the concerns of the current lighting at the courts. Currently, there is no timer system in place. This is currently being reviewed by Town staff. Mr. Provencher suggested speaking to Efficiency Vermont.

A notable item is the added expense of \$950 for uniforms for the Recreation crew. Mr. Crossley said this will help identify staff members when working.

In closing, Mr. Crossley reports that his hope is that revenue will look much different next year with a review of the fee schedule. He noted that a baseball league has been in contact with him regarding the use of the fields that could potentially bring in more revenue as well.

Selectboard: This proposed budget is up \$9,485 compared to last year. Notable increases include moving the printing of the Town Reports from the Finance budget to this budget, chairs for the Selectboard room, changing the Christmas luncheon to an evening event with guests.

Budget Committee Meeting of March 11, 2024 Continued:

There was a brief discussion regarding the Town newsletter. Mr. Violette explained staff are currently in the process of collecting emails as a means of a digital option for residents. Furthermore, Committee members discussed the \$11,600 expense for Cable TV Public Access.

Finance: The Finance budget is proposed to decrease by \$49,771 which is related to a change in the way wages are split as well as the aforementioned move of the Town Reports to the Selectboard budget. Additionally, Finance Director Katelyn Kran announced that \$1,200 was removed from this budget because she was able to secure a grant for the expense to take the Certified Public Finance Officer Training.

Town Manager: The Town Manager's budget is proposed to decrease by \$25,319 which, like Finance, is largely related to redistribution of wage splits. The postage machine, which is shared by all departments in the Municipal Building, was moved from this budget to the Municipal Building budget.

The Manager reports he included funds to attend the International City Management Association (ICMA) meeting in Pittsburg, PA in September.

Discussion focused on timecards. The paper timecards are still being used across some departments. Most of the Municipal Building, minus the Police Department use the online timecard system through Accufund. Mr. Violette explained there are a few areas that are not ready to eliminate the paper timecards at this time.

Elections: The Elections budget is proposed to increase by \$7,123 next fiscal year which is related to the fact that this is a Presidential Election year, making it an additional election to conduct.

Clerk Lunt confirmed that the State will cover the expense of mailing ballots for the November election. The State mails ballots to all active voters for the November General Election.

Town Clerk: The Town Clerk's budget is proposed to increase by \$4,750 which is related to wages and the Clerk's realization that the postage budget was not likely enough with all of the mailings of ballots, letters, etc. that this office sends out.

Clerk Lunt shared that the Clerk's Office has been tracking postage on land records for the past year. She notes it is clear that postage was being underbudgeted. Additionally, law offices are not sending in prepaid envelopes as often anymore for the return of land records, leaving the Town to pick up this added expense.

Data Processing: This proposed budget is \$15,880 less than last year, which is because of wage split change and because it no longer contributes to the Equipment Fund.

Mr. Gilbar suggests changing the title of this budget to "IT".

Assessing: The budget for the Assessing Department is proposed to increase by \$2,990 compared to last year. This increase is related to contractual wage increases and moving the purchase of the administrative assistant computer replacement to this budget from the Equipment Fund.

Municipal Building: The budget for the overall operation of the Municipal Building decreases by \$4,003 as proposed. This decrease is associated with the elimination of its contribution to the Equipment Fund. The rental for the postage machine has been moved to this budget. The Manager notes that in FY25 he is hoping to add a wall in the Town Manager's Office for the Town Manager Assistant. Additionally, the Manager reported he has added the purchase of 6 tables for future trainings and/or meetings.

There was a brief discussion regarding the \$150,000 that was removed from the budget for paving the Municipal parking lot. Unfortunately, Mr. Violette had to remove this item due to additional expenses this year. Mr. Nelson suggested possibly using ARPA funds for this project. This item was added to the whiteboard for further discussion.

Solid Waste: The Solid Waste budget is proposed to decrease by \$1,510 this year. The Solid Waste budget primarily funds the twice a year bulk trash events and the Holden Road Lawn Waste site. The Manager reports there is additional revenue in this budget as Barre City is now using the Holden Lawn Waste site and splitting the cost year-round with the Town, and in addition they are splitting the cost of the woodchipper.

Health Officer: This budget is consistent year to year and pays for the Health and Deputy Health Officer stipends as well as a few other incidental items. It is noted for the record the Town still has a vacancy in the Deputy Health Officer position.

Animal Control: The Police Department typically takes care of animal control issues. In the past the Town had an Animal Control Officer but finding one has been difficult due to inconsistent hours. The Manager reports that the Police Chief has asked about moving this budget to the Police Department budget.

Culture: This budget is essentially for miscellaneous items, most of the not-for-profit entities that are voted on separately on election day are noted in this budget. The one exception is the Aldrich Library which has asked for a 5% increase. Additionally, the Barre Heritage is in this budget. Mrs. Malone noted the Barre Heritage request is also included in the separate ballot articles, and is not a budgeted item.

The Manager stated he is proposing level funded for the Aldrich Library. Overall, he supports the library, however, he believes they still have work to do. He said he is very impressed with the new Director and believes they are taking steps for improvements. The lack of financials was noted. Committee members shared their thoughts. This item was removed from the whiteboard. Committee consensus is to move forward with a level-funded request.

Development: Barre Area Development, Barre Partnership, and Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation are all found in this budget and have all requested level funding. Additionally, this budget includes a line item for Barre Town's per capita dues to the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.

Transportation: The sole item in this budget is Barre Town's contribution to Green Mountain Transportation Authority. The Manager notes that GMTA did request a slight increase.

Insurance: This budget contains most of the liability insurances as well as building and contents insurance and is proposed to go up slightly.

Benefits: All of the General Fund employee benefits are included in this budget. This budget is proposed to increase \$19,115 for FY25 over FY24. This is due to a health insurance increase of nearly 14% as well as most all other line items increasing.

Budget Committee Meeting of March 11, 2024 Continued:

Other items: This budget includes the Town's per capita dues to the Vermont League of Cities and Towns as well as the tax the Town pays to the county and for the land the Town owns in Williamstown.

Mrs. Malone stated that line item 011.491.450 should be budgeted for \$1. This item was added to the whiteboard for further discussion. Additionally, line item 011.450.999 (Property Purchases) should also be budgeted for \$1 and be added back to the budget.

Interfund Transfer: The interfund transfer is where the General Fund provides the capital for the Cemetery Fund. The Cemetery Fund budget is projected to increase which means this budget is proposed for a \$27,886 increase.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ADJOURN:

On a motion by Justin Bolduc, seconded by Todd Provencher, the Budget Committee meeting adjourned at 8:31 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.