



Town of Barre VERMONT

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

Tuesday, March 5, 2024

AGENDA

1. Call to order.....6:00 p.m.
2. Consider approving agenda
3. Consider approving February 20, 2024 meeting minutes
4. Acknowledge guests, if any, for non-agenda items
5. Questions about material received and reviewed to date
6. Review Proposed FY25 Police Department Budget
7. Review Proposed FY25 Fire Department Budget
8. Review Proposed FY25 Emergency Management Budget
9. Review Proposed FY25 Ambulance Budget (General Fund)
10. Review Proposed FY25 Ambulance Fund Budget
11. Handout remaining General Fund budgets: Cemetery Fund Budget and Records Restoration
12. Public comment, if any.
13. 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 5, 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, Assistant Town Clerk Catherine Whalen, Finance Director Katelyn Kran, Police Chief William Dodge, Fire Chief Andrew Lange, and EMS Director David Danforth.

Others Present: None.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Chair Malone.

APPROVE THE AGENDA:

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

APPROVE THE MINUTES:

On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Justin Bolduc the Budget Committee voted unanimously to approve the February 20, 2024, Budget Committee minutes with minor spelling and grammatical corrections.

GUESTS: None.

QUESTIONS: None.

POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Proposed 2024-2025 budget amount: \$1,008,607 (-4.9%)

The Police Department budget is part of the General Fund but historically reviewed the same time as the other Emergency Service budgets. The proposed budget is down by \$49,448 compared to last year. The driving force behind this is the elimination of the transfer to the Equipment Fund which was more than the proposed transfer to the Fleet Maintenance Fund. But like the other departments that own vehicles, this budget includes \$52,525 to purchase a police car. The Police Department purchases a new cruiser every year. Auto insurance for the existing cruisers is an additional item in this budget too as well as the planned purchases of computers per the computer replacement plan. Both of these items would have previously been in the Equipment Fund. Other notable increases include training and ammunition.

The Equipment Maintenance Contract line item has a notable increase. Chief Dodge explained this is a multiyear contract, stating the first year will be \$8,000 and this amount will go down over the next few years.

Mrs. Malone inquired about the FY'23 donation expenses. Finance Director Katelyn Kran explained this line item was related to the patrol car laptops that were donated by National Life.

The Manager shared that ARPA funds have been earmarked for several town projects. One of these projects is a garage for the Police Department. Mrs. Malone noted that \$50,000 has been allocated for this specific project and the Police Department proposed budget is \$50,000 less than the current year. She recommended moving the \$50,000 of ARPA funds into the Police Department budget. She said this would make this budget level-funded. She suggested this item be placed on the whiteboard for consideration.

FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Proposed 2024-2025 budget amount: \$422,775 (-2.8%)

Similar to the Police Department, the Fire Department is part of the General Fund. The proposed budget is down \$7,300 compared to last year's budget. Like the other budgets, the most significant change is the elimination of what previously was transferred to the Equipment Fund. Its replacement, the transfer to the Fleet Maintenance Fund, is far less than the former transfer. However, now in the budget is the purchase of the Fire Departments fleet of trucks which translates to \$93,828 in two-line items that are new this year. Wages are up slightly for the Fire Department because of a strong membership. Other items added from what had been previously purchased from the Equipment Fund include pagers, portables and station computers. Additionally, small equipment purchases is up because of the need to buy new electric vehicle

Budget Committee Meeting of March 5, 2024 Continued:

firefighting equipment and new thermal imaging cameras. Furthermore, the Manager notes, regarding the station lettering, this is something that the Town has been trying to accomplish for several years. Town Maintenance Consultant, Alfred Ladd has worked hard to find a company in Montpelier who can get matching letters and will install them.

The Manager noted the increase in the Equipment Reserve line item, noting the 10-year life cycle on fire gear equipment. He said reserve money is set aside each year for replacement of the equipment. Mr. Gilbar shared concerns regarding the current methodology. He suggested creating an Equipment Reserve Fund for tracking purposes. Additionally, Mrs. Malone stated it would be beneficial to have reports with the budget showing the reserve funds over the years.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:

The total change from last year to this year is \$2,705. This budget funds the small monthly stipend provided to the EMS chairperson (the dept head), and several other incidental items related to emergency management. The most significant item in this budget is the lease payment for the generator at Barre Town Middle and Elementary School. FY25 will be the second to last payment of that lease purchase.

Mr. Bolduc inquired about the fuel for the Barre Town Middle and Elementary school emergency generator. He stated the school is supposed to pay for half of fuel. This item was added to the whiteboard for discussion.

AMBULANCE BUDGET:

Proposed 2024-2025 budget amount: \$4,219,752 (+45.9)%

The Ambulance Fund, like the other Emergency Service budgets, the change in this budget is far different. A significant portion of the increase is related to the expansion of Barre Town Emergency Medical Service. In late 2023 the Town entered into a contract with the Town of Williamstown to provide ambulance service. Part of the agreement is that the Town add a third full-time crew to staff the Williamstown Public Safety Building. This added six full-time staff which means all the other personnel related line items go up substantially. In addition, like the Fire Department, per-diem staff is at record levels which, while coming at additional expense, pays off by reducing overtime and giving much needed time off for the full-time crews.

The Manager noted that one important thing to know is that while the expenses are going up significantly, revenue projections are as well. In fact, as projected, Barre Town's contribution to the fund goes down \$99,865 compared to last year which equates to a \$65.00 per capita cost which is the same as Orange, Washington, Brookfield, and Topsham. The budget contemplates Williamstown's per capita reducing to \$65.00.

Mr. Danforth reported on the increase in revenue. He stated that in FY'23, the average collection per call was \$571.00. He said the Town does not have a final number for FY'24 yet, however, to date in FY'24 the average is \$760.00 per call. Additionally, with all the Per Capita rates increasing he is confident in the proposed numbers.

Mr. Danforth notes that overtime expenses have been reduced extensively. Additionally, increasing staffing has helped cover the majority of calls. To date, they have only had to turn over 1 call. In the past they were losing revenue having to turn over multiple calls.

The Manager shared that on September 1 the Town switched billing companies. Finance Director Katelyn Kran noted that things are working out well with Quick Med Claims (QMC). Mr. Danforth noted that QMC offers real time data and reports for reconciling purposes.

AMBULANCE BUDGET (GENERAL FUND):

The sole purpose of this General Fund budget is to account for Barre Town’s contribution to the Ambulance Fund. As noted in the narrative for the Ambulance Fund, the budget proposes to decrease by \$95,865 and will transfer \$514,995 to the Ambulance Fund.

Mr. Danforth notes that Berlin’s Per Capita Fee may need to be revisited in 2026.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ADJOURN:

On a motion by Mike Gilbar, seconded by Todd Provencher, the Budget Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:01 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.