

Barre Town Budget Committee Meeting
Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2021 - 2022
March 2, 2021
AGENDA

1. Call to order.....6:00 p.m.
2. Consider approving agenda.
3. Consider approving February 23, 2021 minutes.
4. Acknowledge guests, if any.
5. Questions about material received and reviewed to date.
6. Continue review of Budgets: Highway and Ambulance Fund.
7. Public comment: receive guests, if any 7:50 p.m.
8. Adjourn 7:55 p.m.

Minutes for March 2, 2021

The duly warned meeting of the Barre Town Budget Review Committee for the proposed 2021-2022 fiscal year budget was held March 2, 2021 at the Barre Town Municipal Building, Selectboard Meeting Room, Lower Websterville, Vermont at 6:00 p.m. and remotely using Teams.

It is noted for the record the Town-Clerk Treasurer did not attend this meeting due to election duties. The following meeting synopsis was taken from the Teams video recording.

The following members were present in the Selectboard meeting room: W. John “Jack” Mitchell, Jim West, and Terry Reil. Those attending remotely were Paul White, Norma Malone, Bob Nelson (joined at 6:33 p.m.), Justin Bolduc, Cedric Sanborn, Phil Cecchini, and Mike Gilbar.

Also attending (in the Selectboard meeting room): Town Manager Carl Rogers and Asst. Town Manager Elaine Wang. Others attending remotely: EMS Director Christopher Lamonda and Finance Director Katelyn Kran.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

APPROVE AGENDA

On a motion by Paul White, seconded by Cedric Sanborn, the agenda was approved as presented. Bob Nelson was not present for the vote.

APPROVE MINUTES

Board members have provided the Clerk with corrections yesterday. Consensus of the Board is table action to the next meeting.

GUESTS - None

QUESTIONS ON MATERIAL RECEIVED TO DATE

This Committee has requested staff obtain additional information from the Aldrich Public Library (the budget to actual for last fiscal year) and GMTA (a breakout of the “Barre” ridership, Barre City versus Barre Town). Norma Malone inquired if the additional information has been received. Manager Rogers noted a request has been made but nothing has been received. Ms. Malone stated she would like to see this information prior to the next meeting. Mike Gilbar also noted he was unable to find the fiscal information on the Library website.

Manager Rogers inquired if the Committee had received the staff pay distribution documents. All had.

BUDGET REVIEW

Highway Fund Expenses continued: Picking up from last week, the Manager began by reviewing Highway Fund Benefits. He defined the comp time limited availability/use, spoke insurance premiums (employee share increases from 10% to 12%) and staff changes impacting the request amount.

The Town owns a gravel pit located in Williamstown, Route 14, South Barre, just across the Town line. Not only do we use sand and gravel from here but also adds waste granite to enhance our final road product(s). The Town, through a land deal, obtains free sand from Pike Industries (their pit is located off Quarry Hill Road). Pike sand tends to be very fine and some is mixed with our pit extractions. There are occasions when laying new line (water, sewer) the fine sand is used in the base. Staff maintains/works at the pit seasonally (late spring to late fall/early winter).

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING OF March 2, 2021 continued:

The Town rents streetlights from Green Mountain Power. Many years ago, a street light inventory and review was done resulting in eliminating some and converting all lights to LEDs.

Bob Nelson arrived at 6:33 p.m.

AMBULANCE FUND

In summary, the Ambulance Fund proposed budget is increasing 1.10% (\$27,025). Looking at the history of budget changes there is no pattern. This fund can vary significantly for a variety of reasons (staff changes, equipment needs – usually costly, training requirements, public insurance changes, etc.). There is no one thing in particular the Manager can point to as some expenses have decreased while others have increased.

Changes include painting the exterior of the station/storage shed, not funding an Administrative Assistance position (new), and a decrease in the overtime pay. Barre Town’s payment into this Fund is increasing \$27,265 (5.0%).

Revenues: Manager Rogers spoke to the grants received this past year related to COVID which include the contracted COVID services the Town is doing on behalf of the State. Primary revenue sources are private pay (insurance companies and individuals paying out of pocket) and public insurance (Medicare, Medicaid, VA). Paramedic Service revenue is declining as more agencies are becoming license to perform the task. It was noted the Town has been reviewing our ambulance rates regularly. All revenue is based on run volume and type of insurance. This makes budgeting difficult. Overall, by adding both revenue line items (public and private insurances), the budget numbers are usually quite accurate.

Expenses: Manager Rogers spoke to the complex work schedule of EMS and the varying pays they can receive (task related). He also noted this is a union and as such some items have been negotiated. Examples, but not limited to, are items such as time off, protective equipment, uniforms, training, etc. Director Lamonda spoke to department equipment needs (new items and repairs). There is also software and upgrades which include ongoing annual maintenance fees. A big expense for EMS is dispatching, which is 40% of the total contract. Police pay 40% and the Fire Department pays 20%. The VT EMS Assessment (a tax of sorts) is paid to the State. This in turn is to help the State get additional funding from the federal government. This has tended to be a break-even item for the Town.

Benefits: There was a big change in unemployment insurance, increasing from 1.87% to 4.04%. For health insurance premiums a 10% increase is expected in January 2022. EMS employees pay 12% of their premiums.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is Tuesday, March 9, 2021. As always if members have questions contact the Manager via email or phone.

ADJOURN

On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Paul White, the Budget Committee meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Town Clerk-Treasurer – Donna J. Kelty