

**Barre Town Budget Committee Meeting**  
**Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021**  
**January 26, 2021**  
**AGENDA**

1. Call to order.....6:00 p.m.
2. Consider approving agenda.
3. Acknowledge guests, if any
4. Self introductions.
5. Elect Chair and Vice-Chair
6. Information about the budget process and the Committee’s role
7. Begin review of budget appendices.
8. Public comment: receive guests, if any 7:50 p.m.
9. Adjourn 7:55 p.m.

**Minutes for January 26, 2021**

The duly warned meeting of the Barre Town Budget Review Committee for the proposed 2021-2022 fiscal year budget was held January 26, 2021, 6:00 p.m., at the Barre Town Municipal Building, Selectboard Meeting Room, Websterville, VT and remotely using Teams.

The following members attended in person: W. John “Jack” Mitchell, Terry Reil, Cedric Sanborn, Jim West, and Mike Gilbar. Those attending remotely were Paul White, Norma Malone, Bob Nelson, Justin Bolduc, and Phil Cecchini.

Also in attendance (in person) were: Town Manager Carl Rogers and Asst. Town Manager Elaine Wang and attending remotely was Town Clerk-Treasurer Donna J. Kelty.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Selectboard Chair Paul White called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

**APPROVE AGENDA**

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Budget Committee voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.*

**GUESTS - None**

**INTRODUCTIONS**

Members introduced themselves and provided their background information. A contact sheet was distributed. Members were asked to verify their telephone numbers, email address, and to designate those items not to be published on the website. Committee members are encouraged to ask questions and participate, especially if they have an area of special interest.

**ELECT A CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

In accordance with the State Open Meeting Law all Committees, like this one, where motions/considerations are made, meeting minutes will be taken. Barre Town does take minutes and they will need to be approved. Future agendas will contain an item for minute approval. Minutes should be available in a draft form no later than 5 days after the meeting and are posted on the Town website ([www.barretown.org](http://www.barretown.org)) under Boards/Budget Committee.

To keep the meetings moving along a Chair and Vice-Chair will be appointed for this Committee.

*On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Justin Bolduc, a nomination for Norma Malone was made for Chair of the Barre Town Budget Committee. With no other candidates put forth, nominations ceased, and the Committee voted to appoint Norma Malone as Chair.*

*On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Cedric Sanborn, a nomination was made for Justin Bolduc as Vice-Chair of the Barre Town Budget Committee. With no other candidates put forth, nominations ceased, and the Committee voted to appoint Justin Bolduc as Vice-Chair.*

The meeting was turned over to Chair Malone.

**BUDGET COMMITTEE OF 10**

The Budget Committee consists of the five Selectboard members and five citizens; two appointed by the Selectboard; one appointed by the Town Clerk-Treasurer; this group of three then appoints the final two

## **BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING OF January 26, 2021 continued:**

members. The budgets (General Fund and Highway Fund) approved by this Committee will be the ones presented to the voters. In the event the budgets would fail the Committee would reconvene to make changes for the next vote.

### **OPEN MEETING LAW**

The Manager informed the Committee these proceedings are subject to the open meeting law. This means to take official action there must be a quorum of 6. While it is okay to email the Manager with questions, he strongly discourages conversations between members via email. If 6 or more get involved in a conversation, even through links, it is a legal meeting and must be warned. Under the open meeting law all proceedings are to have an agenda. He will prepare one which will include some standard items such as approving/amending the agenda, approval of meeting minutes, allowing time for questions and answers. However, it will be flexible to accommodate the unforeseen discussions. Reminder: consensus is not an official action.... motions are.

Malone also asked the Manager to provide members of this Committee with the “Conflict of Interest Policy.”

### **BUDGET PRACTICES**

Barre Town’s budget practice is to not inflate line items by percentages. Department Heads are instructed to be precise and not to overstate. Rounding is done to the closest 5 or 10 dollars. Wages, utilities, debt service, employee benefits, and insurances are budgeted by the Manager.

The Committee discussed whether Department Heads should be required to attend the meeting(s) while their budget is being discussed. Department Heads include: Town Clerk’s Office – Donna Kely; Zoning & Planning – Chris Violette; Police Department – William Dodge; Fire Department – Chris Violette; Ambulance Service – Chris Lamonda; Emergency Management – Jack Mitchell; Cemetery & Recreation – Dwight Coffrin; Public Works (Equipment, Sewer, Water, and most of the Highway) – Richard Tetreault; and Engineering (Municipal Building, Highway, Sewer, and Water) – Josh Martineau. The consensus is to have Department Heads attend the meeting when their department budget is being reviewed. Department Heads will receive a copy of the tentative meeting schedule, so they are aware when their department budget(s) is/are being reviewed.

Other groups sometimes request to make a presentation to the Budget Committee. Last year COVID impacted visitations. The Budget Committee, by consensus, opted to receive reports from those entities in the budget by February 12, 2021. They can present via Teams during the March 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. Those being requested this year include the Aldrich Library, Barre Area Development, Central Vermont Economic Development Corp., and Barre Partnership. The consensus was to limit presentation time before this Committee. All other Not-for-Profits that are on the ballot submit reports to include details regarding services provided to Town residents.

During the budget review and discussion process each member should make a note of changes they would like to see and/or items which require a more in-depth discussion. These items will be placed on the “white board” for discussion at a future date. Once all fund budgets have been reviewed, individual items remaining on the white board will be acted upon by this Committee. Fund budgets will be approved separately and by motion. Manager Rogers highlighted the importance of the white boards in the meeting room stating they are a good tool to keep the review on track and to better facilitate the discussion of topics important to each member.

The Manager again noted that should you be unable to attend a meeting or will be late, contact him as soon as possible. He will also be available if you want a one-on-one session to catch up on the information you missed. The Budget Committee meetings are audio taped and this will be another resource available to you. All meeting minutes are posted on the website ([www.barretown.org](http://www.barretown.org)). From the homepage, look under the Boards/Commission button, and click on Budget Committee.

### **MEETING TIME & PROCESS**

This Committee will meet Tuesday evenings, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., in the Selectboard Meeting Room at the Municipal Building in Lower Websterville and remotely. The Manager will prepare a tentative calendar outlining the date a fund is to be discussed. Sometimes the Budget Committee will need to hold an extra meeting or there will be a double session should they fall behind in their schedule or if there is a topic which needs in depth discussion. During these double meetings there will be a recess (8:00 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.) to allow the Selectboard to hold a short meeting to conduct necessary weekly business (approving warrants, minutes, etc.). Since meeting in this hybrid manner is so new, the plan is to schedule the double meetings in a couple of weeks.

Using Teams for remote access has a feature to allow documents to be seen in real time. This function will allow the Selectboard to continue the practice of using the “whiteboard.” However, another option is to

## **BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING OF January 26, 2021 continued:**

bring a whiteboard upstairs, place it on an easel behind the Manager. This should be visible by those attending remotely. These ideas need to be tested to see what is most beneficial.

Ideally, the proposed Fiscal Year 2021-2022 budgets must be wrapped by March 23, 2021 so the Selectboard can sign the election warning during their March 30, 2021 meeting.

Budget Committee members stated their preference on how to receive their weekly packet of material via email and/or by paper. The Manager noted large budgets will be delivered to the individuals on Fridays. Should there be no handouts, Boards members who have requested so, will receive the agenda and notes via email.

### **BUDGET TOUR**

There will not be a Budget Tour this year due to COVID. However, for the two new members, a tour would be provided upon request.

### **BUDGET BOOK CONTENTS**

The Budget Notebooks were distributed. Each fund type (tabbed section) within the book is setup in the same manner. Keep in mind that there are no fund budgets currently in your book. Each fund budget section/tab will contain the following: first page is a summary of revenues and expenses for the current fiscal year and the proposed FY 2021-2022. The second page will detail “What’s In, What’s Not & Significant Changes” for the fund. The third page reflects the proposed revenue. The remaining pages (white) are the proposed expenditures. For your information, the current fiscal year is 2020-2021 or July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. The proposed budget this Committee will review is fiscal year 2021-2022, (July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022).

In the very front of the Budget Book there is a list of Fund and Designator Codes (yellow), the General Ledger Chart of Account Object Codes (pink), and a Glossary of Acronyms (violet). Additional instruction/information will be given on the Chart Accounts once there is a budget to review. Contact information for each member was provided with the caveat of remember what constitutes a meeting under the Open Meeting Law.

The proposed FY 21-22 expense budgets were prepared by the various Department Heads and reviewed by the Town Manager. The budget being considered by this Committee is the Manager’s revised budget. The Budget Committee will make the final budget decision(s) and adopt all fund budgets except the General/Highway which will be presented to the voters on Town Meeting Day in May 2021.

### **APPENDIX (Last tab in notebook) REVIEW**

The last section of the Budget Book (Appendix tab) contains the following:

- 5-Year Equipment Purchase Plan
- 5-Year Paved Road Plan
- 5-Year Gravel Road Plan
- 5-Year Building Plan
- Reappraisal Fund
- Debt Service Chart
- Tax Stabilization Contracts
- Housing Loans
- Recreation Facility Maintenance Plan
- Employees’ Pay Department Splits

To create a 5-Year Plan, the Selectboard (who ultimately approve the plans) rely on staff expertise, and recognize that a great deal of time, effort, and research go into their preparation. Information within the plans is used by the Management to assist with the preparation of the proposed budget. Please be aware these plans impact many fund budgets. When preparing the Plan effort is made to keep the numbers somewhat consistent year-to-year. The other appendices are used as aides to assist the Manager with budgeting as well.

The Committee began their review with the *5-Year Equipment Purchase Plan* focusing on replacement schedules, inventory list, Computer Replacement component, and financing of larger/more costly items.

While reviewing the *5-Year Paved Road Plan* Manager Rogers noted pertinent pages at the end of the plan, priority road score process, historic pricing chart, and explained how the grouping of roadwork can make a contract more appealing to bidders.

The *5-Year Gravel Road Plan* is more of a work Plan. There is always maintenance to be done and some roads (the trouble ones or those that are pieces between paved sections) are prepped for paving. The condition of each is evaluated by the Staff.

**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING OF January 26, 2021 continued:**

**PUBLIC COMMENT - None**

**APPENDIX REVIEW CONTINUED**

The Town has many buildings which require routine maintenance, repairs, and replacements over time. The *5-Year Building Plan* keeps us on track to do the repairs. Any Fund that owns buildings, as part of their budget, pay into the Building Plan. The “pay in” depends on the number and type of buildings.

Prior to approving the Plan this year, the Selectboard recognized there are items which are not being done timely and it appears as if projects/repairs are getting behind. The practice has been to keep this budget level funded to avoid spikes. However, the Selectboard has opted to increase the allocation for the next few years to increase the dollars to do needed repairs/maintenance.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 2, 2021, 6:00 p.m. Work will begin with the final review of Appendices, then on to the Cemetery Fund, Water Fund, and Sewer Fund. Water and Sewer Fund budgets will be delivered this Friday.

**ADJOURN**

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

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*Town Clerk-Treasurer – Donna J. Kelty*

***Barre Town Budget Committee***