

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

1. Call to order.....6:00 p.m.
2. Consider approving agenda.
3. Consider approving January 26, 2021 minutes.
4. Acknowledge guests, if any.
5. Questions about material received and reviewed to date.
6. Discuss meeting plan and dates for possible extra meetings.
7. Continue review of Appendices and Budgets: Appendices E thru I, Building Fund, Cemetery Fund, Sewer Fund, Sewer Capital Improvement, and Water Fund Budgets.
8. Public comment: receive guests, if any 7:50 p.m.
9. Adjourn 7:55 p.m.

Minutes for February 2, 2021

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

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

Also attending (in the Selectboard meeting room): Town Manager Carl Rogers, and Asst. Town Manager Elaine Wang. Other attending remotely were: Town Clerk-Treasurer Donna J. Kelty, Town Engineer Josh Martineau, and DPW Superintendent Richard Tetreault.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Norma Malone called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

APPROVE AGENDA

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

APPROVE MINUTES

On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Paul White, the Budget Committee voted to approve the January 26, 2021 meeting minutes with minor spelling and grammatical changes. Jim West was not present for the vote.

QUESTIONS ON MATERIAL RECEIVED TO DATE

Manager Rogers stated members had contacted him with questions and he has responded. There were no additional questions at this time.

SCHEDULE EXTRA MEETING DATES

A tentative (Suggested) meeting schedule was provided to the Committee. It has been recommended that March 9th, 16th, and 23rd be considered for double sessions. As things progress additional meeting dates can be added.

The Manager asked that if members are unable to attend a meeting(s) to please let him know as soon as possible. Jim West will not be attending the February 9, 2021 meeting.

CONTINUATION OF BUDGET REVIEW

Budget Review began in the Appendices Section.

E - Reappraisal. High points include some of the funds being in a higher yield Certificate of Deposit, the State provides funds annually specifically designated for Reappraisal (that is why they are in a separate cash account), the interest earned cannot be spent on anything other than reappraisal, and once the current fiscal year town-wide reappraisal is complete there should be enough funds to do the next one.

F – Debt Service Chart. This is a listing of the Town’s debt service to include the financing and when each debt will be retired.

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING OF February 2, 2021 continued:

G – Tax Stabilization. The Town has a Policy governing Tax Stabilization. Currently, one company, New England Excess Exchange’s (NEEE) contract will expire at the end of Fiscal Year 2022-2023.

H – Housing Loans. The Town has had several Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for housing rehabilitation/weatherization. Proceeds from the repayment of loans is reused for new loans. In lieu of making monthly payments, some property owners have opted for a deferral – no payments and the loan will be paid off at the time of sale or refinance. Currently Down Street Housing & Community Development are managing our existing loans. There are still funds available for lending and the Town does remind residents frequently.

I – Recreation Maintenance. The Plan is basically a work list of items to do. Items have been placed into sections (Painting & Staining, Court Surfaces, Fences – included backstops, and Landscaping Maintenance).

Manager Rogers noted the Recreation Budget being proposed will ask for \$86,000 to meet ALL the fencing needs. It was noted the bridge on the Bike Path, the large culvert under the East Barre Bike Path, and treatment for the bike path pavement was not in the Plan.

UNDERSTANDING THE CHART OF ACCOUNTS

The general ledger chart of account numbers for the Town is represented in a twelve digit numeric format, “XXX-XXX-XXX-000.” The first set of three numbers (XXX-xxx-xxx-000) represent the fund type. The second set of three numbers (xxx-XXX-xxx-000) represent the department/revenue and the last three numbers (xxx-xxx-XXX-000), represent the line item/object. The Chart of Accounts is in the front of the budget book. *These numbers are consistent throughout the various funds and departments.*

Fund Types are:

011	= General	400	= Equipment
012	= Highway	500	= Sewer
050	= Building Fund	600	= Water
200	= Cemetery	700	= Ambulance/EMS

Department/Revenue. Departments, always begin with a 4, and include Police, Fire, Town Manager’s Office, Assessor’s Office, Town Clerk’s Office, etc. Revenues always begin with a 3.

Line item/objects are types of revenues (property taxes, dog licenses, water receipts) or expenses (wages, supplies, insurance, purchases, etc.).

BUDGET SECTION SETUP

The Fund Budget sections are all set up in the same manner. Part 1 is a “Summary.” This will give a broad snapshot of the current fiscal year budget and the proposed budget, state the budget percentage increase, and provide the past four years budget amount and percentage change from prior year.

Part 2 will be green and list the Highlights. This includes what has been added, what has not (but was requested), and any significant line item changes greater than \$1,000.

Part 3 is yellow and will be the revenues and Part 4 is white and they contain the expenses.

BUILDING FUND

The Building Fund is similar to a Capitol Improvement Fund. All Department/Funds which own buildings pay into the Building Fund. The Building Fund organizes all the major projects.

This year the Selectboard recognized the funding provided annually was not meeting our repair and maintenance needs. The result is an increased annual appropriation of 3% over the next few years to provide the additional monies needed.

The proposed budget increased 2.86% (\$1,735). The only revenue source is from the other Funds which own buildings. Expenses are in accordance with Year 1 noted in the 5-Year Building Plan (see Appendix D in the Budget Book). There was brief discussion on the capitalization and impact to some line items on the worksheet.

CEMETERY FUND

The Town owns three cemeteries, two are active (Wilson and Maplewood) and one is inactive (West Hill – located on Perry Road, just off Miller Road). The laborers includes a Sexton (works ½ time Cemetery, ½ time Recreation), two labors and 1 summer helper. The summer helper works mid-May to August and wages are split with Cemetery – ¼ time and Recreation – ¾ time). The Cemetery Commission sets the rules and regulations.

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING OF February 2, 2021 continued:

This is a small budget compared to most departments which means the budget can fluctuate year to year based on the project work. This year there is a 4.71% decrease as the surveying for lots (\$2,000) and tree removal (\$5,600) were one-time expenses in the current fiscal year. The proposed budget is a balanced budget meaning no fund balance is used.

It was noted the Town has switched accounting software. However, the budget module reports were not ready so this year, once again we are using the old software. Unfortunately, it has resulted in the FY 19-20 expenses not having a total.

Revenues come primarily from the sale of lots and columbarium niches, and some services (opening graves, burials, foundations, etc.). When lots are sold a portion goes to perpetual care. The Town cannot spend down these funds but does invest the money. The interest income from the investment can be used for Cemetery operations. Currently the investment interest accounts for approximately \$12,700 of the Funds revenue. There is also a separate ballot question asking residents to contribute to the Cemetery Fund. This year that request is being decreased \$40.00.

Expenses – The Manager reviewed the various departments noting Salary (split of wages), contracted services, and the expensing of donation monies (current year used for replacement of old headstones). Flags For Veterans, normally has a funding request for the purchase of flags to place on veteran graves. This year the volunteer group opted not to make a request. However, the Manager, added in \$200 as a show of appreciation for their work. Electricity (due to our solar farm) was reviewed as was the various insurances (noting discounts and experience modifications). Our insurance is through the VLCT – PACIF program (self-funded insurance pool). This includes general liability, Workman’s Comp, and unemployment.

SEWER FUND

Town Engineer Josh Martineau and DPW Supervisor Richard Tetreault joined the meeting remotely to answer questions.

Not all Barre Town households are connected to the municipal sewer. Our sewage is treated through the Barre City Plant. Many years ago, the Town borrowed to upgrade the facility which provided additional capacity for the Town. Once again upgrades are needed to the Sewer Plant which means costs are passed on to users. Work is being done and there is more on the horizon.

Overall the proposed Sewer Fund budget is increasing 6.79% (\$68,405.00). The biggest increase is due to the Treatment costs. These costs are based on treating 30% wastewater and 70% solids (BOD).

Highlights – All items requested by the Department Head were included. New this year is a repair to the rails for raising and lowering the pump at the Orchard Terrace station and 2-way radio ear muffs for the crew using the vactor truck. As noted earlier the Town is switching software vendors. At the time of preparation, the cost for the billing system was unknown and a guesstimate of \$1225.00 inserted.

The Town has several monitoring stations to determine sewage flow. Some businesses known for their high BOD levels (HP Hood and Land O’Lakes) are checked regularly. A re-analysis of our billing practice and charges will be reviewed.

Revenues – The primary source of revenue is the disposal charge. The Manager noted his revenue is based on 3,085 units, which was increased based on the recent developments in Town. Barre Town also has Williamstown households connected to our sewer line. The Town of Williamstown is billed for 37 customers, each being charged 50% more. The current per unit fee is \$316.00, with the proposed budget calling for an increase of 4.43% or \$330.00 per unit.

Another source of revenue are the delinquent collections to include interest and penalties.

Expenses - Manager Rogers noted there are several Departments within the Sewer Fund: Administration, Collection, and Treatment. Line items to note are *Regular Wages* (adding the Finance Director position and removing the Town Clerk/Treasurer), and the *Bonus* for Management (removing Town Clerk/Treasurer and the Finance Director does not qualify).

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

The Sewer Fund review continued. With so many new employees Training (500-442-510) is needed this year. It was noted that due to COVID none has been done in the current year. The Health Insurance Advisory Service (500-442-693) was located in the “690” account in prior years. Hickok & Boardman provide assistance with insurance regulations and help the Town keep on top of things.

**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING OF February 2, 2021 continued:
NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 9, 2021, 6:00 p.m. at the Selectboard Meeting Room, Municipal Building in Lower Websterville. The review will continue with Sewer Fund Expenses, Page 8 of the budget worksheet.

Manager Rogers will once again distribute packages using the delivery system currently in place. 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 7:55 p.m. Jim West was not present for the vote.

Minutes as taken by:

Town Clerk-Treasurer – Donna J. Kelty