

BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING AGENDA

December 22, 2020

PILOT: None

1. Call to order 6:30 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Consider approving agenda.
4. Consider approving December 8, 2020 meeting minutes.
5. Announcements
6. Receive guests (by phone) for non-agenda items.
7. Public Hearing for and consider approval of proposed sale of 6 Maple Street, Tax Map 26 Lot 44.
8. Consider Sno-Bees Snowmobile Club's request to use Town property (3 road rights-of-way).
9. Presentation of two solar farm projects on Bridge Street and Allen Street.
10. Consider approving Assessor's 2020 Errors and Omissions list.
11. Consider approving 5-Year Plans: a) Equipment; b) Gravel Road Work; and c) Building.
12. Consider approving 3-year renewal of Emergency Dispatch Service Contract.
13. Consider accepting lease-finance proposal for an ambulance and emergency shelter generator.
14. Consider approving ambulance patient billing rates for 2021.
15. COVID-19 Report
16. Consider approving weekly Accounts Payable Warrants for December 15 and 22, 2020.
17. Miscellaneous: including licenses or permits if any.
18. 'Round the table.
19. Executive session: personnel.
20. Adjourn.

BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MINUTES

December 22, 2020

The duly warned meeting of December 22, 2020 was held at the Barre Town Municipal Building, Selectboard Room, in Lower Websterville at 6:30 p.m.

The following members were in attendance: Norma Malone (via Teams), Justin Bolduc (via Teams), Paul White, W. John "Jack" Mitchell, and Bob Nelson (via Teams).

Attendance for the regular meeting: Town Manager Carl Rogers, Assistant Manager Elaine Wang, Town Clerk-Treasurer Donna J. Kely (via Teams), Zoning Administrator Chris Violette (via Teams), Matt Marsh (via Teams) for the Sno-Bees Snowmobile Club, Alex Bravakis (via Teams) for Novus Energy Development, Regan Howard (via Teams), and Val Vallerand (via Teams).

CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVE THE AGENDA

On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the meeting agenda as amended:

- 1) *Add item 17A – approval of the reappointment of the Barre Town Fire Chief; and*
- 2) *Add item 17B – information on the EMS Workforce Stabilization Grant.*

MINUTES

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes of December 8, 2020 with minor spelling and grammatical corrections.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ✓ Registered Barre Town voters are invited to apply to serve on the Barre Town Budget Committee. This Committee works between the last Tuesday of January through the last Tuesday of March. If interested, please send your letter or email of interest by 4:30 p.m. Thursday, December 31st, to the

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town Manager's Office. More information about the responsibilities of the Budget Committee is in the November Barre Town newsletter and at www.barretown.org.

- ✓ Barre Town's elected Town Clerk is retiring at the end of her current term in May 2021. If you are interested in working in a rewarding, challenging, and important position, consider running for Town Clerk. More information about the position is in the November Barre Town newsletter, or you may call the current Town Clerk, Donna Kelty, at 802-479-9391.
- ✓ Winter sand is available for Barre Town residents outside of the Public Works fence. This service is only offered to residents. Please follow instructions posted at the sand pile.
- ✓ When clearing snow from your property remember that no snow is to be pushed across or into a Town road, highway, or public sidewalk. Doing so could result in fines of \$60 to \$20 per offense.
- ✓ Barre Town's Department of Public Works collects Christmas trees after the holidays to be chipped into mulch at the Town's Lawn Waste Site. For more information see your November newsletter or visit www.barretown.org.
- ✓ Did you know that nationally the Holiday Season is the biggest time for fires? Please be fire safe this year:
 - Place Christmas trees and other holiday decorations at least three feet away from heat sources like fireplaces, candles, portable heaters, or radiators.
 - If you are using a real tree, give it plenty of water to keep it from drying out.
 - Make sure holiday lights are in good condition. Never use anything with a frayed electrical cord.
 - Place any lit candles and menorahs on aluminum foil, or sturdy surfaces, out of reach from pets and small children, away from curtains, plants, and decorations.
- ✓ The December 29, 2020 Selectboard meeting has been canceled. The Selectboard will next meet on Tuesday, January 5, 2021.
- ✓ On behalf of all Town of Barre staff, we would like to wish all of you a healthy and safe holiday season. All Town Offices will be closed on December 25th and January 1st. The Town Clerk, Planning & Zoning, and Assessor's offices will also be closed on December 24th and 31st. The Town Manager's Office will be closed after Noon on December 24th and 31st.

GUESTS - None

PUBLIC HEARING – SALE OF 6 MAPLE STREET

Background: Town Charter, Section 41, requires voter approval of the sale of Town owned property. At Town Meeting voters were asked, and they did approve, an article authorizing the Selectboard to sell property after the required Public Hearing. The Selectboard has agreed to sell 6 Maple Street (acquired through tax sale) to Hebert Excavation Corp. This Public Hearing is meet the legal requirement for sale.

On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to open a Public Hearing at 6:40 p.m. to receive comment on the sale of 6 Maple Street, Tax Map 026 Lot 044-00.

There were no comments.

On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted unanimously to close the Public Hearing at 6:41 p.m.

On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the sale of 6 Maple Street, Tax Map 026, Lot 044-00, to Hebert Excavation Corp.

Chair White noted the sale price is \$15,058.00 and the closing is scheduled to take place on December 23, 2020.

SNO-BEES SNOWMOBILE CLUB REQUEST TO USE TOWN PROPERTY

Background: The Sno-Bees Snowmobile Club is responsible for trails north of Route 302. None of their trails cross Town owned lots. However, they are requesting to ride along three Town roads (in the road right-of-way). This request is the same as it has been (and approved) for many years. The three roads are Belding Road (approximately 500 feet), Phelps Road, and Curtis Road (approximately 150 feet).

Matt Marsh was present (via Teams) and confirmed the Club will properly sign each road.

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On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the Sno-Bees Snowmobile Club's Landowners Permission Form and to authorize snowmobile travel on the specified sections of Town roadways pursuant to Title 23 VSA Section 3206 (b(4)), for the December 15, 2020 through April 15, 2021 season.

BRIDGE AND ALLEN STREET SOLAR FARM PROJECTS PRESENTATION

Background: The Paquet Farm (off Morrison Road) is working on a solar farm endeavor under the business name of Merry Meadows LLC. As owners of the land, they will receive the benefits of the project. Novus Energy Development is working with the owners. They are also the entity that was the developer for the Town's solar farm. Tonight is to provide information to the Town.

The proposed sites are on Allen Street between HP Hood and the Church, and off Bridge Street near the tree line by the Stevens Branch. It was noted that Board members did do a site visit to review various project aspects, such as visibility from other areas of Town, possible need for aesthetics, etc.

Alex Bravakis (Novus Energy) informed the Board the goal would be for the Town (Planning Commission and Selectboard) agreeing to a "preferred site designation" for projects which will make permitting much easier. However, if the Town is against the project sites, it could mean finding a new location or downsizing the project(s).

Discussion focused on:

- Locations are less than ideal for farming.
- This is a revenue source for the Farm for at least 20 years and does not tie up the land forever.
- The Town does have some a say. The Planning Commission has already received the presentation.
- The proposed solar farmland would come out of the Current Use program. This means the land will be taxed as raw land by the Town. The solar array is taxed separately in accordance with State guidelines.
- There is a decommission plan.
- Novus is responsible for the property maintenance (fencing, bush hogging, etc.).
- There have been no calls from neighbors regarding the proposed project.
- Zoning Administrator Violette noted the application is in the initial 45-day notice period. This is a good time to address any major concerns with the project. He also noted the new Town Energy Plan and State Statute regarding solar siting.
- Should the site(s) be granted the preferred site designation Novus would like a letter by February 1, 2021 as that is when the application is planned to be filed.
- The Selectboard meets on January 26th and will resume this discussion.

2020 ERRORS AND OMISSION LIST

Background: Annually the Assessor will provide a list of properties whose property (including personal) valuation needs to be corrected after the lodging of the Grand List for the fiscal year. The deadline to correct these valuations is December 31st but they must be approved by the legislative body. A list was provided to the Board for review prior to the meeting.

Manager Rogers noted there was one addition to the Assessor's list. A new one had been emailed earlier this evening. The new list also provided some additional information. Board member Malone noted the net results of the changes would be a Grand List increase of \$9,823.00.

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the amended Errors and Omission List, dated December 22, 2020, as presented by the Town Manager.

5-YEAR PLANS FOR UPCOMING BUDGET CYCLE

Background: Annually the Town prepares several 5-Year Plans to assist with the preparation of budgeting and to ensure we maintain/replace what we have, when we need to. The Plans being presented tonight include the Equipment Plan, Gravel Road Plan, and Building Plan.

The Manager reviewed the changes made in each of the Plans. While there was brief discussion regarding IT items in the Equipment Plan, the major focus was on the Building Plan. Some of those topics included increases, the fluctuation with major needs, and why the Board is just hearing of some of those needs.

Norma Malone noted the Auditors keep telling us the Building Fund is not a valid internal service fund – we should be managing our capital projects. She does understand the need for numbers when developing a budget but is not happy with the "piece meal" projects and maintenance being deferred. It

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was noted the Building Fund Policy does list the various building components and when they are to be replaced. The inventory list is to be placed on the share drive for Board members to review.

Action on the 5-Year Plans was tabled to the January 5, 2021 meeting.

EMERGENCY DISPATCH CONTRACT

Background: Barre Town’s emergency dispatch services are provided by Lamoille County Sheriff’s Department. The current contract is set to expire on June 30, 2021. Our Department Heads (Police, Fire, EMS) have no concerns with the contract but have one request. They would like Dispatch to use the GPS tracker program if the Town installs it in our police cars and/or ambulances. Sheriff Roger Marcoux said he would. Providing that service is included in the proposed pricing. The new 3-year contract call for increases of 2% year 1, 2% year 2, and 3% year 3.

It was noted there is no termination provision in the contract, there is little supporting information (such as how many calls per year), Lamoille is also our PSAP (911) point, which is to our advantage, there are few dispatch providers available so doing a new RFP at this time may not be logical or worth the effort, and the service is far above what we received with our prior vendor.

On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the Agreement for Emergency Dispatch Services with Lamoille County Sherriff’s Department, Hyde Park, Vermont for the period July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2024 which was included with the Memo dated December 8, 2020 and to note the body paragraphs should reflect the entity as Barre Town not just Barre.

LEASE FINANCE FOR AMBULANCE AND GENERATOR

Background: As budgeted for Fiscal Year 2020 – 2021, the Town is to finance one ambulance (delivered in early January) and for the emergency generator. The Town recently used Municipal Leasing Consultants (MLC) for financing the fire truck and police equipment. The Manager, thinking MLC could tack these financing onto that paperwork, he only asked MLC for an interest rate(s) proposal which was very good. He also noted the financing of the ambulance and generator would be placed at a different bank than the fire/police financing.

The 3-year (in advance) ambulance payment is less than budgeted due to the ambulance cost and the interest rate is 2.49%. A generator payment was not calculated. However, the 5-year (in arrears) rate is 2.57%.

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted to accept the Municipal Leasing Consultants, December 9, 2020, financing proposal for one ambulance and one emergency shelter generator.

EMS BILLING RATES FOR 2021

Background: The Selectboard was provided EMS Billing rates list to be effective January 1, 2021. The list also provided prior year history and a couple of new fees (add-on to paramedic intercept fee and mutual aid fee).

The add-on to the Paramedic intercept fee when our paramedic stays with the other service and they transport the patient directly to Dartmouth or UVM. In those cases, the other service gets paid more due to more mileage while Barre Town’s service cost goes up because the medic is out of service for a longer period. The proposed range of the add-on is \$100 - \$250. The charge would be based on the varying factors such as distance/mileage, time out of service, etc.

There was also a proposed fee for Mutual Aid. While the Manager understands what the Director wants to accomplish, if we bill, then it is no longer mutual aid. There may be better ways to deal with the “overuse” of Mutual Aid calls.

Board conversation was centered on the Paramedic add-on and Mutual Aid charges. Malone noted in the EMS Director’s report the Town turned over 41 calls – who responded to those? The Board agreed it needed more time to review the Add-on and Mutual Aid fees. The regular ambulance rates should be approved for the January 1st implementation. However, the two new fees do not need immediate approval.

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the Town of Barre EMS Rate Schedule effective January 1, 2021, with the exclusion of the “Additional PI fee” and the “Mutual Aid fee.”

COVID-19 REPORT

The Town Manager provided the Selectboard with the following updates:

- Staffing is good – no changes.

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- The Municipal Building has moved the doorbell system to the side Annex for the winter. The lobby is larger to accommodate people not having to stand outside. A small service table will be provided and a workstation for accessing information has been setup. This will eliminate the up/down of the steps. Protocols have been put in place to man the side Annex entrance while staff are teleworking and to cover lunch hours.
- Supplies are good.
- The Town Engineer confirmed the mutual aid agreement with East Montpelier is in place.
- Five residents have applied for the VCAAP assistance program. The Clerk informed the Board more funds were made available and additional applications could be forthcoming. At this time, we are unaware of awards being made.
- The November tax installment went very well. It is less than our ballpark range. The Manager also noted the total outstanding delinquent balance is much less than the past two fiscal years (same time). People are paying their taxes much better.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE WARRANT

On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted to approve the accounts payable warrants dated December 15 and 22, 2020. Bob Nelson abstained.

MISCELLANEOUS

On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the Manager's appointment of Christopher Violette as the Barre Town Fire Chief for a three-year term to begin January 1, 2021.

The Manager informed the Board there are more monies available for EMS Hazard pay through a Workforce Stabilization Grant. These funds will be used for the per-diem staff (not included in the original round) in the amount of \$32,214.00. We currently have 17 per-diems who are eligible. However, 8 of them are on other rosters. Based on using the same \$2.54/hour rate as awarded in the past it appears the Town may give back around \$13,000.

Assistant Manager Wang informed the Board the LLGER hazard pay was paid to staff at the \$2.54/hour rate. Overall, there were few changes to our application.

'ROUND TABLE

Justin Bolduc inquired if the new truck specifications included the live edge plows blade and GPS salt tracking system. Manager Rogers stated these were included as optional items in the bid which is due January 19, 2021.

Initial comments are the DPW likes the new equipment. Rogers noted there has not been much snowfall to date to gather data and has not heard of anyone being displeased with the live edge plow blades. Furthermore, during the most recent snowfall, the road thermometer appeared to be very accurate and the accompanying chart was used to reduce the amount of road salt dispensed.

Justin Bolduc inquired on the process/calculation used to value solar farms. Manager Rogers noted the State created the formula that is to be used.

Bob Nelson and Board wished everyone a safe and happy holiday!

Paul White noted the email from VT Agency of Transportation and the highway mileage certificate being emailed to the Town not mailed via USPS. The address on file is the Town Clerk's. Discussion focused with the changing of staff perhaps the email address should be the Town's general mailbox.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted unanimously to find the need to go into executive session citing premature general public knowledge would clearly place the Selectboard at a substantial disadvantage.

On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to go into executive session at 9:17 p.m. for personnel.

On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to come out of executive session at 9:48 p.m.

ADJOURN

On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:48 p.m.

Selectboard Minutes of December 22, 2020 Continued:

Donna J. Kelty, Town Clerk-Treasurer

Selectboard Chair

Barre Town Selectboard