

## BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING AGENDA

April 21, 2020

1. Call to order 6:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Consider approving agenda.
4. Consider approving: April 14, 2020 Selectboard meeting minutes.
5. Announcements
6. Receive guests for non-agenda items.
7. Recognize volunteers.
8. Consider approving Warnings for Open Town Meeting and Annual Election.
9. Discuss participating in State's proposal for pooling local revolving loan funds.
10. Consider awarding contracts: a) roadside mowing; and b) trash & recyclables removal.
11. Report on Coronavirus-19 plans, impacts, and actions.
12. Consider approving weekly accounts payable warrants for April 21, 2020.
13. Miscellaneous - Second Class Liquor Licenses for: a) Great Energy Store; and others, if any.
14. 'Round the table.
15. Executive Session, if needed.
16. Adjourn.

### BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MINUTES

April 21, 2020

The duly warned meeting of April 21, 2020 was held at 6:00 p.m. in the Barre Town Municipal Building, Selectboard Room, in Lower Websterville.

The following members were in attendance: W. John "Jack" Mitchell in person and others by Zoom/telephone are: Bob Nelson, Norma Malone, Paul White, and Tom White (plus one).

Attendance in person for the regular meeting: Town Manager Carl Rogers, Assistant Town Manager Elaine Wang, Town Clerk-Treasurer Donna J. Kely, and by Zoom/Teleconference Times Argus Reporter Eric Blaisdell.

**CALL TO ORDER** – Vice Chair Paul White called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

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

#### APPROVE THE AGENDA

*On a motion by Tom White, seconded by Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the April 21, 2020 meeting agenda as amended:*

1. *Add item 13A – Discussion of acceptance of cash.*

#### MINUTE APPROVAL

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Jack Mitchell, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the April 14, 2020 Selectboard meeting minutes with the minor grammatical and spelling corrections presented.*

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- For a list of COVID-19 resources, and the latest information on changes to Barre Town operations, services, and events due to COVID-19, visit [www.barretown.org](http://www.barretown.org) and click on the first Announcement link. Note that no Notary services are being provided by the Town at this time (either through the Town Clerk or Police Department). Other Notaries may be providing services using remote Notary guidelines issued by the Vermont Secretary of State. A list is not available at this time, so you will need to call individual Notaries to find out whether they can help you.
- Are you planning to do some work on your property that will require a permit? No need to put off applying for that permit! The Planning and Zoning Office encourages you to apply now to avoid a rush-and-wait situation when we are through the Pandemic. Contact the Planning and Zoning Office at 802-479-2595.
- Individuals in Barre Town and Barre City have come together as Mutual Aid to match volunteers with people unable to grocery shop, needing help with medication pick-up, tutoring, or need other essential assistance. This effort is not organized by the Town or City. The group is being supported by the Washington County and Northern Orange Counties Regional Response Command Center (WNOCC-RRCC). The WNOCC-RRCC is a coordinated effort of experienced community service organizations, including Capstone Community Action, Downstreet Housing & Community Development, and the Vermont Department of Health. WNOCC-RRCC will take requests for assistance but asks that if a request for help is just for your household, that you contact Barre Mutual Aid directly. To request help from Barre Mutual Aid, visit the website ([barremutualaid.recovers.org](http://barremutualaid.recovers.org)).

Selectboard Minutes of April 21, 2020 Continued:

If you do not have internet call 802-505-9110. Board member Paul White noted this group is not part of a Municipal function. It is comprised of State Agencies and Not for Profit Organizations. Barre Mutual Aid is a volunteer group which is helping their neighbors. For assistance you can call 211 or obtain contact information from our website.

**GUESTS - None**

**RECOGNIZE VOLUNTEERS**

Background: Due to COVID-19 our tradition of inviting and recognizing volunteers who have provided service to the Town has been changed. Tonight names will be read for the viewing/public audience, noting those who have reached milestones of 5, 10, 20, 25, and 35 years of volunteerism during the 2019-2020 year.

Paul White noted the following individuals who have reached milestones:

<b>Volunteer Name</b>	<b>Committee or Board</b>	<b>Number of service years</b>
Alan Garceau	Cemetery Commission	25 years
Charles Thygesen	Planning Commission	35 years
David Oles	Housing Advisory Committee	20 years
Dan Kelty	Housing Loan Development	10 years
Alan Garceau	Bulk Trash	10 years
Topper McFaun	Bulk Trash	10 years
Bob Benoit	Cemetery Commission	5 years
Terry Smith	Recreation Board	5 years
Debra Pierce	Planning Commission	5 years
Jay Perkins	Bulk Trash	5 years
Merle Miller	Bulk Trash	5 years
Dwight Harrington	Bulk Trash	5 years

The Board thanked all the volunteers who have donated many hours of time and contributions making Barre Town a great place to live and work. A full ad is in today's Time Argus newspaper listing all volunteers.

**APPROVE WARNING FOR OPEN TOWN MEETING & ANNUAL ELECTION**

Background: As of last Friday, the Secretary of State's Office/Governor's Office had not reached a decision on how best to conduct a vote by mail. The Secretary of State's Office, in conversation with the Town Clerk, did state there was an issue with "no physical polling place" and that a "teleconference" election would not pass muster. Therefore, it was recommended the Town's Open Meeting and Annual Election ballot questions be provided.

In the Selectboard packet are three warnings, two with the standard notice for Open Town Meeting and the Annual Election of Officers and Voting by Australian ballot, and third for a combined, vote by mail, election (which includes drive-thru polling). The reason for the different Warnings is just in case the Secretary of State and Governor's Office cannot come to a consensus on vote by mail procedures by this Warning deadline period.

The Town Clerk informed the Board a "vote by mail" procedure agreement had not been reached yet. However, the Secretary of State's office (SOS) had stated they felt good it would be approved by the end of the week. Therefore, upon their recommendation the Clerk is asking the Selectboard to conditionally approve the Election Warning for vote by mail. The conditions would be 1) the Governor's office and SOS reach an agreement on the procedures for vote by mail; and 2) In the event the agreement is not reached, the Warning would become null and void and would be replaced with the standard Election Warning.

The vote by mail process includes providing a drive-thru polling place. Tabulation of ballots would take place at the Municipal Building, Selectboard meeting room. Logistics for setup of the drive-thru station have not been finalized but it will be similar to Bulk Trash. It is noted that drive-thru voting will require voters will remain in their vehicles at all times. Drive-thru voting will facilitate same day voter registration, those with disabilities that need assistance, and those who prefer "going to the polls."

Discussion focused on whether to mail ballots to all active voters or mail postcards to voters and let them request ballots. Concerns for mailing ballots to all voters include cost, potential for fraudulent behavior, national trend to challenge vote by mail elections, and the institution of going to the polls to vote. Reference was made to prior years low voter turnout, the impact to staff time for both processes, the immediate need to have budgets and due dates for the next fiscal year, and public/staff/BCA safety.

*On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Tom White, the Selectboard voted unanimously to "conditionally" approve the June 2, 2020 Warning for the Barre Town Traditional Open Meeting and*

Selectboard Minutes of April 21, 2020 Continued:

*Annual Election of Officers & Voting By Australian Ballot to be conducted as a vote by mail election; said conditions are:*

- 1. The effective term date for elected officers be changed to June 3, 2020; and*
- 2. Should the Vermont Governor's Office and the Vermont Secretary of State's Office not approve the vote by mail election procedures, this conditionally approved Warning will be deemed null and void; and*
- 3. In lieu of the null and void Warning, the Selectboard hereby approves a Warning for the Barre Town Opening Meeting and Annual Election of Officers & Voting By Australian Ballot to be held in the traditional polling place method on June 2, 2020.*

The Selectboard further discussed which method of vote by mail they would prefer: mail ballots to all or mail postcards and have voters request a ballot. Both methods include a drive-thru voting. The Town Clerk was asked if she thought the Selectboard was overstepping their authority in deciding which method to use. The answer is no. The Selectboard is calling for the election. The Clerk is there to conduct the method.

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard authorizes the mailing of postcards to all active voters for the June 2, 2020 Barre Town Opening Meeting and Annual Election of Officers & Voting By Australian Ballot.*

### **DISCUSS PARTICIPATING IN STATE POOLING OF LOCAL REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS**

**Background:** Zoning Administrator Chris Violette attended a video conference with the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) on Thursday, April 16, 2020. The subject was to create an emergency loan fund for businesses impacted by the COVID-19 shutdown. In an email to the Manager the Zoning Administrator stated ACCD is interested in "pooling" municipal revolving loan funds. This would be voluntary. Business applications would be regional, some "strings" would be loosened that are attached to closeout agreements, a common application would be used state-wide with central underwriting. The loans could be considered grants, they are unsecured, and a Memorandum of Understanding still needs to be written. The ACCD would like the program up and running in six weeks.

The Manager noted Barre Town has \$92,000 in our Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). BAD Director, Joel Schwartz suggested the Selectboard not give up the Barre RLF to the state-wide pool. Instead, he is suggesting the rules be loosened to allow more loans, maybe at a lower interest rate and the Town could make their own recovery loans.

Discussion focused on the state timeline versus what the Town may be able to do at local level, not having to provide all the RLF funds to the State, there is no MOU in place, concern for administrative costs to operate at state level, and many unclear/undefined items in the draft procedures. Our local reporting requirements to the State for these funds are said to be impacted; we must know before a commitment can be made. The BAD Director has not provided his written thoughts/plan if the Town were to administer something locally.

Board consensus is the Manager will contact BAD and ask for the plan to use funds to assist at the local level, he will check with the State to see if it is acceptable for the Town to administer its own plan using RLF funds and if there is an MOU for the state proposed plan.

### **AWARD CONTRACTS**

**Roadside Mowing:** The bid specifications were sent to five possible bidders. One bid was received from Donnel Dexter of Williamstown for \$7,600 per year (2 year contract). His hourly rate for extra mowing is \$75.00/hour. Mr. Dexter has mowed for the Town for several years. His prior rate was \$7,400 per year.

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Tom White, the Selectboard voted unanimously to award the 2-year roadside mowing contract to Donnel Dexter at his bid price of \$7,600.00 per year and \$75.00 per hour for extra mowing.*

**Trash and Recyclables:** Bid specifications were mailed to 2 bidders. Myers Waste offers the low bid for all rates in the specification. This is a one-year contract and is comparable to the current year.

*On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted unanimously to award a one-year trash and recyclables removal contract, effective May 1, 2020, to Myers Waste and Recycle based on their per pick up bid amounts.*

### **CORNAVIRUS SITUATION REPORT**

Manager Rogers provided the Board with the following information:

- Last Friday's addendum to the Governor's Executive Order has allowed the Recreation/Cemetery crews to begin work. The addendum also allows the reappraisal work for the Town to continue.
- Administration telework continues. Rogers noted the phones are busier and we have noted more walk-up traffic to the Municipal Building.

Selectboard Minutes of April 21, 2020 Continued:

- Municipal-wide supplies are good.
- Events – Rockfire, usually held in June has been canceled. The Police, Public Works, and EMS report there have been no issues with people congregating in large groups. On a positive note, be sure to watch the Channel 5 news as there is a story on the newest Police Department member, our K-9, Lakota.
- In other news Barre Town EMS has been asked to help the State with COVID-19 testing. The Town will be compensated for working at a site. Good news is the EMS has received the COVID-19 stimulus money from Health and Human Services in the amount of \$55,900 which is more than the \$35,000 - \$40,000 estimate.
- Cemetery Commission will meet tomorrow night using teleconferencing. The agenda will facilitate changing work rules for employees, conducting public business, and working with the funeral directors. It is noted Committees are using Zoom and teleconferencing for their meetings.
- Expenses for COVID-19 at this time are minimal

### **ACCOUNTS PAYABLE WARRANTS**

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Jack Mitchell, the Selectboard voted to approve the accounts payable warrant dated April 21, 2020. Bob Nelson abstained due to a conflict.*

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Tom White, the Selectboard, acting in the capacity of the Local Board of Liquor Control Commissioners unanimously approved a 2020 Second Class Liquor License for the Great Energy Store.*

Amending the unwritten Policy for cash acceptance during the May 15, 2020 tax collection: By Town Charter the May 15, 2020 property tax due date is set by the voters. Unfortunately, the State of Vermont COVID-19 emergency legislation did not include a provision to allow the Selectboard to change the tax due date. Therefore, the fourth installment of property tax will be due on May 15, 2020.

Research states the COVID-19 virus can live on paper, including cash, for a few minutes up to 48 +/- hours. Customarily, the Town receives \$10,000 - \$25,000 in cash each day during the days before and after the due date. The Town Clerk-Treasurer is asking the Selectboard to “bless” an action for the Town to temporarily NOT accept cash payments through May 20, 2020. The concern is for the transmission of any virus between staff, residents, and others who have contact with them. Notices, ads, etc. would be posted to notify taxpayers. Many banks/credit unions have stated if you are a customer, they would not charge a fee for obtaining a bank check/money order to pay property taxes. The Newsletter will be updated to reflect this change.

The Town offers many other ways to pay. Individuals can be use credit card/e-check (there is a transaction fee) or through Direct Debit ACH collection (no fee). For those not familiar with ACH collection visit the Town website.

*Therefore, by consensus, the Barre Town Selectboard agrees the Barre Town Clerk-Treasurer will not accept cash payments through May 20, 2020 citing COVID-19 and concern for public safety.*

### **‘ROUND THE TABLE**

Norma Malone put in a plug for the use of Direct Debit ACH payments. It is noted a notice will be placed on Front Porch Forum.

Tom White thanked Paul for running the meeting as he attended to his “plus one” needs.

Jack Mitchell noted the Town is doing good with the recycle program. He received his agenda packet in an envelope that was used back in October 2019.

Jack Mitchell inquired if the Video Budget Presentation would be happening. Manager Rogers said yes and they will be using Zoom and CVTV to facilitate the production of the video.

With no Open Town Meeting Mitchell inquired on the procedure to award the Wendell Pelkey Citizenship Award. Manager Rogers stated the winner could be picked at any time. Although it would be nice to wait until the recipient could attend the meeting in person.

Paul White inquired if the AccuFund payroll program is up and running. Assistant Manager Wang informed the Board many Departments are using it on a trial basis but we are not ready to go live.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION - None**

**ADJOURN**

Selectboard Minutes of April 21, 2020 Continued:

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:58 p.m.*

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Donna J. Kelty, Town Clerk-Treasurer

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Selectboard Chair

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Barre Town Selectboard