

## BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING AGENDA

December 8, 2020

- PILOT: A. Interview applicant for CVFiber Board alternate position 6:00 p.m.  
B. Presentation of Vermont Land Trust agricultural land conservation programs 6:15 p.m.
1. Call to order 6:30 p.m.
  2. Pledge of Allegiance
  3. Consider approving agenda.
  4. Consider approving November 24, 2020 meeting minutes.
  5. Announcements
  6. Receive guests (by phone) for non-agenda items.
  7. Consider approving letter of support of Vermont Land Trust's conservation and clean water project on Bridge Street.
  8. Consider appointing an alternate board member to CV Fiber.
  9. Discuss ambulance billing service.
  10. Discuss Town Clerk salary range.
  11. Discuss Town Treasurer job description.
  12. Consider canceling December 15, 2020 meeting.
  13. COVID-19 Report
  14. Consider approving weekly Accounts Payable Warrants for December 1 and 8, 2020.
  15. Miscellaneous: including licenses or permits if any.
  16. 'Round the table.
  17. Executive session: contracts.
  18. Adjourn.

### BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MINUTES

December 8, 2020

The duly warned meeting of December 8, 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), EMS Director Chris Lamonda (via Teams), Britt Haselton (VLT – via Teams), and Times Argus Reporter Eric Blaisdell.

**CALL TO ORDER** – The meeting was called to order at 6:37 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 presented.*

#### MINUTES

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the Selectboard meeting minutes of November 24, 2020 with minor spelling and grammatical corrections.*

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ✓ 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 \$60.00 to \$210.00 per offense.
- ✓ Vermonters suffering economic hardship due to loss of income from COVID-19 can get help now to pay their past due utility accounts for their home or business through the Vermont COVID-19 Arrearage Assistance Program (VCAAP). This applies to electric, landline telephone, Town water or sewer, and Graniteville Fire District water accounts. For more information visit [www.publicservice.vermont.gov](http://www.publicservice.vermont.gov), or call Capstone community Action at 802-479-1053.

Selectboard Minutes of December 8, 2020 Continued:

- ✓ The Selectboard is seeking registered voters to serve on the Barre Town Budget Committee between the last Tuesday of January through the last Tuesday of March. The Budget Committee reviews the entire budget for Barre Town. Serving on this Committee gives you a say in all fiscal year 2021 – 2022 budgets and is a great way to learn about Town operations. If interest, please send your letter or email of interest by 4:30 p.m., Thursday, December 31<sup>st</sup>, to the Town Manager at 802-479-9331 or one of your Selectboard members. Their contact information is at [www.barretown.org](http://www.barretown.org).
- ✓ The Barre Town Clerk is retiring at the end of her current term in May 2021. Please consider running for Town Clerk! It is an important position in the Town, responsible for managing elections and voter registrations, maintaining all sorts of records important to the public, and producing utility and property tax bills, to name a few roles. The new Town Clerk would be joining an experienced team and have access to plenty of training and guidance documents from State and regional organizations. Retiring Town Clerk Donna Kelty will also make herself available. More information about the position is in the November Barre Town Newsletter.
- ✓ Everyone, please stay safe, keep to your household, and when you must go out, wear a mask and stay at least 6 feet from others you do not live with.
- ✓ Chair White noted the following actions were taken at the November 24, 2020 Selectboard meeting following Executive Session:
  - The Selectboard authorized the sale of 6 Maple Street to Hebert Excavation Corp upon receipt of the payment.
  - The Selectboard authorized the sale of 2012 6-wheel truck to Clark’s Truck Center for \$27,450.00.
  - The Selectboard authorized the Town staff to bid on a “short bus with handicap lift” through an online auction site, said bid not to exceed \$8,800 (with fees).
  - The Selectboard authorized the Town Manager to sign a land contract with Saad Development Corp, out of Alabama.

**GUESTS - None**

### **LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR VERMONT LAND TRUST**

Background: The Vermont Land Trust (VLT) is working on another agricultural land conversation project. This project has a preliminary step. It involves 34 acres in two parcels – one on Bridge Street and one on Allen Street. An aerial photo was provided to the Board. The preliminary step involves borrowing from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund to acquire the two parcels and completing riparian wetland restoration projects along a stream that runs through the Bridge Street property. When that work is done VLT secures conservation easement funding from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, then VLT sells the 34 acres to the owners of the Old Soul Farm.

To comply with the Clean Water State Revolving Fund requirements, VLT is seeking a letter of support of the clean water project.

Board members discussed maintenance of the water protection zone (by property owner), financing, and the process of imposing forever easements on future owners. It was also recognized that Gordon Booth was an avid farmer and always looking to protect agricultural lands and believed he would be in favor of this transaction.

*On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve a letter of support of the Vermont Land Trusts’ clean water project on an unnamed tributary of the Stevens Branch as it crosses a lot on Bridge Street so that said letter could be used in conjunction with Vermont Land Trust obtaining funding through the Vermont Clean Water State Revolving Fund.*

### **APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATE TO CVFIBER BOARD**

Background: Earlier during PILOT the Selectboard interviewed a candidate who had applied for the position to the CVFiber Board. The Selectboard will be discussion the possible appointment.

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to appoint Phil Cecchini as the Barre Town alternate to the CVFiber Board, said term to expire Town Meeting Day in March 2021.*

In his letter of interest Mr. Cecchini also stated he would like to serve on the Budget Committee again. He confirmed even with this appointment he still would like to serve on the Budget Committee.

**DISCUSS AMBULANCE BILLING SERVICE**

Background: The Selectboard is continuing their review of the ambulance billing services which the Town currently outsources to EMS Billing. The Selectboard was provided with copies of the proposals from EMS Billing and Medical Business Services (MBS), a comparison chart provided by staff, and a worksheet estimating the additional delinquent collections needed for a change in billing services.

Initial talk focused on staff time spent on various tasks, the lack of process for the delinquent collections, insurance billings and their respective (write-offs). Board members wondered if perhaps Medical Business Services would be willing to negotiate their proposed percentage of collection rate and there does need to be some clarification of the MBS 94% collection rate. EMS Director Chris Lamonda, attending via Teams, noted he can do some legwork and make inquiries to collect additional information.

There was brief discussion on the Towns recent full-time coverage of Williamstown. At this time, Lamonda stated it looks as though it was profitable. Once the billing is complete the Board will receive more detailed data.

**DISCUSS TOWN CLERK SALARY RANGE**

Background: With the recent Charter change, the Town Clerk and Treasurer positions will be split. The Town Clerk (full-time) will remain an elected position. As no staff are interested in the position, recruitment has begun. Most individuals inquiring would like to know what the salary is. The Selectboard asked to have this placed on the meeting agenda.

Manager Rogers provided the Board with a VLCT salary chart listing Town, population, and salary for the Town Clerk only position for the Board to review. It was noted that Clerk-Treasurer position (after 20+ years (plus 11 years as an Assistant) is \$66,707.00.

Conversation focused on the need to have a range, not a set amount, as this will provide flexibility to accommodate experiences. The salary will be determined during negotiation with the Selectboard. In accordance with the Personnel Policy, the Town Clerk will have some additional benefits.

Using the survey several proposals were noted – ranging from \$50,000 up to \$70,000.

*On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted to set the Town Clerk salary range to be \$55,000 to \$65,000, for the term beginning May 12, 2021, with the exact salary to be negotiated by the Selectboard. The motion passed with Jack Mitchell voting no.*

**DISCUSS TOWN TREASURER JOB DESCRIPTION**

Background: The discussion on the Town Clerk salary range was mentioned at the last meeting it prompted another review of the draft (appointed) Treasurer job description. After the last meeting revisions were made and draft 2 was provided to the Board prior to the meeting.

Board members raised several questions. In reading the duties there appears to be a lot of crossover duties between Finance and the Treasurer. Town Clerk-Treasurer Kelty noted that many tasks have numerous steps which involve dividing said steps, for internal control purposes. That division will need to be fine tuned between Finance Director and Treasurer.

Reviewing the Treasurer job description it was noted the Assistant Treasurer was included in many of the tasks. Discussion comments centered on what specific duties the Treasurer would do versus those of the Assistant. Work will continue on the job description.

**DISCUSS CANCELING DECEMBER 15, 2020 BOARD MEETING**

Background: The Manager informed the Selectboard there is nothing urgent for the December 15, 2020 meeting agenda.

During discussion, the following items were noted:

1. Should the meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> be canceled, the only remaining meeting for the year would be December 22<sup>nd</sup> and there are still things on the to do list.
2. EMS Billing rates need to be reviewed prior to January 1, 2020.
3. Norma Malone would like to see a report like one presented at the June 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting for the delinquent taxes.
4. Norma Malone would like to conclude the FY 18-19 and know the status of FY 19-20 audit.

*On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted to cancel the Selectboard meeting of December 15, 2020. The motion passed with Bob Nelson voting no.*

### **COVID-19 REPORT**

The Town Manager provided the Selectboard with the following updates:

- Staffing is good and working. Administrative offices are teleworking on a rotating schedule.
- Tax Collection for November 2020 still shows approximately \$82,634 left to collect for the quarter. When compared to 2019 it is higher. However, when you look at the overall outstanding balance for Delinquent Property Tax (\$404,000) this is much less than in 2019 (\$414,000), and 2018 (\$485,000). COVID does not appear to have had a negative impact on tax collection at this time.
- Supplies within Departments are pretty good. DPW is ordering more face masks.
- The Municipal Building is preparing for winter changes. The public will be greeted at the side Annex (meeting room entrance). The doorbell at the front will be relocated. Signage has been ordered to direct those that need “personal” service to use the Annex entrance.
- DPW formalization to provide coverage from/to other neighboring Towns is not necessary. Towns have agreed to help where they can (examples: abutting roads, changing routes, etc.).
- The Assistant Town Manager will be working on the LIGERS grant which is due this week.

### **ACCOUNTS PAYABLE WARRANT**

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the accounts payable warrants dated December 1 and 8, 2020. Bob Nelson abstained.*

During the motion discussion it was noted there were a couple of late payments for Delta Dental and Sun Life Insurance. Assistant Manager Wang noted the Delta Dental notice arrives giving the Town less than 15 days to process payment. As for Sun Life they had not billed in a couple of months due to billing errors which were being remedied.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

Assistant Manager Wang stated a resident had called regarding the Wilson Recycling Depot noting how clean it is and the staff is very professional and nice. With Casella Waste takeover the Board concurred how nice it is to hear positive comments.

### **‘ROUND TABLE**

Justin Bolduc stated after the last visit from the Assessor regarding reappraisal he thought mailers were going to be sent to property owners. Recently, his outside property was inspected, and he was very disappointed with the lack of interaction with the inspection staff.

Norma Malone stated she had received a complaint, 3<sup>rd</sup> hand, regarding light placement at the softball field. It was noted there is a streetlight the school had put up and there appears to be a shift in the placement. The Town will request GMP to look at this.

Norma Malone stated even though we are using Teams this week for the meeting, the audio quality is still subpar. It was noted the new telecom system has been ordered and we are awaiting delivery.

Jack Mitchell took a moment to honor former Barre Town Police Officers, Don Denko and Andy Marceau who have recently passed. Condolences go out to the family. This has been a tough week for the Police Department.

Paul White noted there was mail in the packet which was addressed to the Chair. However, his first look at the correspondence came through the meeting materials. In the future he would like to receive a copy of the correspondence in a timely manner.

### **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 Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted unanimously to go into executive session at 9:14 p.m. for personnel, contracts, and real estate.*

*On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to come out of executive session at 9:42 p.m.*

Selectboard Minutes of December 8, 2020 Continued:

**ADJOURN**

*On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:43 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