

## **BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING AGENDA**

**April 20, 2021**

P.I.L.O.T – Report on Reappraisal

6:00 p.m.

1. Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Consider approving agenda.
4. Consider approving April 13, 2021 Selectboard meeting minutes.
5. Announcements
6. Receive guests (by phone) for non-agenda items.
7. Discussion regarding Town Forest logging.
8. Consider adopting Resolution No. 4-21 acknowledging and extending appreciation to Barre Town's volunteers.
9. Discussion about cannabis.
10. Consider approving cover letter for 2021-2022 Budget Booklet.
11. COVID-19 report, if needed.
12. Consider approving weekly Accounts Payable Warrants for April 20, 2021.
13. Miscellaneous: a) Canadian Club Licenses and permits (3<sup>rd</sup> Class license to Sell Spiritous Liquors; Outside Consumption permit, and 1<sup>st</sup> Class license for Club to sell Malt and Vinous Beverages; b) 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Liquor License for GG Store, Inc.; and c) other permits and licenses, if any.
14. 'Round the table.
15. Executive session: real estate and personnel.
16. Adjourn.

6:30 p.m.

### **BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MINUTES**

**April 20, 2021**

The duly warned meeting of April 20, 2021 was held at the Barre Town Municipal Building, Selectboard Room, in Lower Websterville, Vermont at 6:30 p.m. and remotely using Teams.

The following member attended in person: W. John "Jack" Mitchell Those attending remotely include: Paul White, Norma Malone, Justin Bolduc, and Bob Nelson.

Attendance in person for the regular meeting: Town Manager Carl Rogers, Assistant Manager Elaine Wang. Those attending remotely or by phone: Town Clerk-Treasurer Donna J. Kelty, Jeff Smith (Town Forester), Times Argus Reporter Eric Blaisdell, Lori and Marc Bernier, Jeff Blow, Carol Hebert, Jaime Babin, Lee Larson, Stephen Mayr, Melissa Danilowicz, Maureen Hastings, Melyssa Ardelle, Lee Walther, David Rouleau, and identified on computer as "Spaulding."

**CALL TO ORDER** – The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m.

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

### **APPROVE THE AGENDA**

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the meeting agenda as presented.*

### **MINUTES**

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard Meeting minutes of April 13, 2021 were unanimously approved with minor grammatical and spelling changes as presented to the Clerk.*

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

To those of you in spring cleaning mode:

- ✓ The Barre Town Lawn Waste Site is now open Saturdays, 8:00 a.m. to Noon and Wednesdays 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. We are also looking for volunteers to cover a couple hours another weekday. If you are interested please call the Manager's Office at 802-479-9331.
- ✓ The Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District's Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event in Barre Town will be held on April 24, 2021 from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the Barre Town Garage, 129 Websterville Road. For more information on fees and COVID protocols visit [www.cvswm.org](http://www.cvswm.org) or call 802-229-9383 (extension 105).

Selectboard Minutes of April 20, 2021 Continued:

- ✓ Green Up Day will be Saturday, May 1, 2021. Sign up to Green Up Barre Town by calling the Town offices at 802-479-9331 with your roadside choice, or stop by between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Bags and gloves are now available.
- ✓ Please help the Millstone Trails Association volunteers clean up the trails from the winter. The next trail cleanup day is Sunday, April 25, 2021, 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Bring a mask, water and dress for the weather. Meet at 44 Brook Street in Websterville.
- ✓ The Barre Town Bulk Trash collection will be held on Saturday, May 8, 2021, from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. More details will be in the April Barre Town Newsletter coming soon.

Selectboard member Jack Mitchell noted that COVID-19 protocols are in place. This means wearing of a mask and to please stay in your vehicle at all times. If your assistance is needed the staff will let you know. Be sure to box or contain loose building materials. On May 8, 2021 as you load your vehicle, if you are unsure if the Town will accept an item, you can call the Town Garage at 802-479-5483.

In other news:

- ✓ The Town is still accepting application for Public Works summer helpers. You must be 18 or older and have a valid driver's license. Necessary training is provided. The first summer pay rate is \$12.75 an hour. To apply, call 802-479-9331 and ask for an application.
- ✓ Early ballots are now available for the Barre Town Municipal Elections and the Barre Unified Union School District Budget Revote to be held on May 11, 2021. To request an early ballot call the Town Clerk's Office at 802-479-9391. If you need to register to vote you can do so any time, including now. Visit or call the Town Clerk's Office or go online to [www.olvr.vermont.gov](http://www.olvr.vermont.gov).
- ✓ If you own the Barre Town home you live in, do not forget to file your Homestead Declaration Form with the State of Vermont by May 16, 2021, to be billed at the lower residential rate for education taxes.

**GUESTS - None**

**TOWN FOREST LOGGING OPERATION**

Background: Recently logging, in accordance with the Town Forest Management Plan, has taken place. This action was completed under the supervision of Jeff Smith the Town Forester and the Vermont Land Trust. During the April 6, 2021 Selectboard meeting, several residents called to raise concerns over the logging activity. Since this was not a warned item and the Selectboard needed more information discussion between the Forester, Selectboard, and public was scheduled for this meeting. Included in the Selectboard meeting package was information on the timeline of acquiring the Forest, how the Town Forest came to be, and how logging fits into the Forest Plan. (Said notes are attached to these minutes.)

Chair Paul White, read a historical account of how the Town Forest came to be and the agreements that have been made to include the one with Millstone Trails Association's trail-work and cleanup.

Town Forester Jeff Smith outlined his role in the logging process. It has been recognized this Forest is young and there is/was concern for continuity. He informed those present the logging operations are not ongoing annual events. Once the third phase of logging is complete, the next need for logging will be in 25+ years.

The first two section of logging were completed using a more traditional method (chain saws, etc.). Existing roadways, whenever possible, are used for staging and equipment access. However, with the most recent section, a more mechanical method of logging was used which required removing trees in some areas to allow equipment access. The overall goal is to have a Forest with a diversified age group of quality trees. Mr. Smith stated that in 30 to 40 years this will result in a much healthier Forest. Granted things may appear somewhat void of trees and devastating to some, but cleanup has not been completed and regrowth will begin this spring/summer. As for clear cutting it was stated only a half-acre of land was clear cut.

Resident and user comments

- Proceeds from the logging operation. The Manager informed residents that proceeds from the logging are deposited into the General Fund for use by the Recreation Department.
- Slash (tree tops) remaining. Mr. Smith stated some slash will remain. Much is being removed, which is evident by visiting some of logging operations staging area.
- Cutting of unmarked trees. There are some trees which definitely need to be cut and those were marked. However, it is also necessary sometimes to remove others due to overcrowding, getting equipment in and out, cutting of apple trees, and wanting to include the removal of some ash trees. Some larger/bigger/taller trees need to be removed to create openings to allow water and light for

Selectboard Minutes of April 20, 2021 Continued:

new growth. The existing trees in the Forest will provide plenty of seed for new trees to establish in the openings that have been created by the logging. So no replanting is needed.

- Focus on Forest Use by all. Residents voiced concerns for the balance of the type of current logging activity versus the way it is currently being used (hiking, biking, walking, etc.). Given the most recent logging operation many felt they will be unable to safely use the Forest for their customary activities.
- Concern for wildlife habitats and vernal pools. The most recent logging removed so many trees that residents voiced concern for the animal habitat. It was noted there was a vernal pool that was disturbed which did not comply with what the Forest Management Plan had outlined. Mr. Smith “there was some rutting near one of the vernal pools, which will be smoothed over to prevent salamanders and wood frogs from mistakenly laying eggs there. Most importantly there is no risk of any sediment from any of the skid trails running off into either of the pools. A couple of trees were cut in the primary zone of one but they were on the outer edge and do not impact the shading of the pool.”
- There is approximately 25 acres left to log out of the last phase. An abutting neighbor was concerned for the type of logging that has recently taken place.
- Review of the Town Forest Management Plan/Review. With the logging project as outlined not being completed yet, it is anticipated the review will begin in 2022.

Chair White thanked everyone for coming. The Town Forester will be holding a “walk-thru” soon and details will be provided so the public may attend.

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 4-21 ACKNOWLEDGING BARRE TOWN’S VOLUNTEERS**

Background: April 18 – 24, 2021 is National Volunteer Appreciation Week. Due to the Pandemic the Town is publishing an ad in the Times Argus newspaper thanking volunteers in lieu of the usual recognition during a Selectboard meeting.

*On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted unanimously to adopt and authorize the signing of the “Town of Barre, Vermont, Resolution No. 4-21, A Resolution of the Town of Barre, Vermont In Recognition and Appreciation of Town and Community Volunteers.*

Chair White read the Resolution and recognized individuals who have volunteer anniversaries, (5, 10 and 20 years of service to the Barre Town Community). All volunteers received a standing ovation from the Selectboard and an abundance of thanks and appreciation.

#### **CANNABIS DISCUSSION**

Due to the lateness of the meeting, and no parties present via Teams or by phone, the Selectboard passed over the item. It will be on a future agenda.

#### **FY 2021-2022 COVER LETTER FOR BUDGET BOOK**

Background: As required by Town Charter, the Fiscal year 2021-2022 Budget Booklet draft was presented to the Selectboard for review. Once the Selectboard approved the “cover letter” the booklet can go to print and be distributed.

Several edits were provided to the Manager to include typos on a couple of pages.

*On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted to approve and sign the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget Booklet cover letter with the edits, as provided to the Manager.*

#### **COVID-19 REPORT**

Manager Rogers reported the following:

- Employees – The Town had an employee who was near someone who was near someone that had COVID. Results were negative.
- The State is putting our changes on meetings. Staff had not had an opportunity to review those changes. Our meeting classification is considered Group V. As more details emerge the Board will need to discuss how to conduct meetings. This will lead into discussing when/how to open the Municipal Building to the public.
- The American Rescue Plan updates are slow in coming – everyone is awaiting the regulations to be distributed by the US Treasury.
- There is a new COVID-19 grant to help renters with their utility arrearages. Finance Director Katelyn Kran is overseeing this grant. It will require landlords working with renters to facilitate applying for relief.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE WARRANT

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the April 20, 2021 accounts payable warrant.

MISCELLANEOUS

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the following 2021 Liquor Licenses:

- 1. Third Class Liquor License for Canadian Club Inc; Outdoor Consumption Permit; and a First Class Liquor License to Sell Malt and Vinous Beverages; and
- 2. Second Class Liquor License for GG Store Inc.

‘ROUND TABLE

Justin Bolduc noted the recent comments on Front Porch Forum regarding a Fireworks Display. It seems to have caught some off guard. Once an application is approved by the Selectboard the Public Safety Departments receive copies of the permit. While not required, it has been the practice to post those permits on the Town website and through social media accounts. However, this one did not get posted on the social media site.

Norma Malone stated the Barre Town Charter Amendments were signed by Governor on April 13, 2021. She inquired when the updates will appear on the Muni Code online version. Rogers stated the changes since November 2018 are being gathered and will be sent out for codification.

Jack Mitchell stated that when review begins on the Town Forest discussion is needed with regards to the type of equipment used for logging. The Forest Management Plan review process was briefly noted.

Paul White stated the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee has drafted a Traffic Calming Policy which will be forthcoming. They are seeking Selectboard input and are aware the Selectboard is looking to “consolidate” some policies.

Paul White inquired if there was going to be a recorded Budget Presentation. The need, timeline, those who have voted early, and possibly doing a PDF version were noted. By consensus, the Selectboard opted to allow the Manager and Assistant to come up with possible solutions to getting the information out to residents.

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 8:42 p.m. for contracts and personnel.

On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to come out of executive session at 9:40 p.m.

ADJOURN

On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:42 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

See next page for Attached Notes.

Town Forest Logging, Forest Management

AGENDA ITEM # 7

Town citizens, and probably some friends, started making mountain bike trails on Rock of Ages and other private property in the early 2000s, if not earlier. Interest and participation in trail work and riding grew. After a couple years it was determined an organization was needed. Millstone Trails Association – MTA – was founded in the mid-2000s.

After several years and increase in use of the trail system, Rock of Ages informed MTA it wanted to sell its unproductive land. MTA contacted the Trust for Public Land, which decided to help MTA secure the Rock of Ages land and several other much smaller parcels. MTA and the Trust for Public Land came to the Selectboard and asked if the Town would participate. The Trust for Public Land said the likely grant sources probably would require public (meaning government) ownership and it would help secure those grants if the Town contributed. After a Town Forest Study Committee recommended the Town contribute to the purchase and accept title of the land, Town voters approved borrowing \$100,000 for the forest acquisition.

I tell you this because it is important to remember MTA came first and MTA came to the Town requesting help preserving its trail system. The Town didn't ask MTA to accept trail maintenance responsibilities. MTA stated up front it would take care of its trails. It should be noted MTA is not protesting those responsibilities now. The understanding with MTA is written into an agreement between MTA and the Town.

From the beginning logging was contemplated in the area to become the town forest. Supporters of the proposal to acquire land for the town forest talked about how it could help the Vermont logging and timber products industries. A town forest management was written and then reviewed and modified by a committee of town residents. The Plan was adopted by the Selectboard. The largest section of the plan is the forest, meaning timber, management plan. It was written by the then county forester.

The timber management plan divided the town forest into several sections based on mix of tree species, age and condition. It made suggestions for when sections should be harvested. It noted several purposes or goals of the logging in each section. The plan mentions several overall goals. The plan called for some logging soon after the acquisition.

After acquiring title to the land, the Town issued a request for proposals for forestry consulting services. Several proposals were submitted. Jeff Smith of Butternut Hollow Forestry was selected. Since then, starting in the winter of 2015- 2016, the Town has had two logging contracts before the current contract. The area north of Littlejohn Road was logged first. The second contract was for timbering the northeastern corner of the large tract of the town forest. The logger was asked to minimize treetops and brush across MTA trails. The logger was responsible, when the ground dried out, to repair ruts or other ground damage. MTA was responsible for and did clear its trails.

Continuing with implementation of the forest management plan this logging contract was put out for bidding. Because it is a different section of the forest that may have a different mix of tree species and age, the goal of the logging might be different than and look different than the work in the first two contracts. Because goals or purpose of logging vary from area to area, and from owner to owner, what citizens see in the town forest area just logged could look vastly different from what they have seen at other logging operations.

This spring when the snow melted the forest looked its very worst. The logger hasn't repaired ruts yet but will come back in late May or June. Leaves, especially on the understory, are not out to reduce sight lines. Until April 11, MTA hadn't had time to remove brush from trails. Branches on the ground, from logging or there naturally are freshly skinned up and look unnatural. The wood has not decomposed at all yet.

(Over)

Logging in the town forest was planned from the beginning. The overall plan was prepared by the county forester. That plan is interpreted and implemented by an experienced forester. The bidding specs were reviewed by and the work has been checked by the Vermont Land Trust's certified forester. Both of these foresters have been actively involved. The forester spent many hours in the section before the logging began. He visited the site regularly during the logging. The VLT forester inspected the site. And I'd add, has worked with volunteers doing invasive species removal from the forest.

With that background we can call on Jeff Smith to talk about the plan and goals for logging this 72-acre section and his thoughts about the work accomplishing the goals.