



Town of Barre VERMONT

BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING February 15, 2022

AGENDA

1. Call to order.....8:05 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Consider approving agenda.
4. Consider approving February 8 meeting minutes.
5. Announcements.
6. Receive guests for non-agenda items.
7. Conversation with Barre Town’s two State Legislators
8. Presentation of Barre Unified Union School District proposed budget.
9. Discuss changes to recreation division structure.
10. Consider approving weekly accounts payable warrants for February 15, 2022.
11. Miscellaneous: **a)** GG Store, Inc, d/b/a Graniteville General Store second class liquor license; **b)** other licenses and permits, if any.
12. ‘Round table.
13. Executive session, real estate (no action anticipated).
14. Adjourn.

MINUTES

The duly warned meeting of February 15, 2022 was held at the Barre Town Municipal Building, Selectboard Room, in Lower Websterville at 8:05 p.m.

Selectboard Members Present: Paul White, Norma Malone, Justin Bolduc, W. John “Jack” Mitchell, and Bob Nelson.

Selectboard Members Absent: None.

Staff Members Present: Town Manager Carl Rogers, Assistant Town Manager Elaine Wang, Town Clerk Tina Lunt, and Cemetery Sexton Dwight Coffrin. Those present virtually: Planning and Zoning Administrator Chris Violette.

Others Present: Nancy LeClerc, Terry Reil, Dean Preston, Alice Farrell, Josh Howard, Rob LaClair, Francis “Topper” McFaun, Chris Hennessey, Sonya Spaulding, Patty Coffrin and David Rouleau. Those present virtually: Chris Parker, Renee Badeau and Doug Farnham.

CALL TO ORDER: Chair White called the meeting to order at 8:05 p.m.

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

APPROVE THE AGENDA:

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the amended agenda as follows:

1. Add to #13 Executive Session: personnel and legal

APPROVE THE MINUTES:

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the February 8, 2022 meeting minutes with minor spelling and grammatical corrections.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- The public is welcome to attend the Barre Town Budget Committee meetings, which are every Tuesday through March at 6:00 p.m. More info is at barretown.org.
- If you would like a ballot for the March 1 school elections mailed to you, you may request it by calling the Town Clerk's office at 802-479-9391. However, keep in mind that the Town must receive your completed ballot back by election day for your vote to count. So, if you have any doubt you will receive your ballot in time, instead of requesting an early ballot be mailed to you, either plan to vote at the polls at Barre Town School on March 1st between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. or come to the Town Clerk's Office at 149 Websterville Road between now and February 28th, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. and vote early there.
- If you care about public health, especially when it comes to rental properties, consider serving the Town as its Deputy Health Officer. Training is provided at no cost, and you would be working with the Town's experienced Town Health Officer. This position serves when the Town Health Officer is not available, usually a few times a year. Deputies and Town Health Officers are nominated by the Selectboard and appointed by the Vermont Commissioner of Health to three-year terms. For more information, call the Town Officers at 802-479-9331, or search for Town Health Officer at Vermont.gov.
- If you are a homeowner who is behind on your housing-related bills due to the COVID-19 pandemic, look into the Vermont Housing Finance Agency's Vermont Homeowner Assistance Program at vermonthap.vhfa.org.
- Free tax help is available to eligible Vermonters, including those with lower income, disabilities, the elderly, or those with limited English. Visit barretown.org for the flyer from the Vermont Department of Taxes.
- The free, walk-in COVID-19 vaccine clinic held by Barre Town EMS at their East Barre Station is now on Mondays and Fridays, still 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., not Thursday as noted in the February newsletter. You can choose between Pfizer and Moderna. J&J is no longer available through BTEMS. The EMS Station is at 4 McLaughlin Road.

GUESTS: None.

VERMONT STATE LEGISLATOR UPDATE:

Background: It has been an annual practice to receive information from our State Legislators regarding proposed legislation that affects the Town and give them options on certain bills. House Representatives Francis "Topper" McFaun and Rob LaClair will present to the Board.

Senior Representative Topper McFaun led the presentation. Representative McFaun spoke to several bills. Highlights include:

- Use of funds for infrastructure
- Budget adjustment bill
- Redistricting
- Retirement funds
- Opioid settlement bill: 15% has been earmarked for towns and cities
- Non-binary bill: a bill to simplify amending birth certificates for gender identity purposes
- House Bill 510: child tax credit
- Weatherization funds: for middle income households and landlords with low-income tenants

Representative LaClair presented an overview of the redistricting process. The US Census is used to determine the plans for reapportionment. The Committee is currently reviewing maps and plans. The original plan was to have all single-member districts, but they have decided that will be too much of a change-over. There are a couple different options for Barre Town that are being reviewed. Most states have single-member districts, Vermont is one of nine states in the country that have multi-member districts. Vermont is the only one of the nine that have multi-member districts in the House and Senate. A decision will be made soon, as the Secretary of State office has a deadline of April 1, 2022.

Representative LaClair spoke to the State Employees and Teachers Pension and the current funding crisis. A task force has been working with unions to address the concerns. Representative LaClair shared if the bill passes, the Legislature will be putting approximately \$600 million towards this issue.

House Bill 510: The child tax credit is in the neighborhood of \$49-million dollars. Representative LaClair noted there was an amendment put in to reduce the income level from \$223,000 to \$100,000. This could save \$11.5 million which would be allocated to incentivize nurses in the current healthcare crisis. Unfortunately, the amendment failed.

In looking ahead, Legislation will focus on Prop 5, Prop 2, redistricting, and a development disability bill.

BARRE UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT 2022-2023 BUDGET PRESENTATION:

Background: Annually the School Board presents their proposed budget during a televised Selectboard meeting. The Barre Unified Union School District (BUUSD) budget vote will be held on March 1, 2022 at the Barre Town Middle and Elementary School gymnasium from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Superintendent Chris Hennessey and BUUSD Board Chair Sonya Spaulding were present.

The BUUSD annual report was shared electronically with Board members.

Mr. Hennessey led the conversation. He shared that a copy of the BUUSD annual reports was mailed to all Barre Town families and can be found on the buusd.org.

The Barre Unified Union School District Board approved a budget of \$53,254,319 for fiscal year 2023. BUUSD per equalized pupil spending is \$16,252 per equalized pupil.

Mr. Hennessey noted that the education taxes are going down this year. He encouraged residents to read over the Annual Report and to look over the frequently asked questions that can be found on www.buUSD.org.

Ms. Spaulding explained the ballot language. She stressed the importance of page 6 of the BUUSD Annual Report and for families to review how the educational taxes will impact their household. Ms. Spaulding noted the tax rate is decreasing; Barre City will see a decrease of \$0.07, and Barre Town is decreasing \$0.02. Mr. Hennessey added that the Annual Report outlines the BUUSD priorities and reports the daily struggles they are experiencing.

Board members inquired about the budget, asking clarifying questions around the noted increase. Mr. Hennessey expressed it has been a challenging year for the BUUSD. Board members continued to question the BUUSD grant and Esser funds, seeking answers on how these funds have been spent and the timeframe. Additionally, the fund balance was questioned. Mr. Hennessey stated the surplus is 1.8 million and has been broken down into thirds, (tax stabilization, capital improvements, revenue) noting this is an extraordinary number due to the schools being shut down during the pandemic.

Mr. Hennessey spoke about the Spaulding Educational Alternatives (SEA) program. This program is currently academically servicing 50 students grades 9-12. He noted they are seeing a higher attendance and family involvement.

Highlights of budget:

- Addition of funding for full staff assistant coaches at SHS
- Addition of Reading Interventionist at BTMES

RECREATION DIVISION STRUCTURE:

Background: During last week's Board meeting the Selectboard heard from the Recreation Working Group regarding proposals after review of ordinances, policies, Rec Board Charge, and job descriptions. Draft documents were shared with Board members to review which included a restructuring proposal of staff, new Rec Board Charge, and job description for a new Recreation Director position.

Mrs. Malone addressed the concerns that were raised during last week's discussion by Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Nelson. Discussion focused on the use of specific language and amendments to the draft documents.

Cemetery Sexton Dwight Coffrin was present. Mr. Coffrin expressed the Recreation Working Group did an excellent job of creating the Recreation Director position. He gave a shout out to all the ground's maintenance staff who have helped bring the Barre Town fields to what they are today. Mr. Coffrin shared that he has no plans of retiring anytime soon and would like to continue his work with the Barre Town Cemeteries. Board members confirmed the intent is to have Mr. Coffrin as a full time Cemetery Sexton.

Rec Board Vice President David Rouleau was present. Mr. Rouleau shared that he is in support of the Recreation Director position. He expressed the Town could use this working position and he feels it will set them up for future opportunities. He recognizes it's an expense for the Town but noted that people are picking a community to live in because of recreation and what is being offered.

Selectboard Minutes of February 15, 2022 Continued:

Board members shared their opinions regarding the timeline and logistics. Conversation continued regarding implementation of hiring a recreation director with a hire date of July 1, 2022. Board consensus is to move forward with the proposal.

On a motion by Justin Bolduc, seconded by Jack Mitchell, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the Recreation Director Position and instruct the Town Manager to add it into the FY 22-23 budget.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE:

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted to approve the accounts payable warrants for the week of February 15, 2022. Bob Nelson abstained.

MISCELLANEOUS:

On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the 2022 Second Class Liquor License for GG Store Inc. d/b/a Graniteville General Store.

Chair White noted Town Clerk Tina Lunt shared an email with Board members earlier in the day. This email was to designate a contact person for the appeals to PVR. Board members agreed Mrs. Lunt will be the designated contact.

Ms. Wang shared that Fuzzbuzz Technologies, Inc. is scheduled to continue work on the AV system this coming Friday.

'ROUND TABLE:

Mr. Bolduc asked what the exit strategy is for the masking in the Town facility. Town Manager Carl Rogers noted there are no plans as of now and they are watching the positive case rate, noting it will be some time before the removal of masks at the Town office.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to find the need to go into executive session citing premature general 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 10:13 p.m. for real estate, personnel, and legal.

On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to come out of executive session at 10:47 p.m.

ADJOURN:

On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:47 p.m.

APPROVED MINUTES

Barre Town Selectboard

Paul White, Chair

Norma Malone, Vice Chair

Justin Bolduc

Jack Mitchell

Bob Nelson

Filed in the Barre Town Clerk's Office on this _____ day of _____, 2022.

ATTEST: _____, Barre Town Clerk.