



Town of Barre VERMONT

BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING November 1, 2022

AGENDA

1. Call to order.....6:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Consider approving agenda
4. Consider approving October 25 Selectboard meeting minutes
5. Announcements
6. Receive guests for non-agenda items.
7. Norwich Tech presentation of proposed solar array and agriculture ventures on School Road property
8. Quarterly department head visits: **a) Fire Chief; b) Planning and Zoning Director**
9. Consider authorizing execution of grant agreement for Wildersburg stormwater project
10. Discuss plan for Beckley Hill Meadows (Ivan Drive) site visit (inspection)
11. Consider approving weekly accounts payable warrants for November 1, 2022
12. Miscellaneous, including licenses and permits if any
13. Round the table
14. Executive session: personnel
15. Adjourn

MINUTES

The duly warned meeting of November 1, 2022 was held at the Barre Town Municipal Building, Selectboard Room, in Lower Websterville at 6:00 p.m.

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

Selectboard Members Absent: None.

Staff Members Present: Town Manager Carl Rogers, Assistant Town Clerk Jennifer Bushway, Town Clerk Tina Lunt, and Planning and Zoning Administrator Chris Violette.

Others Present: Bill Fraser, Joan McMahan, Brandon Campo, Craig Chase, Terry Reil, Shannon Romeo, Megan LeCours, Martin Romeo, Brad Romeo, Lila Humphrres-LePage, Cam Cahill, Dave Thurber, Pam Thurber, Brent Tewksbury, Jim Merriam, Diana Wood, Troy McBride, Times Argues Reporter Eric Blaisdell, Cedric Sanborn, Mike Gilbar. Those present virtually: Deb Lefebvre, Stephen Conti, Howard Cook, Becky Post, 476-7171, 479-5233, and 279-6899.

CALL TO ORDER: Chair White called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

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

APPROVE THE AGENDA:

On a motion by Bob Nelson, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

APPROVE THE MINUTES:

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the October 25, 2022 meeting minutes with minor spelling and grammatical corrections.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- The lawn waste site on Holden Road will be open Saturday, November 5 from 8:00 a.m. to noon. Do not leave bags, plastic sheeting, or tarps behind.
- The Town's prohibition on parking on the street from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. starts November 1. Please plan to park vehicles off the street overnight.
- Election day is Tuesday, November 8. Voting is conducted in the Barre Town Middle and Elementary School gym. The polling place is open 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- The second quarterly property tax installment is due November 15. Pay in person in the Town Clerk's Office from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday or drop-off your payment in one of the drop boxes at the front of the municipal building.
- The Vermont Homeowners Assistance Program, known as VHAP, is winding down. VHAP assists homeowners with their tax and utility bills if the homeowner suffered financial hardship because of the COVID-19 pandemic. If you or someone you know had loss of income during the pandemic and have past due utility and or property tax bills, visit this website for more information: vermonthap.vhfa.org. The program will stop taking applications in December. If you need help, act now.
- Chair Announcement: Our former Deputy Health Officer recently was appointed Town Health Officer creating a vacancy in the Deputy position. The Deputy fills in for the Health Officer when the officer is not available. Barre Town sees about a dozen Health Officer calls per year. For more information about the position contact the Town Manager's Office.
- Chair Announcement: The Recreation Board has a vacancy. The term ends May 31, 2024. The Recreation Board is a 7-member Board that meets the first Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. Please contact the Town Manager's Office if you are interested in serving on this Board by Wednesday, November 23 or visit the Town website.

GUESTS:

Montpelier City Manager Bill Fraser was present. Mr. Fraser was present on behalf of the International City/County Management Association. He presented Mr. Rogers with his lifetime membership award. Mr. Fraser thanked Mr. Rogers for all he has done for the region over the years.

SCHOOL ROAD SOLAR FARM:

Background: Notice of a special Planning Commission meeting was published in the newspaper. Norwich Solar was the developer of the two Washington County Mental Health solar projects. Norwich Solar is looking at acquiring a 50-acre parcel along School Road. This project would be a 2,100-kW array. The electricity generated would be sold to the State of Vermont.

Those present from Norwich Solar: CEO Jim Merriam, Community Outreach Director Diana Wood, and Project Manager Troy McBride.

Norwich Solar is looking at assessing a 50-acre parcel along School Road to continue agricultural uses and include solar electric generation. The solar array would have a footprint of approximately 12-15 acres. They are working with Vermont farmers and educational institutions to create a dual land use plan for growing crops as well as generating solar-sourced electricity. Norwich Solar CEO Jim Merriam stated they are reaching out to share this information and to receive public input, answer questions, and address concerns.

Many residents of the neighborhood were present. Those present voiced concerns around noise, wildlife, long-term health effects, visibility of panels, future expansion, decommissioning, and decrease in property value. Numerous residents expressed their concerns around the land being used for a community garden, stating they are not in favor of this idea. Mr. Merriam noted this. Conversation continued as Mr. Merriam and owners of the LePage Farm discussed potential opportunities of working together for future use of the land.

Planning and Zoning Administrator Chris Violette stated the Public Utility Commission of the State of Vermont ultimately will make the decision around this project, however, there is a process. Although the Town does not have direct authority, they do have a voice in the decision process. Norwich Solar will file a 45-day notice that the Selectboard and Planning Commission will review. Mr. Violette noted the Town has an Energy Plan and a Town Plan. These plans have been approved by the Public Utility Commission and will be reviewed. Additionally, the Planning Commission and Selectboard will have a chance to submit comments to the developer once the project has been reviewed. The abutters will also have a chance to provide input.

Chair White thanked everyone for coming out to voice their opinions.

DEPARTMENT HEAD VISITS:

Background: Chris Violette will report for the months of July, August, and September.

Fire Department

Fire Chief Chris Violette was present and updated the Board on the following:

- 50 emergency calls
- Calais mutual aid fire assistance

Selectboard Minutes of November 1, 2022 Continued:

- Thunder Road call
- Trainings/Certification
- Dry hydrant visits
- Scavenger Hunt (familiarization with hydrant location, addresses, and gates)
 - Truck Committee: this Committee will help with the replacement of the rescue truck
- Barre Heritage Festival and parade
- Community Aid Program
- Association Gun Raffle
- Use of East Barre Fire Station
 - Hosted official fire training
 - Central Vermont Dart

Mr. Violette gave a brief update on the radio study. KGI Spectrum is the agent for the Taplin Hill location. Mr. Violette noted KGI came back with pricing, but it was significantly high. Mr. Violette has asked them if there would be a discount for an emergency service host town and is waiting to hear back on an answer.

Planning and Zoning

Planning and Zoning Administrator Chris Violette was present and updated the Board on the following:

- 63 permits processed (20 less than last year)
 - 7 dwellings (5 for Fecteau Residential and 2 Windy Wood LLC)
- Development Review Board:
 - Approved site plan addition for Montessori School
 - Approved subdivision for Bibeau
 - Approved Variance for Parsons
 - Velie Ave., LLC: Conditional Use approval and site plan continued for October
 - O'Riley Auto Parts Conceptual Use
- Planning Commission
 - Energy Committee
 - Site visit on Lowery Road
 - Solar project work
 - Discussions around potential of village designation.
- Audio-Visual system update
- McLeod Hill Road/ Orchard Terrace/ Ferris Street property updates

Mr. Violette gave a presentation on the Town's phone system. In summary, the phone bill is broken down by 15 departments. The bill includes 2 internet charges, 3 fax lines, and 23 phones. The lines are Sovernet Legacy Plans, which are grandfathered in through First Light. Additionally, there are 4 lines at the DPW Maintenance Garage, that are on the First Light Plan. This is a flat rate plan. The approximate fees for the Town's phones are \$2,000. Mr. Violette stated the cost difference is the upgrade to the internet with fiberoptic, the three additional phones with the First Light Plan, and the Town Engineer's enhanced phone options.

Discussion continued as Board members discussed the limited number of competitors and the possibility of a future audit. Board members voiced their concerns around the after-hours phone system and how the calls are directed.

GRANT AGREEMENT FOR WILDERSBURG STORMWATER PROJECT:

Background: The State awarded Barre Town a \$512,525 grant for the public-private partnership stormwater project in Wildersburg Common. The grant agreement has been taking some time. One of the hold ups has been the renewal of the SAMS number which is a problem being addressed across many municipalities. On October 11 the Board skipped over this item as an agenda item pending answers by Town Attorney Mike Monte.

There was a question as to why the Town was referred to as Grantee in part of the agreement and as Subrecipient in another. Grantee is the State's term and Subrecipient is the Federal term. The terms have the same meaning. Additionally, there was a second question about a re-payment provision in Attachment D. The provision states the Town may have to re-pay the grant if the project is deemed not in compliance with the ARPA program the State is using for the public-private partnership program. The Final Rule (page 37) was enclosed for the Boards review which states eligible uses including management and treatment of stormwater.

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Bob Nelson, the Selectboard voted unanimously to authorize the Town Manager to sign the Wildersburg Public-Private Partnership grant #06140-2022-ARPA CWB-01.

IVAN DRIVE INSPECTION:

Background: Per the ordinance and State law, the Selectboard must inspect the road for provisional acceptance. Public notice of the inspection must be given in the newspaper. The Town Engineer will issue a report before the Selectboards inspection.

Board members discussed their availability for the inspection. Board consensus is to tentatively schedule the site visit for 3:30 p.m. on November 15, 2022.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE:

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the accounts payable warrants for the week of November 1, 2022.

MISCELLANEOUS: NONE

ROUND TABLE:

Paul White:

- Chair White inquired about Mr. Rogers notes in the Board packet regarding the stormwater project.

Jack Mitchell:

- Mr. Mitchell inquired about the letter that was received regarding the Rec Board resignation, confirming this removes him from his assignment.
- Mr. Mitchell noted he received complaints regarding water being shut off due to the Websterville waterline project. Mr. Rogers stated he will ask Ottercreek to let the Town know ahead of time when this needs to take place in the future.

Selectboard Minutes of November 1, 2022 Continued:

- Mr. Mitchell inquired about the article in the Times Argus regarding the City developing their budget and the possibility of shutting down their holding cells. He stated the Board should consider a discussion regarding this.
- Mr. Mitchell expressed that he had a nice time at the Town Manager’s retirement celebration. He noted it was nice to see past staff and interns.

Justin Bolduc

- Mr. Bolduc inquired about the Websterville and Town water inter-connections and if there has been any movement on this. Mr. Rogers stated that Ottercreek has not reported anything yet.
- Mr. Bolduc inquired about the incomplete pavement parkings. Mr. Rogers stated the contractor was unable to complete the work this past weekend and will be returning.

Norma Malone:

- Mrs. Malone inquired about the status of the Town Forest Committee meetings. Mr. Rogers said he will be working with the Rec Director to set a date to get this started.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Justin Bolduc, 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 9:08 p.m. for personnel.

On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to come out of executive session at 10:09 p.m.

ADJOURN:

On a motion by Jack Mitchell, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:09 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.