



**BARRE TOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING  
December 12, 2023**

**AGENDA**

1. Call to order.....6:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of allegiance
3. Consider approving the agenda
4. Consider approving December 5, 2023, meeting minutes
5. Announcements
6. Receive guests for non-agenda items.
7. Interview Recreation Board Candidates
8. Consider adopting the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP)
9. Consider approving the Town of Orange Winter Road Maintenance Agreement
10. Consider approving 2024 EMS Billing Rates
11. Consider approving Town of Williamstown Ambulance Service Contract
12. Consider appointment to the Recreation Board
13. Consider approving weekly accounts payable warrants for December 12, 2023
14. Miscellaneous: including permits and licenses if any
15. Round Table
16. Executive Session: Contracts & Legal
17. Adjourn

**MINUTES**

The duly warned meeting of December 12, 2023 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, and Mike Gilbar.

**Selectboard Members Absent:** Bob Nelson.

**Staff Members Present:** Town Manager Chris Violette, Town Clerk Tina Lunt, Interim EMS Director David Danforth, and Town Manager Assistant Leslie Babic. Those present virtually: Assistant Town Clerk Catherine Whalen.

**Others Present:** Andrea McLaughlin, Josh Howard, Laura Ireland, Shadi Battah, and Jill Wilkinson. Those present virtually: Carol Hebert and Jeff Blow.

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

- 1. Item #13. The Town Manager requested to add a special warrant*
- 2. Item #16 Executive Session: Add personnel*

**APPROVE THE MINUTES:**

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the December 5, 2023 Selectboard meeting minutes with minor spelling and grammatical corrections.*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- We are seeking registered Town voters who would like to serve on the 2024 Budget Committee. The Committee will meet from the end of January to the end of March and review every Town fund budget. Participation on the Budget Committee is the most efficient means to learn about Town operations. Letters or emails will be accepted until December 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- We are also seeking Town resident volunteers to serve on the recently formed Energy Committee. This is an exciting opportunity to be the first to join this new Committee that will serve an advisory role concerning Town Energy Policy, as well as develop and implement community outreach and education opportunities for residents, among other things. We are seeking individuals with backgrounds in the fields of energy, finance and banking, grant writing, transportation, and building infrastructure and engineering. The Energy Committee will meet monthly on the first Wednesday of the month (hopefully starting in February) for a term of at least 18 months but could be longer.
- If interested in joining one of the committees mentioned, or if you would like more information, please send an email to [offices@barretown.org](mailto:offices@barretown.org) or call the Town Manager's Office at 802-479-9331.
- The Public Works Department has resumed cutting ash trees that are in the Town right-of-way. Cutting will be in the East Barre area to include upper Waterman Street and Donahue Road, as well as Lowery and Little John Road. If you have an ash tree in front of your house, in the right-of-way, and you'd like the wood, please contact the Public Works Department at 476-3522.
- Chair Announcement: Chair White announced that after exiting executive session at the end of last week's meeting, the 5-Year Paved Road Plan was unanimously approved.

**GUESTS:** None.

**RECREATION BOARD INTERVIEWS:**

Background: The Recreation Board has a vacancy for the remainder of a term that expires May 30, 2024. This position was held by Stacey Lynds who stepped down a few months ago. The open position has been

Selectboard Minutes of December 12, 2023 Continued:

advertised on Front Porch Forum over the last few weeks. Five residents have expressed interest in joining the Board and will be interviewed by the Selectboard.

Jill Wilkinson: Ms. Wilkinson shared that she recently moved to Barre in November. She saw the Recreation Board vacancy on Front Porch Forum and thought it would be a good way to get involved with her new community. Ms. Wilkinson stated she has worked in the recreation field, noting ski resorts. She shared she has no agenda other than to give perspective and learn about recreation in the Town of Barre. Ms. Wilkinson noted she would like to see a balance of recreation offerings across all ages within the recreation facilities. Ms. Wilkinson confirmed she has the time to commit to the monthly meetings.

Andrea McLaughlin: Mrs. McLaughlin taught at Barre Town School for 22 years. Since leaving Barre Town School, she has felt disconnected from the community. Mrs. McLaughlin shared she organized many of the rec activities at Barre Town School, noting the Girls on the Run program. She was the original race director for Central Vermont Runners. Mrs. McLaughlin said she has an interest in the Millstone Trails, disc golf, and tennis. Furthermore, she confirmed she can attend the monthly meetings.

Laura Ireland: Ms. Ireland moved to Barre Town 1 ½ years ago. She has been involved within the community in a variety of ways. She works with Vermont Law School, which is mostly remote. Ms. Ireland shared that she and her daughter are active and spend a lot of time on the Millstone Trails, they have also participated in many of the recreation events. Ms. Ireland is the cross-country coach at Spaulding High School. In the past, Ms. Ireland has served on a Leadership Team at the County level at a Sheriff's Office in Oregon. Additionally, Ms. Ireland noted she has the time to commit to the monthly meetings.

Josh Howard: Mr. Howard has previously served on the Budget Committee and the Community Forest Management Committee. Mr. Howard lives next to one of the recreation parks and shared this could be a benefit as a Board member. Additionally, Mr. Howard noted the idea of being a liaison between the PTO and Recreation Board, in a means of collaborating events. Mr. Howard shared he feels recreation events have been done well. Mr. Howard confirmed he has the time to commit to the monthly meetings.

Shadi Battah: Mr. Battah moved to Barre Town in 2016. He works at the State House as part of the IT Team. Mr. Battah shared that he and his family enjoy the recreation facilities and events, noting the ice cream socials and movie events. Additionally, Mr. Battah shared he has been helping set up the movie events. Mr. Battah said he would like to see the Recreation Board get more youth involved. Mr. Battah confirmed he is committed to the meeting schedule. Mr. Battah suggested aligning Rec Board events with the school break schedule. In closing, Mr. Battah shared that since he has become a citizen, he has been wanting to become more involved with the community and he believes he would bring diversity to the Recreation Board.

Mr. Bolduc noted the Board has 5 applicants and 1 vacancy, and the Recreation Board has asked that the Selectboard keep a list of the applicants. The Rec Board would like to be able to call upon these applicants for volunteer purposes.

Chair White noted an appointment will be made during a later agenda item.

### **LOCAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN (LHMP):**

**Background:** The Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), also known as an All-Hazard Mitigation Plan, was updated by Paul Luciano of OPH Consulting during the summer. The plan has a life span of five years before it must be updated and re-adopted by the Selectboard and approved by Vermont Emergency

Selectboard Minutes of December 12, 2023 Continued:

Management (VEM) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Mr. Luciano submitted the plan to VEM on August 8, 2023, for review. The Town was notified on December 1, 2023, by VEM, that they had approved Barre Town's plan. Now the plan must be adopted by the Selectboard before being submitted to FEMA for final approval. The plan will be effective until 2028, once adopted.

An approved LHMP is important for many reasons, first among those is to help make a community more flood resilient, disaster relief funding is another. While FEMA will reimburse communities 75% of eligible costs associated with repairs related to a declared natural disaster, VEM will provide additional assistance through the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF). The standard funding is 7.5% in addition to the FEMA funding; however, towns can be eligible for an additional 17.5% from VEM when certain steps are taken, an approved LHMP is one of those steps. With an approved LHMP, Barre Town should qualify for a total of 12.5% funding from VEM to bring the total funding to 87.5% for expenses related to the July flood event.

Board members reviewed the version of the plan that VEM approved. Board members noted edits that would need to be made to a final version that included pagination.

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the 2023 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), subject to minor edits and proper pagination.*

### **TOWN OF ORANGE WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT:**

Background: Barre Town and the Town of Orange have had a long-standing agreement to plow roads located in the other town where it makes sense due to proximity of those roads to roads each town already maintains of their own. This arrangement is beneficial to both towns and there is a desire to continue such an agreement. The Town plows a section of Partridge Road and Cutler Corner Road in Orange; Orange plows a portion of Ladd Road for Barre Town. The only change from last year's agreement is that Orange has requested that the agreement be for three years instead of one. The Public Works Department is okay with that change and the continued mutually beneficial cooperation between the two towns.

*On a motion by Justin Bolduc, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the Cooperative Plowing Agreement between the Town of Barre and the Town of Orange per the letter dated December 6, 2023 for a term of three years.*

### **2024 EMS BILLING RATES:**

Background: Annually the EMS billing rates for the following year are reviewed and approved in December. Interim EMS Director David Danforth proposed rates a few weeks ago and has provided the Board with an explanation about the rates.

Interim EMS Director David Danforth was present. Board members were provided with a copy of the proposed EMS Fee Schedule for review. Discussion began as Board members asked Mr. Danforth specific questions around the rates.

Medicare rates increased by 8.4% as of January 1. Medicaid rates increased 43% as of July 1. Mrs. Malone noted there will be a significant change in the Town rates from year '23 to '24, due to the methodology being used for Medicare and Medicaid rates. Mrs. Malone questioned how this will affect the various

Selectboard Minutes of December 12, 2023 Continued:

private insurers. Mr. Danforth noted the private insurers pay what EMS bills, based on Medicare/Medicaid guidelines.

Chair White noted there are some big increases but thanked Mr. Danforth for explaining the methodology of how the Department came up with the rates. Mr. Danforth stated the goal is to set these rates and move toward a fiscal year rate setting rather than a calendar year. The Town can review the rates in May/June to see if a small adjustment needs to be made before they move into the fiscal year. Ultimately, this will make budgeting much easier.

***On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the 2024 Barre Town EMS billing rates for services rendered as presented.***

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES CONTRACT:**

Background: The Town of Williamstown approached the Town of Barre asking the Town to take over the ambulance service. A public information meeting was held in Williamstown on November 6 regarding this proposal. During last evening's Williamstown Selectboard meeting, it was unanimously voted that the Town of Williamstown would contract with the Town of Barre to take over this service. A contract was presented to the Board for review.

Town Manager Chris Violette shared the proposed contract with the Board for review. The contract is for 3 ½ years. Mr. Violette noted a few changes that would need to be made to the contract. These include payment due dates, purchase of ambulance equipment, and amending the last page to include all selectboard member signatures.

Mr. Gilbar asked if there was opposition to this decision. Mr. Danforth stated there was a fair number of people who shared concerns. Town Manager Chris Violette expressed that Williamstown has had many dedicated people over the years, and they should feel proud of what they have accomplished. There were many emotions expressed but, at the end of the day, the Selectboard had to make the decision about what they thought was best for the community. Overall, the Town of Barre will be able to provide a higher level of service for the Williamstown community. Mr. Danforth noted the unsustainability of Williamstown's current model. Williamstown staff have been encouraged to apply to the Town of Barre.

Chair White stated this was not a case of Barre Town soliciting business. Williamstown approached Barre Town regarding this proposal.

Mr. Danforth plans to work out of the EMS station one day a week once the contract is effective. Additionally, he will meet with the Williamstown Selectboard periodically to keep them up to date.

***On a motion by Justin Bolduc, seconded by Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the Emergency Medical Contract with the Town of Williamstown for a term of 42 months starting January 1, 2024.***

### **RECREATION BOARD APPOINTMENT:**

Background: Earlier, the Board interviewed five candidates for the one vacant Recreation Board position with a remaining term expiring May 30, 2024. Laura Ireland, Andrea McLaughlin, Jill Wilkinson, Josh Howard, and Shadi Battah have all expressed an interest in serving on the Board.

*On a motion by Justin Bolduc, seconded by Norma Malone, the Selectboard voted unanimously to appoint Laura Ireland to the Recreation Board with a term that expires on May 30, 2024.*

**ACCOUNTS PAYABLE:**

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the accounts payable warrants for the week of December 12, 2023.*

Chair White asked what Air Table is. Mr. Violette explained it is a spreadsheet program. The program is used in numerous departments for a variety of different reasons. Most recently, Town Engineer Josh Martineau used this program for documenting the July flood work for FEMA.

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

*On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to approve the 2023 Second Class Liquor License, Tobacco License, and Tobacco Endorsement for GG Store, Inc. d/b/a/ Graniteville General Store.*

**ROUND TABLE:**

Norma Malone:

- Mrs. Malone asked if there has been an update on the Barclay Quarry Road resident inquiry. Town Manager Chris Violette shared he had asked the Rec Board to look into this. He has not heard back from the resident regarding this matter.

Justin Bolduc:

- Mr. Bolduc noted that a while back they had discussed the Rec Board Charge. He noted this is just another friendly reminder that this should be looked at.

Mike Gilbar:

- Mr. Gilbar inquired about the Sterling Hill residents and the EWP program. The Manager noted that engineers were sent out and site visits have been completed. Mr. Violette met with the engineer, however, they are far behind with the schedule. The engineers did believe a couple of the sites would fall under their purview but the work that would be completed would alleviate potential future damage, its not to repair damage that happened during the flood. Mr. Violette believes the focus would be fixing the stream, however, he is not sure until he hears back from the engineers.
- Mr. Gilbar inquired about the BADC packet. He asked about the emergency housing options that were discussed at the meeting. Mr. Gilbar asked if Wilson Industrial Park is still on the list. Town Manager Chris Violette stated he made it clear this is not an option. Additionally, Mr. Gilbar noted he was disturbed to see FY'25 is level funded at the proposed rather than approved level, and there is still a huge focus on housing. Mr. Violette noted BADC will be attending a future meeting, and the Board will be able to address the many questions they have.

Paul White:

- On behalf of Mr. Nelson, Chair White asked if Town Engineer Josh Martineau could look into the sink hole on Jalbert Road. This is in the area that was reconstructed last year.

Selectboard Minutes of December 12, 2023 Continued:

- Chair White stated when he served on the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee the Town upgraded numerous streetlights to LED. Chair White stated the Town still has 63 mercury streetlights. He suggested the Energy Committee tackle finding out where these are located and upgrade them.

Chris Violette

- Mr. Violette shared that Assessor Russ Beaudoin will have an Errors and Omissions report for the Board to consider approving next week.
- Mr. Violette shared that he attended a meeting with Rec Director Johnny Crossley which included the contractors involved with installing the baseball field poles. Currently, they need to wait for the ground to freeze to allow the equipment to get on to the field. Mr. Violette shared they are looking at a timeline of January or February.
- The Manager noted that Central Vermont Solid Waste District has found a parcel that they will be closing on in Berlin. Mr. Fredd Thumm will attend a future meeting to update the Board.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

*On a motion by Justin Bolduc, seconded by Mike Gilbar, 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 Justin Bolduc, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to go into executive session at 8:00 p.m. for contracts, legal, and personnel and invite Town Manager Assistant Leslie Babic and EMS Interim Director David Danforth.*

*On a motion by Justin Bolduc, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Selectboard voted unanimously to exit executive session at 10:20 p.m.*

**ADJOURN:**

*On a motion by Mike Gilbar, seconded by Justin Bolduc, the Selectboard voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:21 p.m.*

APPROVED MINUTES

Barre Town Selectboard

\_\_\_\_\_  
Paul White, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Justin Bolduc, Vice Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Norma Malone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mike Gilbar

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bob Nelson

Filed in the Barre Town Clerk’s Office on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023.

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_, Barre Town Clerk.